



## S.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### S.1 INTRODUCTION

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 S.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.

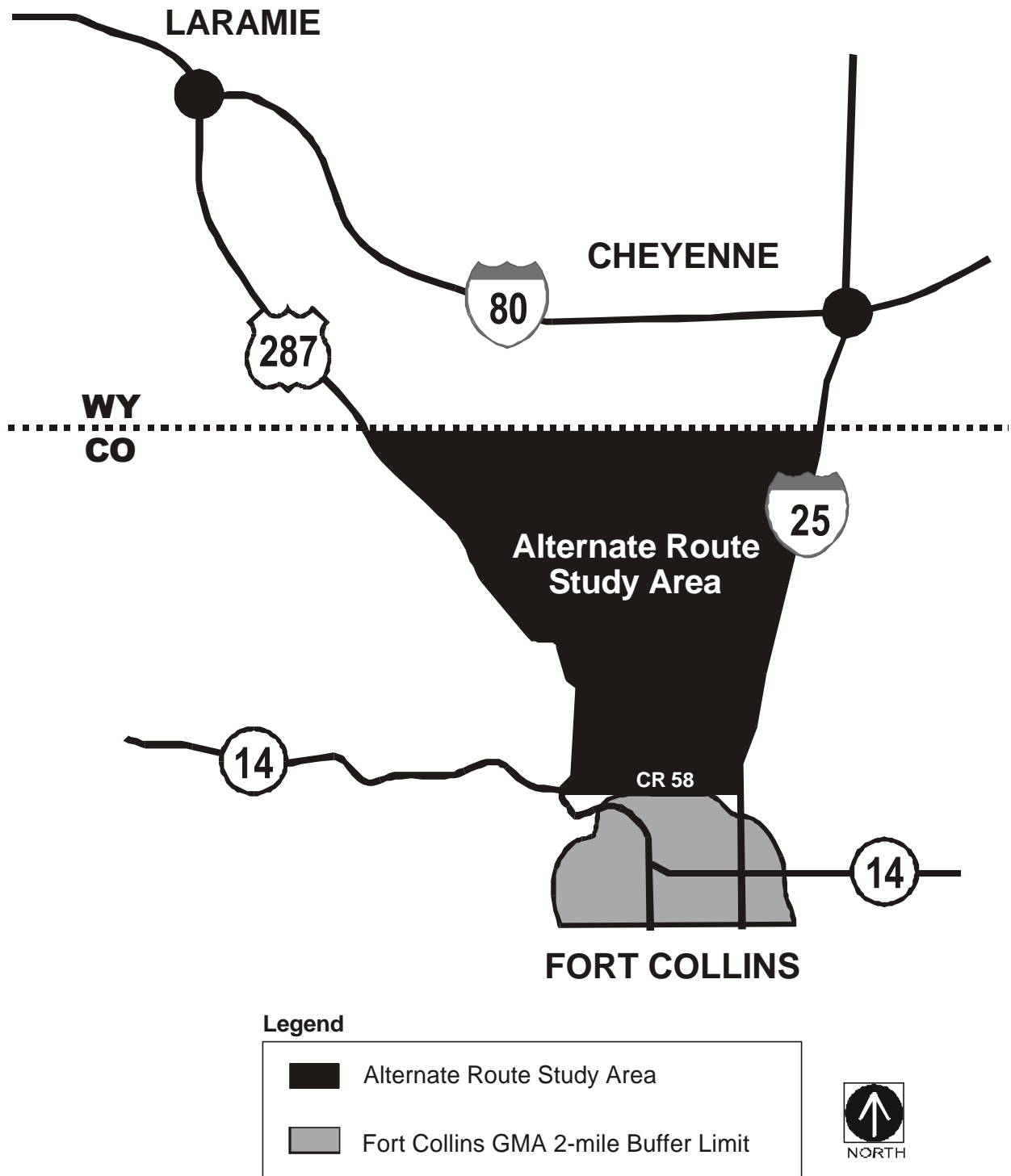
### S.2 PROCESS

The overall study process was developed to produce viable alternatives to the truck mobility problem in the City of Fort Collins and northern Larimer County area. The process included a focused, fact-based technical analysis and an extensive public and agency outreach program.

