Executive Summary

I-25 in northern Colorado is the focus of substantial growth to the new energy economy activities in Colorado and Wyoming. The existing SH 392/I-25 Interchange is an inhibitor to sustainable economic activity and economic growth. One of the fundamental aims of this project is to make improvements that will increase opportunity for economic growth. This project will create jobs immediately and will allow many long-term jobs to be realized for the northern and eastern Colorado region.

This project is ready for implementation and has not only local, but regional and state support. The support for the project across government agencies and by many community leaders is a testament to the priority of this project. This executive summary serves to provide highlights from each of our submittal sections.

Summary of Long-Term Benefits

Investment of $27 million in the reconstruction of the interchange will generate long-term benefits that are in direct alignment with the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The long-term benefits are measurable and significant, with a return on initial investment of 106 to 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Measured Benefit</th>
<th>Present value dollars (in millions)</th>
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<tr>
<td>State of Good Repair</td>
<td>Life Cycle Cost Reductions</td>
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<td>Economic Competitiveness</td>
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<td>Benefit/Cost Ratio</td>
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* Short-term benefits discussed in section 1b

Highlights Part 1a

State of Good Repair

The interchange is a high priority for the state, region and local communities. The project is designed to be sustainable and reduces life-cycle costs.

Economic Competitiveness

Combined total long-term economic impacts related to expansion, hiring or other growth of private sector production is estimated to be $2.6 billion through year 2035.

Livability

Congestion reduction results in 15 million fewer vehicle hours of travel and $168 million in savings through year 2035.

Sustainability

14.23 million gallons of fuel saved resulting in a savings of $36.7 million. $4.18 million in carbon emissions saved. Construction that reduces energy and improves water quality.

Safety

30% reduction in crashes per year or $18.1 million savings through year 2035.
Highlights Part 1b
Job Creation

The project is ready for implementation and will create 195 jobs within 4 months with an immediate economic benefit of $40.4 million. Long-term benefits include 7,050 new jobs with an economic benefit of $2.6 billion.

Project Schedule

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</table>

195 jobs created within 4 months

Highlights Part 2a
Innovation

The project has been innovative from the beginning, including a highly collaborative and accelerated project delivery. The project will include features that reduce capital and long-term costs, protect the environment, improve mode choice and safety, and preserve long-term multi-modal benefits.

- Accelerated design and construction phasing.
- Use of value engineering to increase value.
- Sustainability by reducing single occupancy trips and energy consumption, and protection of the environment.
- Improved mobility, safety and multi-modal accessibility.

Highlights Part 2b
Partnership

The interchange project has provided a model of collaboration that helps lead through example how to create and sustain benefits to a region rather than individual communities. This includes not only studying traditional transportation issues, but also an integration and involvement of natural resources within the context of project planning.

An impressive investment of over $2.25 million in funds from CDOT, Fort Collins, Windsor, and the North Front Range MPO have already been applied to prepare this project for implementation. However, it is clear that the project cannot be built without Federal funds. Local and State resources are willing to contribute available dollars over a period of time, but it is unrealistic to believe this pool of funds would reach the required $27 million dollars.

Our partnership is justifiably proud of a ground-breaking demonstration of regional cooperation reflected in this project, and we recognize the many public agencies contributing to this success. This includes FHWA, CDOT and the North Front Range MPO, but also includes private industry and employers, regional emergency services, hospitals and regional facilities. We respectfully request financial infusion to convert this ground-breaking effort into a true groundbreaking.
Introduction

WHO:

The SH392/I-25 interchange reconstruction project is the end product of a partnership between the Colorado Department of Transportation, the City of Fort Collins and the Town of Windsor. Located in northern Colorado, this interchange project lies in the heart of a growing northern Colorado region. The Colorado State Demographer’s 2000 population estimate for this region was 436,000 residents. With a 3% annual growth rate, 2010 estimates are reaching 575,000 people.

What:

Northern Colorado is a vibrant region nestled in the Rocky Mountain foothills that cherishes the unique natural and cultural resources within reach. The communities celebrate the rich heritage and bright future that awaits residents and visitors alike. Northern Colorado’s distinctive environment makes it ideal for supporting agri-business, new energy ventures, higher education institutions, high tech enterprises and artisan manufacturing.

Where:

The northern Colorado region is located 50 miles north of Denver and 50 miles south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, via I-25. I-70 in Colorado and I-80 in Wyoming rely on north I-25 to connect the two heavy shipping routes. I-15 in Utah and I-29 in South Dakota / Iowa, 350 and 550 miles away respectively, are the closest other interstate connections between I-70 & I-80.

With plentiful housing, good schools and 300 days of sunshine each year, Northern Colorado provides endless opportunities for new businesses, residents and visitors.
Importance to the Region

The Colorado State Highway 392 (SH392) / Interstate 25 (I-25) interchange is a vital link in the Colorado transportation system. As part of the nationwide interstate system, I-25 in northern Colorado is the focus of substantial growth to the new energy economy activities in Colorado and Wyoming. According to the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), projections in the North I-25 corridor show an increase of 84 percent in households, while projections for employment show an increase of more than 56 percent by the year 2030. The SH 392/I-25 Interchange is squarely located in the heart of this growing metropolitan area.

SH 392 is a priority corridor from a regional context because it serves an area that has dramatically changed over the last 20 years. Today, the SH 392 corridor requires significant increase in mobility improvements to meet its role as a regional facility that provides commuter access, and makes east-west connections within south Fort Collins and Windsor. The communities along the corridor value high levels of mobility, transportation choices, safety, and transportation system preservation. Users of this corridor want to support the movement of commuters, freight, and farm-to-market products in and through the corridor while recognizing the environmental (including preservation and minimization/mitigation of impacts to protected public open lands/natural areas), economic and social needs of the surrounding area.