The fact-based technical approach included the evaluation of the non-route based strategies and alternate routes through a two-phase screening process. The first phase, eliminate unrealistic alternatives, eliminated alternatives that clearly did not meet the goals and objectives of the study. The second phase, comparative screening analysis, compared the relative impacts and benefits of the strategies and alternate routes based on how effectively they met the established evaluation criteria.

- (1) *Eliminate Unrealistic Alternatives.* The unrealistic screening analysis eliminated non-route based strategies and alternate routes that clearly did not address the needs of the study. Alternatives screened out at this level were removed from further consideration because they had no chance of being implemented. The unrealistic screening analysis was qualitative and was conducted with input from the various study committees and trucking industry representatives to ensure the appropriate non-route based strategies and alternate routes were evaluated at a more detailed level.

**Figure S.1  
Study Area Map**



---

*SH 14 Relocation Study*

(2) *Comparative Screening Analysis.* The second phase of the screening process, the comparative screening analysis, was conducted to help develop the recommendations for non-route based strategies and alternate routes. The comparative analysis used evaluation criteria developed in relation to the various issues in the study area as the basis for comparison. Detailed information was collected for each strategy and alternate route to use in the comparative analysis. The comparative screening analysis was quantitative in nature and evaluated the relative benefits and impacts of the non-route based strategies and alternatives based on the established evaluation criteria.

To meet the study objective of providing a fair and open process and to ensure that all issues were heard, an extensive public and agency involvement process was conducted. This process involved a variety of opportunities for the public and affected interests to get involved and stay informed including:

- One-on-one meetings and presentations for various community groups, local agencies, and special interest groups
- Public open houses
- Trucking industry workshops
- Media outreach
- Study website, [www.sh14truckingstudy.com](http://www.sh14truckingstudy.com)
- On-line Internet feedback comment forms
- Study committees (Project Management Team, Policy Advisory Committee, and Stakeholders Committee)

### **S.3 DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS**

To develop a clear understanding of the issues, some specific data collection efforts were conducted including an existing condition assessment, a thorough review of previous study efforts, and a truck origin and destination study.

The existing conditions assessment was completed that characterized the existing designated truck route through the City of Fort Collins that extends along SH 14 and US 287. The existing SH 14/US 287 route was separated into five different corridor segments and characterized based on traffic volumes, speed limits, access conditions, and adjacent land uses. In addition to the existing conditions assessment, a thorough review was conducted detailing information regarding the past 30 years of planning studies related to this issue. The information was chronicled in a support document titled the *History of Fort Collins Truck Route and Bypass Planning Efforts, 1966 to Present* and was used to help develop the lists of possible non-route based strategies and alternate routes.

One of the most important issues of this study was to clearly establish the number of through trucks using the existing SH 14/US 287 route. To address this issue, a truck origin and destination study was conducted. The intent of the study was to determine the proportion and number of through truck trips that could be accommodated by either a non-route based strategy

or an alternate route. Through trucks are classified as trucks that use the SH 14/US 287 route to access I-80 in Laramie or I-25 east of the City of Fort Collins with no business stops in the City of Fort Collins or northern Larimer County. In general, the origin and destination study estimates that approximately 600 existing truck trips per day are through trips and could be diverted from the existing route.

#### **S.4 ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION – NON-ROUTE BASED STRATEGIES**

Non-route based strategies are seen as the least objectionable method of getting through trucks off the existing SH 14/US 287 route. These strategies are used to encourage through truck traffic to use the Interstate system (I-25 and I-80) without constructing a new roadway.

Based on input from the various committees, trucking industry representatives, and previous studies, an initial list of strategies was developed. This list was refined through workshops with the trucking industry and meetings with the various study committees. These strategies include options that have been evaluated in previous studies, tried in other jurisdictions, and new strategies that have not been previously considered. The initial non-route based strategies list was grouped into four categories including: financial strategies, marketing/informational strategies, regulatory enforcement strategies, and physical strategies as seen in Figure S.2.

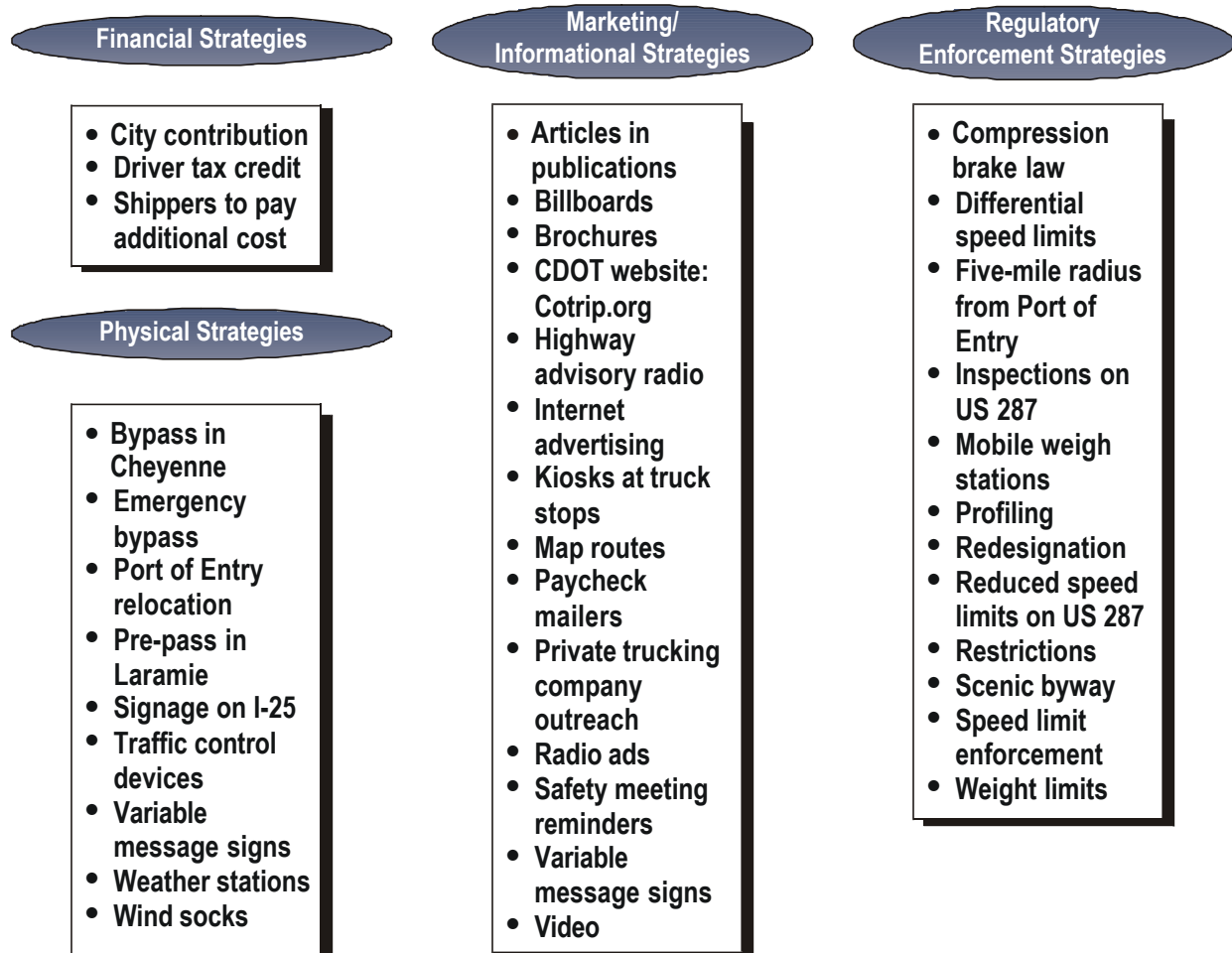
**Financial Strategies.** Financial strategies were evaluated because many truck drivers are paid based on the number of miles they travel and the fact that they have predetermined routes as defined by the shipping companies. The cost associated with any additional mileage is the responsibility of the driver. Financial strategies included incentive based measures to encourage trucks to use the Interstate by subsidizing the additional expense to the truck drivers or shipping companies.

**Marketing and Informational Strategies.** The second category of non-route based strategies includes marketing and informational strategies that would be used as a means to affect a change in the decision making process of truck drivers as they approach I-80/US 287 from the north and I-25/SH 14 from the south. These strategies include different media to relay messages encouraging Interstate use.

**Regulatory Enforcement Strategies.** The third category of non-route based strategies focused on regulatory strategies and was examined to assess any laws, ordinances, or other mechanisms that could be used as restrictive means to move trucks to the Interstate.