SH392 is the main street through the Town of Windsor. In the last decade, Windsor has transformed from a stand-alone, rural town, to a community fully entrenched in the northern Colorado suburban landscape. The Town’s urbanization ushered in more diversified economic opportunities. This point is clearly demonstrated when comparing traffic forecasts for SH 392 that have evolved in the last 20 years within Regional Transportation Plans (RTP). For example, in the 2020 RTP that had a base year of 1995, it was expected that traffic would grow at an annual rate of 1.8%. However, in the most recent 2035 RTP that had a base year of 2008, SH 392 traffic is expected to grow at over 3.2%. This clearly demonstrates the significant and rapid change that has occurred and further underpins the severe inadequacy of the existing 1960’s interchange in serving the transportation needs of this economic center in northern Colorado.

The expected growth in population and employment will place travel demand pressure on the regional transportation system. SH 392 is a Colorado State Highway with regional significance. I-25 is a major link in the nationwide interstate highway system serving long distance travel as a critical element of the Western Transportation Trade Network (WTTN). The WTTN is a system of highway and rail routes through 14 states; it carries the majority of freight through the western United States. By year 2030, 75 percent of North I-25 is projected to be congested and to operate over capacity during peak periods of travel. Regarding freight movement, commodity flow projections made in the Eastern Colorado Mobility Study (CDOT, 2002) indicate that freight tonnage in and out of Adams, Denver, Larimer, and Weld counties is expected to increase from 96.2 million tons in 1998 to 192.3 million tons in 2025. This reflects more than a doubling of commodity movement to/from these four counties alone. Truck volume projections indicate that volumes could increase from approximately 8,000 trucks daily in 2004 to 17,000 trucks daily in year 2030.

Importance to Communities

The existing interchange is an inhibitor to sustainable economic activity and economic growth. SH392 is the main access into the Town of Windsor and is the southern gateway to the City of Fort Collins. Private investment and keeping or creating jobs are inhibited by the capacity and safety restrictions that the existing interchange presents. Future transit mode options are also inhibited by the spatial constraints of the interchange, limiting mobility for future economic activity.

This interchange is not only a gateway to the Town of Windsor and City of Fort Collins, it is also provides access to many other northern Colorado communities including Greeley and Loveland. It provides access to the regional Fort Collins/Loveland Municipal Airport as well as new businesses leading the way in wind turbine blade fabrication and clean coal technology, and additional access to technology-leading and national research on renewable energy being conducted in Fort Collins by the Colorado State University.
Long-Term Outcomes

Investment of $27 million for reconstruction of the SH 392/I-25 interchange, hereafter referred to as “the interchange”, will generate long-term outcomes that are in direct alignment with the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The long-term outcomes, or benefits, are measurable and significant, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 106 to 1. The following discussions go into further detail to describe and quantify long-term benefits of this project.

a.i. State of Good Repair

The interchange is a high priority for the state, region and local communities. The project is designed to be sustainable and reduces life-cycle costs.

i. The project is part of and consistent with relevant state, local or regional efforts to maintain transportation facilities in a state of good repair.

The interchange is a high priority for all transportation planning agencies in northern Colorado. It is one of seven projects in Colorado specifically endorsed by the CDOT Transportation Commission for TIGER grant application. As a high priority, maintaining the interchange in a state of good repair is inherently necessary for the health and continued prosperity from the State, region and local community perspectives.

State

In 1996, the Colorado Transportation Commission approved a set of 28 projects constituting the Colorado Strategic Transportation Project Program to accelerate completion of statewide high priority corridor projects. These corridor projects are identified as having state-wide impacts to the transportation network. Many discrete portions of I-25 are part of the Strategic Transportation Project Program, including I-25 from Denver to Fort Collins due to heavy commuter, tourism and freight traffic. The Colorado Transportation Commission remains committed to the Strategic Transportation Project Program including I-25, recognizing the value of a world-class transportation network.

Region

The proposed project is included in the NFR MPO 2035 Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan. In light of the rapidly diminishing Federal, State and Local transportation resources, the NFR MPO underwent a process of identifying and ranking corridors that are most significant to the northern Colorado region in order to focus the limited transportation resources. Through this analysis, the NFR MPO assigned I-25 a Tier 1 ranking, the highest priority corridor ranking. The NFR MPO further reiterated I-25’s regional significance through their support of this application.

Local Communities

The interchange is an integral component and a priority of other local and regional plans such as:

- Fort Collins City Plan (1994) & Master Street Plan
- Larimer County Master Plan (1997)
- I-25 Corridor Plan (2001)
- I-25 Subarea Plan (2001)
- Loveland Comprehensive Master Plan (1994)
- SH 392 Environmental Overview Study (2006)
ii. The project will rehabilitate, reconstruct and upgrade a current surface transportation project that threatens future economic growth and stability due to its poor condition.

One of the fundamental aims of this project is to make improvements that will increase opportunity for economic growth. The pavement condition of both I-25 and SH 392 is conclusively characterized as poor. In addition, the existing bridge is functionally obsolete due to inadequate width. Most significant, the interchange is a chokepoint in the highway system and if not improved will continue to limit and threaten economic growth.

The communities of Fort Collins and Windsor have established strong economic footholds in the area of the interchange, and have adopted plans for future residential, commercial and industrial growth that would be served by the interchange. An adequately functioning interchange is essential in order to maintain the already established economic foothold, and is absolutely vital to the future plans for growth. If no improvements are made, the condition of the interchange will continue to deteriorate and the unmanageable congestion will increase. Ultimately, this will deter the expansion of existing economic enterprises, will make it difficult for the communities to attract new enterprises, and may cause some enterprises to relocate entirely, fueling a cycle of economic downturn.

One of the most significant recent economic successes in this region was the decision of Vestas Blades America, Inc. to build a new manufacturing facility in Windsor. This plant builds turbine blades for use in wind turbine locations throughout the United States. Vestas employs over 650 northern Colorado residents at this location. The comments of General Manager Hans Jespersen as reflected in his letter of support attached to this application, place in clear focus the importance of restoring this Interchange to a functional condition.

“ We need to improve this interchange as it affects our ability to transport blades in a timely manner to our customers, which then ultimately affects our bottom line”

“ ...improving this interchange would mean that our employees who drive through this interchange every day to come to work, would be insured a safer drive— and this is very important to us”

– Hans Jespersen, Vestas Blades America, Inc.

iii. The project is appropriately capitalized up front and uses asset management approaches that optimize long-term cost structure.

Pavement and bridge management systems are used by CDOT to determine the optimal time for surface treatment repairs and reconstruction based on minimizing life cycle costs. The proposed interchange would be managed using CDOT’s established system performance management tools.

The following infrastructure assessment demonstrates the specific approach of this project to make appropriate initial investments that will reduce life cycle costs.

**Pavement:** The existing pavement on both I-25 and SH 392 is in poor condition with zero remaining service life. The interchange reconstruction will replace existing pavements with 30-year design life concrete pavement. Concrete pavement in Colorado has historically been over 40% less expensive to maintain than asphalt pavement. This up-front capitalization will reduce life-cycle costs of the project at an estimated $1.3 million through year 2035.

**Bridge:** The existing structure C-17-ER, which carries SH 392 over I-25, is 45 years old and functionally obsolete. Replacing the bridge will reduce maintenance costs. The inadequate bridge will be replaced with a structure with design life of 75 years that will allow safe access for autos, commercial trucks, public transit, bicyclists and pedestrians while meeting estimated traffic demands through 2035.

**Roadside design:** The long-term roadside maintenance costs will be minimized because landscaping for the project has been designed to include low maintenance and naturally sustaining vegetative plantings that will not require watering through irrigation systems or extensive labor. This approach has been fully coordinated through the local agency process and reflects a context-sensitive design that is aligned with
the sustainability principles that were established early in the project by the local agency governing bodies. Refer to Appendix for local agency resolutions that demonstrate commitment to sustainability.

Traffic Signals: The new interchange will use Liquid Emitting Diode (LED) traffic signal indications. LED traffic signals are proven to require 80% less energy than incandescent indications. The energy cost for an intersection using incandescent bulbs averages $1,200 per year, as compared to $240 per year for LED. For the four intersections in this project, this equates to an estimated $100,000 reduction in energy costs through year 2035. LED traffic signals also have a longer life span which require fewer maintenance man hours and lower material costs.

iv. This project includes a sustainable source of revenue available for long-term operations and maintenance.

The requested TIGER funds will not be used for maintenance or operations of the project. When complete, the new structure and roadway will fall under CDOT’s jurisdiction. To allocate revenues to planned expenditures, CDOT utilizes a resource allocation system that is linked to four major investment categories, one of which is System Quality. The CDOT 2009-2010 budget allocates 24.9% of available funding to the System Quality category. As infrastructure continues to age, CDOT recognizes that a growing emphasis will be placed on system preservation. The CDOT 2035 Revenue Forecast and Resource Allocation allocates an increase in System Quality to 29.3% of the annual budget. For more information about these CDOT programs please refer to the following links.

http://www.dot.state.co.us/Budget/FY10%20CDOT%20Budget%20Narr%20TC%20Signed%206-12-09.pdf


Throughout the project development and final design, the participating local agencies have closely coordinated with CDOT to establish understanding of long-term maintenance responsibilities. Some features of the project do not fall within CDOT specifications and will be maintained by the local agencies. This project therefore provides an approach of shared responsibility between the surrounding local agencies and CDOT. This shared responsibility provides further certainty that multiple sources of revenue will be available for the long-term operations and maintenance of the project.

a.ii. Economic Competitiveness

The combined total long-term economic impact related to expansion, hiring or other growth of private sector production is estimated to be $2.6 billion through year 2035.

i. The project will improve long-term efficiency, reliability and cost-competitiveness in the movement of workers and goods.

The interchange is failing to meet existing travel demands and congestion is expected to grow and will dramatically affect the ability of the region to remain economically competitive. Engineering studies demonstrate that traffic demand will double by 2035. Thirty-three percent of the future traffic will be Fort Collins-based while 21 percent will be drawn from Windsor. The remaining traffic will be trips originating in the other surrounding communities, including 11 percent from Loveland, and 4 percent from Greeley along with unincorporated Weld County and Larimer County. These percentages plainly show the increasing regional importance of the interchange, and correspondingly the economic importance of the interchange to northern Colorado.

A failed regional interchange negatively impacts every aspect of the health of the region from schools to emergency services and from recreation to environmental sustainability. None of these negative impacts are more severely felt than the retardation of economic growth and development. Positioned on the I-25 north-south corridor, the interchange is located near the geographic and economic center of the City of Fort Collins and the Town of Windsor, as well as the Town of Loveland and Greeley. The Fort Collins-Loveland Regional Airport is two miles away to the south and west, and The Ranch, which houses the Budweiser Events Center and the Larimer County Fairgrounds, is equidistant to the south and east. Both of these busy facilities and the businesses that they have spawned are served, or more accurately disserved, by this interchange.

“This failed interchange is choking an emerging industrial/employment center of the region. Free flowing access to I-25 is important for development of this area...”