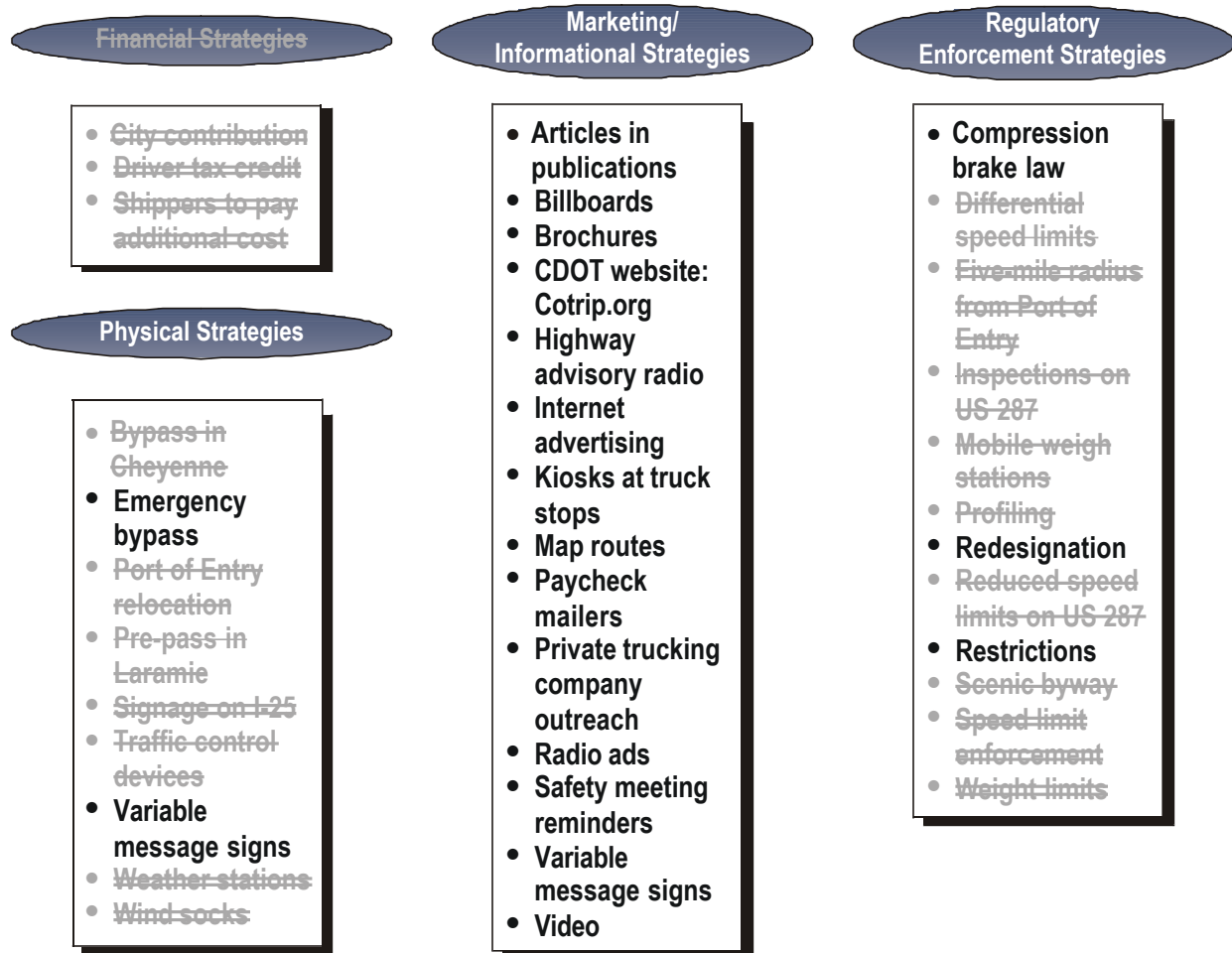
**Physical Strategies.** The final category is physical non-route based strategies and includes options that would move truck traffic from the existing route with the use of newly constructed features.

**Figure S.2**  
**Initial Non-Route Based Strategy List**



A two-phase screening process was used to develop the overall study recommendations for the non-route based strategies. Figure S.3 shows the results of the screening process. The strategies shown in gray with lines through them were eliminated from further consideration while the remaining strategies were used to develop the final study recommendations. In some cases, the strategies could be implemented immediately. In other cases, the strategies are dependant on the construction of an alternate route. Also, certain regulatory strategies are recommended as a continuation of existing enforcement, not an increased use of the strategy.

**Figure S.3  
Non-Route Based Strategy Screening Results**



Note: Non-route based strategies eliminated from further consideration in the unrealistic screening analysis are shown in gray with a single line through them and strategies eliminated in the comparative strategy screening analysis are shown in gray with a double line through them.

## S.5 ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION – ALTERNATE ROUTES

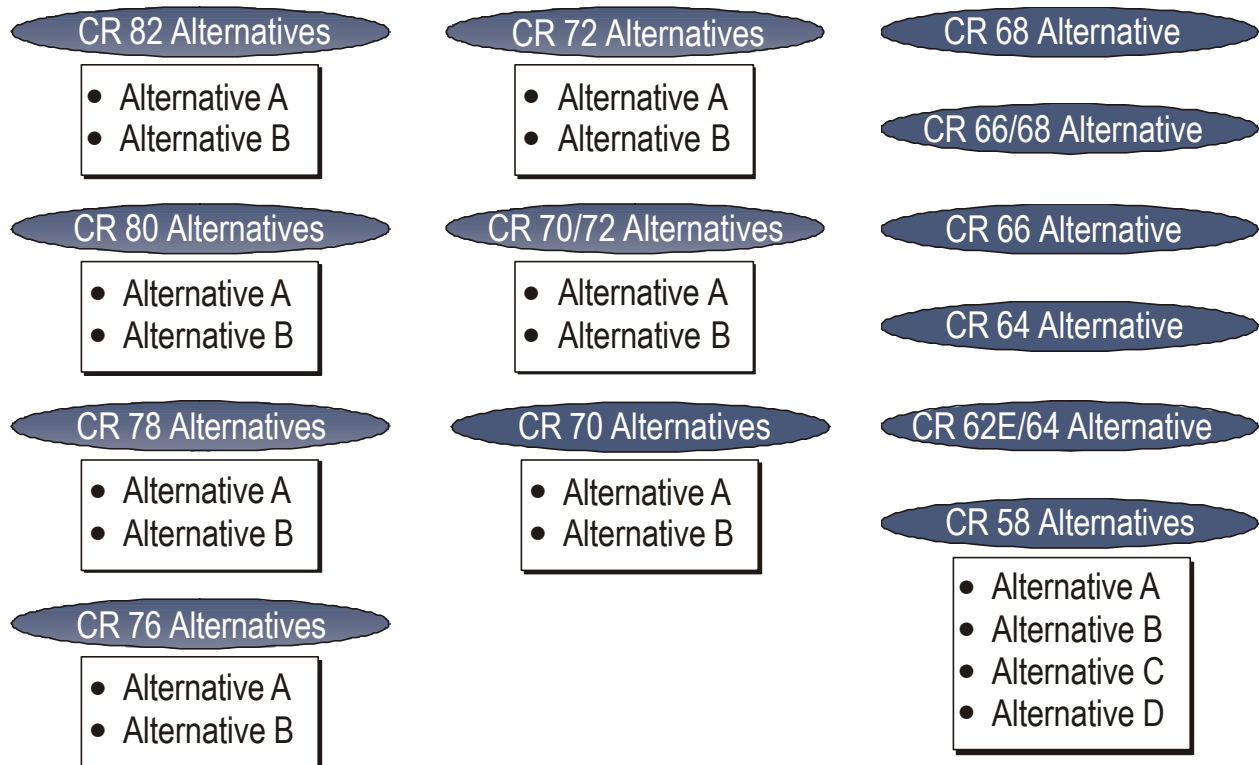
In addition to non-route based strategies, the study developed and analyzed alternate truck routes. As stated in Ballot Initiative 200, the alternate truck routes evaluated in this study must be located at least 2 miles north of the City of Fort Collins GMA. This requirement means that the southernmost alternate route that was evaluated in this study was CR 58. The alternate truck routes developed through the alternative evaluation process were refined by working closely with various stakeholders and affected agencies.

The development of the initial list of alternate routes included routes analyzed in previous studies in addition to new alignments in the study area. Major constraints in the study area include: the hogback (mountains) on the west side of the study area, interchange connections to I-25 on the east side of the study area, and bodies of water and development in the center of the study area. Schematic alternate route alignments were developed based on the various study area constraints.