– Cliff Davidson, NFR MPO Executive Director
**Economic Competitiveness: Long-term benefits**

To quantify the long-term economic benefits of the project, Economic Research Associates (ERA|AECOM) was engaged to prepare an analysis of the expected economic impact of the proposed improvements at the interchange. Please refer to the appendix for a full technical summary of the analysis. It is important to note that the analysis conducted was limited in that it could only address the economic impacts associated with nearby vacant land. For this reason, the economic benefits summarized do not quantify or fully recognize the benefits to existing businesses or economic expansion outside the immediate area of the interchange. The following are estimated long-term economic impacts of the project related to the opportunities for economic expansion in the immediate area of the interchange:

- **In order for the 508 acres of vacant developable land directly surrounding the interchange to develop, adequate public infrastructure must be built. This infrastructure includes the SH 392/I-25 Interchange.**
- **The creation of 7,850 jobs related to construction could be realized during the 20 year build-out of vacant developable land.**
- **Build-out of adjacent developable land could support over 7,050 jobs on an annual basis. This represents approximately 3.3% of the existing total jobs in the study area.**
- **Through year 2035, total construction-related economic output from the development of adjacent land is estimated to be $750 million.**
- **The productivity of businesses created through development of adjacent land is expected to stimulate an estimated $274.5 million in economic output on an annual basis. This recurring annual benefit will accumulate to more than $1.85 billion in present day dollars through the forecast year of 2035.**
- **The combined total long-term economic impact related to expansion, hiring or other growth of private sector production is estimated to be $2.6 billion through year 2035.**

Perhaps the most significant economic fact of life of this failing interchange is its role as the southern gateway to the City of Fort Collins and the Town of Windsor’s sole access to I-25. A case in point is Windsor’s recent initiative to create jobs by promoting an industrial park near Windsor’s downtown as an incubator for new energy businesses and jobs. This initiative was embraced by the Colorado Division of Local Affairs and the Governor’s Office. Governor Bill Ritter Jr. has personally praised and endorsed the initiative on a number of occasions. Every industry that looked to this area as a possible site for location or re-location has focused first on transportation access. While Windsor is blessed with good rail access, companies often rely on interstate highways to transport products. These companies require a pool of skilled workers that are drawn from the northern Colorado region. Therefore, the ability to move products and attract skilled workers has been stifled by the interchange and its legendary delays. By improving the interchange, existing companies and potential businesses will have a reliable and efficient connection to I-25.

**ii. The project will make improvements that allow for new investments in expansion, hiring, or other growth of private sector production in economically distressed areas.**

Despite the condition of the interchange, the story of the region’s ability to attract new businesses and jobs has been positive. For example, by joining with Weld County, Windsor has been able to provide sufficient economic incentives to attract dynamic businesses and a number of stable, good-paying jobs. As is elsewhere documented in this application, Windsor is principally located in Weld County, which has been designated as an economically distressed county, and the creation of new jobs for the Weld County economy is crucial. Refer to Figure 3.

Over the past several years, the Town of Windsor has promoted the development of the Great Western Industrial Park as the center of its industrial and new energy initiative. A new industry to locate in this area was Owens-Illinois, a bottle manufacturer and principal supplier to the Budweiser brewing facility in northeast Fort Collins. Today, Owens-Illinois employs 230 workers. The bottles manufactured at this facility are all moved by truck, and that movement is restricted by the interchange. Front Range Energy, an ethanol plant, created another 35 jobs. In 2007, Vestas Blades of America, Inc., a worldwide wind energy company, announced plans...
to build a large facility in Windsor to manufacturer blades for wind turbines. This facility was fast tracked, and is now fully operational. It employs 700 workers. Finished blades manufactured by Vestas are moved by rail or by truck. Vestas specifically avoids the interchange because it is unreliable.

The direct economic benefits to the region from the arrival of these businesses represent only a fraction of the overall economic impact. The indirect and induced economic effects of new job creation multiply the direct benefit many times. The improvement of the interchange is essential to keep these new businesses productive, to encourage their expansion, and to attract new businesses to the region.

The employment growth, economic benefits, hiring, job creation and improvements to the movement of workers and goods described in the previous discussion would directly benefit an economically distressed area. Colorado’s Enterprise Zone program provides tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand in designated economically distressed areas of the state. The interchange is a route for traffic to and from the Greeley/Weld County Enterprise Zone.

For further information about this Enterprise Zone, go to http://www.upstatecolorado.org/ or use the following contact information: Cathy Schulte, Upstate Colorado Economic Development, 822 7th Street, #550, Greeley, CO 80631, p: 970.356.4565 f: 970.352.2436, cschulte@upstatecolorado.org. Upstate Colorado Economic Development is a public/private non-profit economic development corporation that provides services to all of Weld County.
a.iii. Livability

The project provides more convenient, healthy and sustainable transportation options. Congestion reduction results in 15 million fewer vehicle hours of travel and $168 million in savings through year 2035.

1) The project will enhance user mobility through creation of more convenient transportation options.

Regional efforts to expand transit accessibility will benefit from the improved interchange due to reliable traffic patterns and new facilities at the interchange. Public transit users will benefit from the enhanced carpool/vanpool facilities included within the project scope. The carpool/vanpool lot will accommodate 90 parking spaces and provides quick access to I-25. The facility provides the capacity to reduce single occupancy trips, provides opportunity for travelers to reduce out-of-pocket travel expenses, and is a public asset that encourages change in travel behavior that benefits the transportation system.

The existing interchange limits mode choices. The current bridge is just 28 feet wide, with 24 feet of travel lanes, which is not conducive for safe use by bicycles or pedestrians traversing across I-25. By providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of this project, the livability of the area is improved directly by providing a more convenient, healthy and sustainable means of access to this and many other community assets. Refer to Figure 4.

2) The project will enhance modal connectivity and reduces congestion on existing modal assets.

The existing interchange is failing to meet current travel demands. The interchange failure is causing changes to travel behavior that are affecting the system of transportation in northern Colorado. Through stakeholder involvement feedback, users of this interchange have commented that they avoid this interchange in their travel behavior, thereby placing a burden on other transportation infrastructure in the area and reducing travel efficiency. By improving the interchange, not only will congestion be reduced at the immediate interchange but there will also be benefits related to changes in travel pattern that will result in higher efficiency and reduced congestion throughout the transportation system. This project therefore includes a compounding affect that provides a myriad of travel benefits that propagate throughout the regional transportation system.

The interchange is currently operating at a failing level-of-service (LOS) “F”, indicating a traffic flow break down with excessive congestion and delay. This operational deficiency...
is further compounded by design deficiencies that impact current traffic movement and safety. The following are items that define the project purpose and need.

- Technical analysis indicates existing LOS “F” during peak hours. Spill back from the interchange causes systemic operational issues with the surrounding local roads and I-25. The existing failing infrastructure is causing systemic operational and safety issues.

- The close distance between the west frontage road intersection and the southbound ramp intersection causes confusion for drivers at the interchange. Driver confusion can occur both at low speeds during congested times of the day and perhaps more concern for safety at times of the day when congestion is not as bad but speeds are higher. The proposed interchange improvements will provide improved separation of the frontage road from the interchange.

- The existing SH 392 bridge is 45 years old and is functionally obsolete in terms of width and typical section. The current width of the bridge is 28 feet and does not include sidewalks, bicycle facilities, turning lanes, or adequate shoulders.

Refer to Figure 5 for demonstration of Level of Service of the project for the forecast year of 2035 under no-build and build scenarios.

Reduced congestion translates to long-term transportation benefits that are substantial and quantifiable. An estimated reduction of over 15 million vehicle hours of travel (VHT) will be realized from the project through the year 2035. Applying cost of time of $11.20/hour (per USDOT Revised Departmental Guidance: Valuation of Travel Time in Economic Analysis, 2003) the value of VHT savings is $168 million. Refer to the appendix for traffic analysis and calculation of VHT reduction.

Reduced congestion translates to long-term transportation benefits that are substantial and quantifiable. An estimated reduction of over 15 million vehicle hours of travel (VHT) will be realized from the project through the year 2035. Applying cost of time of $11.20/hour (per USDOT Revised Departmental Guidance: Valuation of Travel Time in Economic Analysis, 2003) the value of VHT savings is $168 million. Refer to the appendix for traffic analysis and calculation of VHT reduction.

Congestion reduction results in 15 million fewer vehicle hours of travel and $168 million in savings through year 2035.

3 The project will improve accessibility and transport for economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens and persons with disabilities and will make goods, commodities, and services more readily available to these groups.

The Colorado State Demographer classified 65,000 residents as seniors age 60 years or older in Larimer or Weld County in 2005. For 2010, that number rose to 84,000. The 2035 projection jumps to a staggering 215,000 residents. These
figures amplify a growing need to provide services tailored to active seniors and the transit dependent. The needs of these vulnerable populations are of concern as communities wrestle with addressing the transportation network.

The improved interchange opens opportunities for additional transit services by reducing congestion and improving transit access points, thus positively impacting transit operations. Providing safe multi-modal travel options enables bicyclists and pedestrians a means of crossing over I-25 to access park-and-ride facilities.

Transit service in the Windsor area is currently provided by Weld County as a means of transporting seniors to congregate at meals sites or for medical appointments. Transit service frequency is measured in days of the week, instead of operational hours of the day. Today, there is no public transit that connects Windsor to Fort Collins, eliminating many quality of life activities for the transit dependent.

In 2006, the Town of Windsor, along with nearby Johnstown and Milliken, came together to develop a Short-Range Transit Plan. The plan includes a recommendation for implementation of fixed-route transit service connecting Johnstown / Milliken / Windsor to Greeley, Loveland, and Fort Collins. These three communities are working with Weld County and have agreed to share the local grant match for acquisition of vehicles to initiate the proposed service in 2009 or 2010. The three communities will be seeking a grant for funding the operations and maintenance of the service in 2010, and will be providing the local match.

One potential bi-directional stop is the expanded park-and-ride adjacent to the interchange. Without the interchange reconstruction, unpredictable traffic flows would negatively impact transit service by reducing the service reliability and thus making it an unattractive transportation option.

4) The project results from a planning process which coordinated transportation land use planning decisions and encouraged community participation in the process.

Many contributing agencies have provided a high level of participation and guidance during studies involving the interchange including the City of Fort Collins, Town of Windsor, North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFR MPO), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and CDOT. In 2007, the City of Fort Collins and Town of Windsor completed a comprehensive Interchange Improvement Plan that included review of land use and natural resources within the context of transportation infrastructure planning. Refer to Figure 6 for the framework plan that resulted from this transportation and land use planning effort. During this process, a Technical Advisory
Committee including the NFR MPO, City of Fort Collins, Town of Windsor, and CDOT was formulated to coordinate regional agency collaboration. Seven Stakeholder meetings involving immediate property owners and established businesses as well as potential developers were conducted between October 2006 and June 2009. Three Public Open House meetings were conducted in January 2007, March 2007, and November 2008 to include project scoping and input from the general public. Direct mailings, individual meetings, a project website, and a series of bulletins were used to encourage community participation.

(iv) Sustainability

1. The project will improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed interchange improvement is projected to change the intersection LOS during peak hours from “F” in 2009 to “C” in 2035, resulting in a reduction of 15.1 million vehicle hours of travel through 2035. The reduction in congestion will result in the following long-term savings through year 2035;

- Reduce fuel consumption, saving 14.23M gallons of fuel or $36.7 million. (at $2.57/gallon based on 5-year Colorado average fuel cost of regular grade gasoline)
- Carbon emissions reduced by 139,600 tons (126,643 metric tons) (at 19.4 lbs/gal)
- Benefit of $4.18 million in carbon emissions reduction (at $33 per metric ton)

2. The interconnected traffic signal system will work together with the infrastructure to further reduce stop-and-go traffic conditions. LED traffic signals will also reduce energy consumption 80% as compared with incandescent lamps.