SH 14 Relocation Study

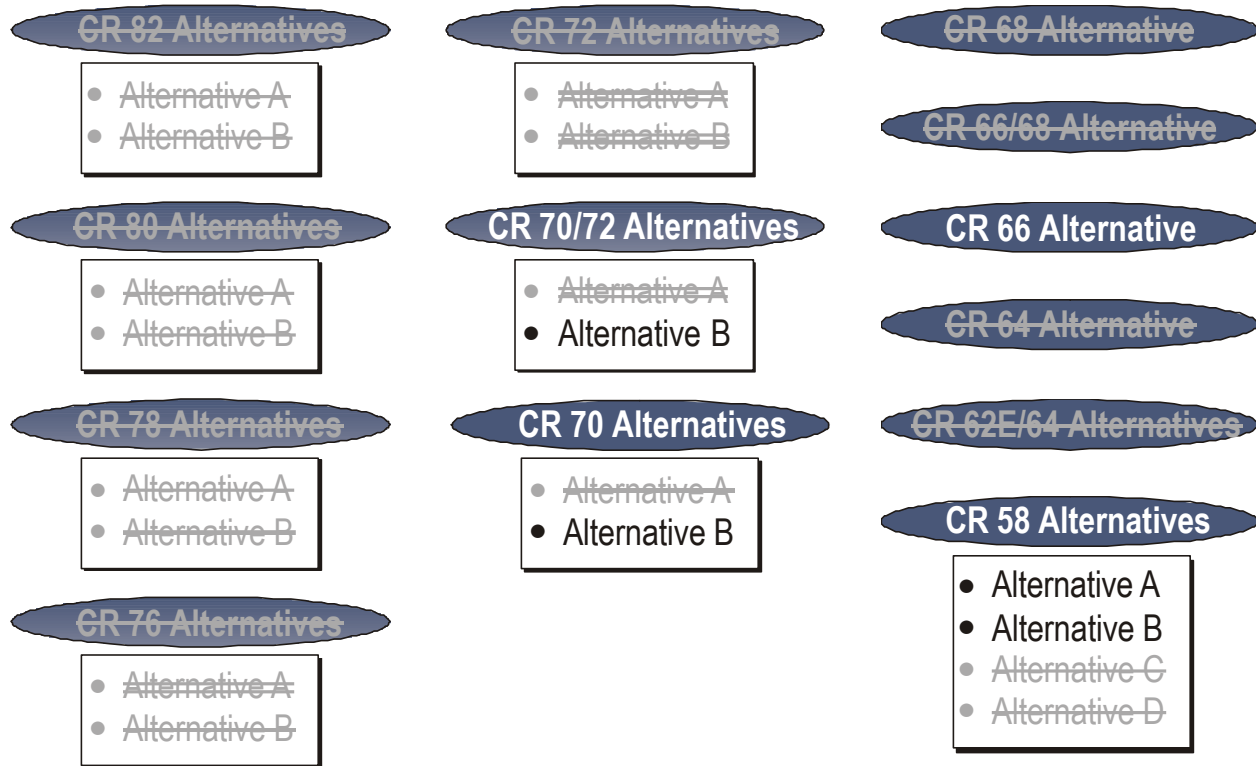
Route designations are grouped by corridors and include: CR 80/82, CR 76/78, CR 70/72, CR 66/68, CR 62/64, and CR 58. Each corridor has a number of different route options designated by the point where it connects to US 287. These options are designated by a letter (A thru D). Figure S.4 shows the initial list of alternate routes.

**Figure S.4  
Initial List of Alternate Routes**



A two-phase screening process was used to develop the overall study recommendations for the alternate routes. Figure S.5 shows the results of the screening process. The alternate routes shown in gray with lines through them were eliminated from further consideration while the remaining used to develop the final study recommendations.

**Figure S.5  
Alternate Route Screening Results**



Note: Alternate routes eliminated from further consideration in the unrealistic screening analysis are shown in gray with a single line through them and routes eliminated in the comparative screening analysis are shown in gray with a double line through them.

## S.6 FUNDING

A third element addressed in this study was to research and identify funding mechanisms for the study recommendations. A variety of funding sources including Federal, state, county, local and private exist that could be used to implement the study recommendations. A combination of existing and new sources may need to be pursued to establish project funding.