The 90-space carpool/vanpool parking lot will reduce the number of single occupancy trips within the transportation system. The trip types that are likely to be reduced by this project feature are long-distance trips with high potential for fuel and carbon emissions reduction. The pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are included with the project will also provide opportunity to reduce the number of auto trips in the transportation system. Shorter trips that are converted to pedestrian and bicycle modes not only reduce but eliminate associated fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

The project includes use of materials that reduce the embodied energy of new construction and disposal demands on local landfills. These materials include:

- High fly ash content in concrete allows the use of a post industrial byproduct of coal-fired power plants and reduces the amount of cement required in concrete mixtures, thus reducing the embodied energy of the concrete used in this project.
- The allowed reuse of recycled content steel reduces the environmental impacts from mining and smelting operations associated with the production of new steel.
- The allowed re-use of rubbelized concrete in new construction as aggregate reduces gravel mining volumes and associated energy use as well as degradation of air quality.

1a 1b 2a 2b
The project has specified materials that can be found within northern Colorado region. These local harvested, mined or manufactured materials reduce energy use associated with transporting the materials while keeping the economic benefits of construction within the local community. These materials include:

- Stone veneer for retaining walls that are locally quarried (within a 120 mile radius) reduce the associated energy used to transport materials.
- Fly ash from the nearby Rawhide coal-fired power plant reduces transport and manufacturing energy required for cement in concrete.

2) The project will maintain, protect and enhance the environment, as evidenced by its avoidance of adverse environmental impacts.

The project is consistent with the recommendations from the North I-25 EIS and includes a footprint that avoids to the greatest extent practical, impacts to the environment. Retaining walls that are designed adjacent to wetlands reduce the impacts to wetlands from over 1 acre to 0.17 acre. The 0.17 acres of impact will be mitigated at a minimum of 1 for 1 as part of the Army Corps of Engineers requirements. In addition to these project requirements, the local agencies of Fort Collins and Windsor have agreed to further mitigate the wetland impacts by creating additional wetlands that will result in a 3 for 1 ratio of mitigation. The net result will be an additional 0.34 acres of wetlands that will be created as a separate locally funded project. This is a positive enhancement of natural habitat and water quality and demonstrates the unique dedication of the partnering local agencies to protect and enhance the environment.

Water is a precious resource in Colorado. Although the project is not within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS-4) permit area, the project is designed to properly treat water runoff and will result in water quality improvement that is compliant with MS-4 requirements. The water quality features include use of bio-filtration that provide 50% additional bioswale area providing improved water quality run-off and slower release of stormwater to downstream waters.

The project has also reduced the energy investment in the production and conveyance of municipal potable water. The following strategies have been applied to reduce water use.

- Native plant materials, enhances wildlife value, eliminates water use for irrigation and minimizes long term maintenance requirements.
- No irrigation system – plants sustained by natural rainfall that is naturally conveyed to specific areas though special and precise roadside grading that will increase the opportunity for landscaping plant materials to establish and thrive.

(v) Safety

Completion of the improvements would result in a 30% expected reduction in crashes per year or $18.1 million savings through year 2035.

It is expected that the safety improvements from the interchange project, quantified based on National Safety Council values, can result in savings to society estimated at $18.1 million. This savings is a result of several key features that are part of the project including:

- Improved separation of the frontage road from the I-25 ramps
- Improved sight distances related to improved horizontal geometry
- Improved stopping/starting conditions, especially during inclement weather, due to improved vertical geometry from 7% to 4% grades
- Improved capacity of turn lanes.

The safety of the existing interchange has been evaluated based on methods used by the FHWA Hazard Elimination Program Application process. This method assumes that crash history at this location will remain constant and improvements can be evaluated into the future by projecting the same crash rates. By this method, the improvements to the frontage roads and ramp reconfigurations are estimated to reduce crashes by 30% based on CDOT’s experience with this type of improvement.

The National Safety Council has established the following values used to determine the safety benefit of improvements:

Death = $1,130,000
Injury = $61,600
Property Damage Only (PDO) = $7,500
During a timeframe from 2002 through 2006, there was an average of 50 crashes annually at the interchange. With the improvements it is estimated that this number of crashes will be reduced by 30% on an annual basis. This would result in an overall safety savings of $225k per year or $5.63 million present value dollars.

From recent data available, there was one fatal crash recorded at the interchange in 2001. It is important to note that fatalities at the interchange are likely statistically underestimated because significant congestion that lowers speeds and severity of accidents. Given this statistical anomaly, it is reasonable to assume that the aforementioned safety benefits could be much higher. To account for congestion that has likely affected crash statistics, CDOT has prepared an estimation of the value of crash reduction based on historical average rates on all Colorado Interstate interchanges. These historical crash rates at interchanges show that 64.11% are PDO crashes, 34.34% are injury crashes, and 1.55% are fatal crashes. Using these rates, the 30% expected reduction in crashes at the interchange results in $722k per year or $18.1 million through year 2035.

Summary of Long-Term Benefits
Investment of $27 million in the reconstruction of the interchange will generate long-term benefits that are in direct alignment with the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The long-term benefits are measurable and significant, with a return on initial investment of 106 to 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Measured Benefit</th>
<th>Present value dollars (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Good Repair</td>
<td>Life Cycle Cost Reductions</td>
<td>$1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Competitiveness</td>
<td>Development Construction Spending</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development Operations Spending</td>
<td>$1,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livability</td>
<td>Congestion Reduction</td>
<td>$168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Carbon Emission Reduction</td>
<td>$4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fuel Savings</td>
<td>$36.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Crash Reduction</td>
<td>$18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Construction*</td>
<td>Interchange Construction Spending</td>
<td>$40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Benefits</td>
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<td>$2,868.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Cost</td>
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<td>$27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit/Cost Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Short-term benefits discussed in section 1b

“The proposed project will allow for more types of transportation - vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian and transit, relieve a critical bottleneck, and provide a substantial economic benefit to northern Colorado.”

– Mark Udall, United States Senator
Job Creation

The project is ready for implementation and will create 195 jobs within 4-months with an immediate economic benefit of $40.4 million.

Long-term benefits include 7,050 new jobs with an economic benefit of $2.6 billion.

The interchange is a primary gateway to the Town of Windsor and Weld County. It is also an important emerging gateway to the City of Fort Collins and Larimer County. Weld County is an economically distressed area, and by improving the interchange, long term economic growth will be generated through land development and business expansion. The proximity of the interchange to Weld County and the limited access to the interstate highway system within this proximity makes timely transportation investments vital to regional economic stability. The long-term benefits include 7,050 new jobs that have an economic impact of $2.6 billion. (Please refer to Section 1a for long-term job creation and economic benefits and the appendix for the complete economic benefits analysis)

The City of Fort Collins, Town of Windsor and CDOT recognize the value of this interchange and have worked relentlessly to keep this project at the forefront for their communities and for northern Colorado. The local agencies’ and CDOT investment of time, resources, and collaboration has provided a project that is “shovel ready”, backed by resounding local, regional and statewide support. Over $2.25 million has already been invested to prepare this project for rapid implementation. Investment in this

Figure 8: Immediate economic benefits of $40.4 million

It is important to note that construction, manufacturing and transportation jobs will comprise 61% of the immediate jobs that are created within 4-months. This provides a rapid influx of opportunity for those who desperately need a job in economically distressed areas of northern and eastern Colorado.
project will demonstrate an immediate benefit by creating an estimated 195 jobs within 4-months, and will result in over $40 million in direct and indirect benefits during the construction of the interchange. The jobs created as part of the interchange reconstruction will be maintained over the 15-18 month construction schedule.

The project will meet Federal laws guaranteeing equal opportunity by following defined CDOT programs that have a sound track record on labor practices and compliance with Federal laws. These programs are more clearly described below.

1) Job Creation for Low Income Workers (through best practice hiring programs and utilization of apprenticeship programs)

CDOT’s On-the-Job Training (OJT) program is a component of every Federally funded project overseen by CDOT. Due to project’s proximity to an Economically Distressed Area, greater emphasis will be placed on achieving OJT outcomes. This opportunity for OJT participation provides meaningful jobs for low income workers. Based on an 15-18 month project, the 392 project will provide a projected 3,840 hours of OJT labor to meet applicable Federal OJT criteria, see appendix.

2) Maximum Practicable Opportunities for SBE, DBE, Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Service-Disabled Veteran Small Businesses

CDOT assists businesses that meet criteria established in 49 CFR Part 26 by streamlining the DBE certification process and by setting fair DBE project goals. Prime contractors must achieve established DBE goals or demonstrate adequate attempts to comply. CDOT believes that by supporting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certified and eligible businesses, the State as a whole benefits. During a recent CDOT bidding process, the lowest bidder was rejected for not achieving the project’s DBE goal. The interchange project will meet or exceed CDOT’s standard DBE goals.

3) Use of Community Based Organizations in Connecting Disadvantaged Business Workers with Economic Opportunities

CDOT will work with Cathy Schulte from the Upstate Colorado Economic Development organization to use the project as an economic investment incentive and with various public and private employment organizations to maximize outreach to disadvantaged business workers. CDOT will coordinate directly with Weld County Human Service’s “Employment Services of Weld County,” a comprehensive workforce center which connects resources for employment, education, and training services at the local, state and national level. Self-service resources promote personal and career development, furnish access to Internet tools for employment and training opportunities, and provide information about local and regional employers and labor markets. Staff services include labor exchange and job referral, skills assessment, eligibility screening for career counseling and training programs, and individualized employer services. See http://agency.gov/jobs.com/weld/default.cfm and http://www.eswc.org/

Note: Based on the U.S. Census in 2000, there were 180,936 people in Weld County. The racial makeup of the county was 82 percent White and 27 percent Hispanic/Latino. About 8 percent of families and 12.5 percent of the population were below the poverty line.

4) Support for Entities that have a Sound Track Record on Labor Practices and Compliance with Federal Laws Ensuring Safety and Equity

CDOT contracting requirements mandate that construction contractors and their subcontractors comply with all federal and state labor laws.
5) Best Practices in Compliance with National Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Laws

CDOT contracting requirements mandate that construction contractors and their subcontractors comply with all federal and state civil rights and equal opportunity laws.

CDOT also certifies that it will comply with the Federal Wage Rate Certification requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40 of the United States Code, as required by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. This certification also encompasses all requirements under 29 CFR Subtitle A.

b.i. Project Schedule

The final plans and specifications for the project are complete and are ready to be packaged for construction advertisement. Project construction is anticipated to occur over a 15-18 month timeframe. This construction schedule reflects an accelerated construction phasing concept that allows the project to begin construction rapidly, with an immediate creation of jobs.

b.ii. Environmental Approval

The NEPA process is complete and the project is ready for construction upon receipt of formal funding. The NEPA documentation required for the interchange project was determined to be a Categorical Exclusion with the requirement that the environmental results be supported by the North I-25 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The supporting environmental data was packaged and the Categorical Exclusion was approved by CDOT and FHWA in December 2008. The Categorical Exclusion documentation can be found in the appendix.

b.iii. Legislative/Agency Approvals

Numerous agencies from the local, regional, and statewide level are in support of this project and have taken appropriate actions to make this project a priority. The local agencies have passed resolutions that reaffirm the commitment of the City of Fort Collins and Town of Windsor towards the project. CDOT has also passed a resolution through its Transportation Commission as commitment towards the project. Please refer to appendix for these resolutions.