Federal funding sources range from a variety of Federal Highway Formula Funds to specific earmarks and discretionary sources. Federal funding is allocated to the states and is distributed through local agencies. Significant portions of Federal funding sources are already committed to projects in regional and statewide plans. Attaining Federal funding would require a reprioritization of projects and/or significantly coordinated Federal lobbying efforts with Colorado Congressional members. Also, any Federal funds for transportation projects would require the completion of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study.

State funding sources come from a variety of mechanisms and are generally prioritized by CDOT and the local transportation planning regions. The prioritization includes specific criteria to evaluate regional needs and available funding. A significant portion of State funding sources are already committed to projects in regional and statewide plans. Attaining State funding would

*SH 14 Relocation Study*

require a reprioritization of projects. Due to the uncertainty of State funding for transportation, competition with already programmed projects would be extremely difficult.

Local and county funding sources typically come from the general fund based on taxes that are collected. Partnering with other agencies has been used in the past to fund regional projects. There are also rural transportation authorities that have been formed in certain areas to fund regional transportation projects. Funding availability at the local and county level is limited given already established priorities and because the majority of the funds are dedicated to maintenance and system preservation. A new source of funding (tax) would most likely be required for any significant capital investment. Local and/or County funds would be a potential source for upfront planning and environmental studies to initiate the study, but would not likely be enough to fund the construction of an alternate route.

Partnership opportunities between the public and private sector called a Public/Private Partnership Initiative (PPI) for the funding and construction of projects is an innovative financing technique that is being utilized more frequently across the country. PPIs provide opportunities to utilize private funding to advance a project with a public revenue source repaying the initial investment. Private partners are most interested in projects that can apply some type of user pay system (tolls) to recover the initial capital investment. This is a difficult issue with the alternate routes that have been considered. Typical toll facilities have restricted access and do not allow any direct driveway access. The alternate routes that have been developed all consider controlled access, but not to the level of a toll facility. Another issue relates to the usage and whether the tolls would provide a return to the investors while still being inexpensive enough to attract users.

The research that was conducted and issues related to the various funding sources was used to develop the overall study recommendations.

## **S.7 STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS/NEXT STEPS**

Per the mandates of Ballot Initiative 200, the Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study has examined three key issues germane to through truck travel in the City of Fort Collins and northern Larimer County:

- Assessment of non-route based strategies intended to encourage through truck traffic to use the Interstate system (I-25 and I-80) as opposed to the existing SH 14/US 287 route currently favored by the trucking industry
- A comprehensive evaluation of alternate routes for SH 14, located a minimum of 2 miles north of the City of Fort Collins GMA
- Research of funding mechanisms that could be pursued to fund the study recommendations and the issues related to them

The recommendations are separated by non-route based strategies, alternate routes, and funding. Other issues related to moving forward with the recommendations are also discussed.

**Non-Route Based Strategy Recommendations.** The range of recommendations include communicating the benefits of using the Interstate over the existing route, additional studies to reduce congestion in the downtown area, a workshop with local law enforcement, continuation of regulatory enforcement procedures, and future considerations. The non-route based strategy recommendations include:

1. **Marketing committee.** Developing a marketing committee to create messages highlighting the benefits of using the Interstate
2. **Downtown truck operation study.** Conducting a study to address local and regional truck traffic to reduce congestion in the downtown area
3. **Incident management study.** Conducting an incident management study to address how traffic is handled when US 287, I-25, and/or I-80 are closed during adverse weather conditions or other incidents
4. **Compression brake workshop.** Conducting a workshop with local law enforcement regarding the existing compression brake law
5. **Potential future redesignation.** Assessing the potential for future redesignation of SH 14 if a reasonable new alternate route is constructed
6. **Continued regulatory enforcement.** Continuing enforcement of speed limits, random mobile weigh station inspections, and enforcement of the five-mile radius requirement for trucks to clear the Port of Entry (POE)
7. **Measure of effectiveness.** Establishing a mechanism to measure the effects that the non-route based strategies have on moving truck traffic to the Interstate

**Alternate Route Recommendations.** Based on the results of the screening process and funding investigation, there are some specific considerations that are included with the alternate route recommendations. When the study began, the intent was to identify a single alternate route within the study area. To achieve that goal, an extensive evaluation of potential alternate routes was conducted to a greater level of detail than a typical feasibility study. Following the comparative screening analysis, five alternate routes remain with various pros and cons associated with them. A more detailed level of analysis is required to assess the significance of the various pros and cons. Given the likely need for funding with a Federal source and the issues with relocating a state highway, an environmental analysis based on NEPA is required.

Under the NEPA analysis, all reasonable alternatives, in addition to the five alternatives identified in this study, must be considered. These alternatives include a no-action alternative, improvements to the existing route, and potential routes south of the CR 58 boundary requirements of this study. There is also an existing conflict between the language of Ballot Initiative 200 and the requirements of NEPA that would need to be addressed by the City of Fort Collins. The NEPA requirements state that all reasonable alternatives be considered and Ballot Initiative 200 precludes the City of Fort Collins from looking at alternatives south of CR 58. There have been past cases where the conflict with local and Federal laws have not excluded certain alternatives, those south of CR 58, from evaluation under NEPA. Given these issues, either the ballot initiative would need to be amended or another agency would have to fund the study. NEPA studies for highway improvements are typically managed by CDOT.

*SH 14 Relocation Study*

As discussed, numerous issues need to be addressed to pursue an alternate route. The results from the screening process for the alternate routes identify five alternatives in the study area. These five alternatives include two options along CR 70 and 72, one option along CR 66, and two options along CR 58. These various options actually represent three separate corridors, CR 70/72, CR66, and CR 58. Based on the variety of issues and requirements, if a NEPA study is initiated, it is recommended that the three remaining corridors; CR 70/72, CR 66, and CR 58, be included in the full range of reasonable alternatives that would be considered as potential alternate routes evaluated further in a NEPA study.

**Funding Recommendations.** A variety of issues exist with any of the funding mechanisms that have been researched as part of this study. In general, the largest issue is the lack of readily available funds that have not been committed to other regional priorities or local needs. Given the recent downturn in the economy and various international issues, the competition for funding dollars is extremely competitive.

**Non-Route Based Strategies.** Funding options for the non-route based strategies require a local source based on the nature of the issue that is being addressed. Based on Ballot Initiative 200, the remaining resources in the Building Community Choices (BCC) program are available to use for the implementation of non-route based strategies. The decision on whether to use these funds for that purpose will be made by the Fort Collins City Council. Also, some of the recommended strategies are outside the scope of Ballot Initiative 200 and are therefore not eligible for BCC funds.

**Alternate Routes.** Funding options for the alternate routes are much more complicated. Public/private partnership mechanisms are not likely due to the need for a user pay system, or a tollway. Larimer County and City of Fort Collins funds are already committed to existing priorities, so a new source of funding, most likely new taxes, would be required. One potential option would be for the City of Fort Collins or Larimer County to contribute to funding the NEPA study or preliminary design efforts. To date, neither agency has expressed and interest and the City of Fort Collins has issues of whether they can contribute to a NEPA study and its requirements based on the limitations of Ballot Initiative 200.

State and Federal funding sources for the alternate route have similar issues associated with them. First, significant portions of the funding sources at both levels are committed to other regional priority projects. To realistically move an alternate route forward for formula funding, a reprioritization of projects is required and an alternate route needs to become a strong regional priority in the region. To pursue the idea of Federal earmarks, closely coordinated Federal lobbying efforts would be required with strong support from Colorado Congressional members. To garner the support from Colorado Congressional members, unified regional backing would be required from all of the jurisdictions in the region and the Colorado Transportation Commission as well.

**Next Steps.** There are numerous issues involved with the construction of an alternate route that need to be addressed by the City of Fort Collins and agencies in the region. There are remaining funds in the Building Community Choices program that are available to use to move forward with the implementation of non-route based strategies or a NEPA study for alternate routes. Both of these issues require a decision from the Fort Collins City Council to move ahead. The decisions include authorization of funding and the involvement that the City of Fort Collins is able to have in a NEPA study.

On December 18, 2001, the Fort Collins City Council approved a resolution to accept the findings of the Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study and also instructed City staff to pursue implementation of the non-route based strategies. The resolution also directs the City Manager to meet no less than yearly with County officials to try to identify the most feasible route of the remaining alternatives that could then be recommended to CDOT.