The participating governing bodies have worked relentlessly to keep the project at the forefront for their communities and for all of northern Colorado. Please reference part 2b and the appendix for documented support of the project. Intergovernmental agreements are in place between the local agencies and CDOT that have clearly defined the cooperative responsibilities during the project development and design stages. The construction and maintenance intergovernmental agreement has been coordinated and will be executed when funding is in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 9: Project Schedule Highlights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Design and Environmental Clearance Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of Grant Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Right-of-Way Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 Construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

195 Jobs Created Within 4-months
### b.i.v. Financial Feasibility

With final design complete, the partnership is confident in this project’s financial feasibility. The technical details have been fully identified and addressed through the design coordination process. The interchange project cost is estimated at $27 million based on the final PS&E plan package. The engineer’s estimate is based on the current CDOT cost data available as of September 2009. The following is a summary of the estimated project costs. Refer to the appendix for the Engineer’s estimate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Component</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Cost</td>
<td>$21.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Management/Oversight</td>
<td>$2.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way and Easements</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### b.v. Technical Feasibility

The project has been designed in accordance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and CDOT design criteria and is technically feasible as designed. The final plans, specifications, and estimate (PS&E plan package) are complete. The plans have been thoroughly reviewed by professionals in each discipline including additional review for constructability to ensure construction efficiency. In addition, the plans have been reviewed by each partnering agency.

The project was designed and made ‘ready to build’ in record time. The level of effort and cooperation between communities and CDOT has been extraordinary.”

— John Frey  
Town of Windsor  
Attorney

### b.iv. State and Local Planning

The City of Fort Collins and Town of Windsor have partnered since 2005 in preparation of various interchange planning activities. The project is consistent with a locally initiated Interchange Improvement Plan that was completed in 2008. The proposed project is included in the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization 2035 Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan. The project has also been closely coordinated with the ongoing North I-25 EIS and the design has been prepared to include a longer bridge that will allow for future modal opportunities in the North I-25 corridor.

The interchange is an integral component of other local and regional plans such as:

- Fort Collins City Plan (1994) & Master Street Plan
- Larimer County Master Plan (1997)
- I-25 Corridor Plan (2001)
- I-25 Subarea Plan (2001)
- Loveland Comprehensive Master Plan (1994)
- SH 392 Environmental Overview Study (2006)
Part 2a

Innovation

The project has been innovative from the beginning, including a highly collaborative and accelerated project delivery. The project will include features that reduce capital and long-term costs, protect the environment, improve mode choice and safety, and preserve long-term multi-modal benefits.

i. The project is a model of innovative project delivery.

The collaboration of the local agencies with CDOT and FHWA has demonstrated a model of successful cooperation and project delivery. CDOT and FHWA have provided continual support of the project with effective and efficient decision making that allows the project to stand ready for implementation. The most innovative component of the project is therefore exemplified by this collective work to rapidly deliver a project that will improve transportation efficiency, create long-term economic impact, and positively impact the quality of life in northern Colorado for many years to come. The innovative project delivery features of the project include:

- Justification for Separate action allowed this priority project to be accelerated through the environmental clearance and final design process.
- NEPA documented categorical exclusion approved in December 2008 utilized North I-25 EIS technical studies.
- 6-month fast-track preliminary and final design completed in August 2009.
- Project phasing for rapid implementation, with the first phase of construction beginning within 4-months of grant approval.

“Such cooperation between our towns has been a source of pride for me, and I hope that their joint efforts can be rewarded through this grant.”

– Betsy Markey – United States Representative, Colorado 4th District

ii. The project uses innovative approaches that meet long-term objectives.

The project is innovative in achieving long-term objectives by including features that collectively provide: 1) capital cost and life-cycle cost reduction 2) sustainability of the environment 3) improved mode choice and safety benefits and 4) long term multi-modal benefits.

1) Capital cost and life-cycle cost reduction

Early in the project design and development process, the participating agencies gathered to conduct a value engineering study. Please refer to the appendix for the complete value engineering report. The objective of the value engineering study was to increase the overall value of the project by satisfying the required functions of the project at the lowest initial total cost and cost over the life of the project. The approach to value engineering for this project was innovative because it focused on overall value including:

- Lower capital and maintenance cost
- Lower life-cycle costs including user costs
- Improved mobility (for all travel modes) and improving safety
- Enhanced environmental or other benefits

For this value engineering study, some recommendations reduced cost while other recommendations improved project performance. Performance issues (such as fewer winter weather problems due to improved 4 percent grade on SH 392 west of the interchange) cannot easily be translated into dollars for financial comparison. For those items that were quantified, the following summarizes the cost changes and the benefit-cost ratio of conducting the value engineering study.

- Approximate Cost of VE Study: $35,000
- Number of Approved Recommendations: 10
- Value of Approved Recommendations: $960,000
- Benefit-cost ratio achieved through value engineering: 27:1
2) Sustainability of the environment

The participating agencies worked to put action to the objectives of sustainability. Both the City of Fort Collins and Town of Windsor agreed early in the process to maintain a focus on reducing impacts to the environment. Refer to the appendix for resolutions approved by both the City and Town that outline these guiding project principles. This attention to sustainability resulted in the following long-term outcomes:

- Reduced single occupancy trips by implementing a 90-space carpool/vanpool parking lot and inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Combined with congestion reduction realized by the project, carbon emissions are estimated to be reduced by 139,600 tons with a savings of $4.18 million through the year 2035.
- Interconnected traffic signals that reduce delay and stop-and-go traffic conditions. LED traffic signals will also reduce energy consumption by 80%.
- Use of local materials that reduce the embodied energy of construction.
- Avoidance and reduction of wetland impacts by installing retaining walls that will reduce wetland impacts from over 1 acres to 0.17 acres. The local agencies have also agreed to further mitigate wetland impacts by creating an additional 0.34 acres of wetlands through a separate local agency project. This will achieve a net mitigation of 3 to 1 for the project.
- The design includes native landscape strategies and water quality features that eliminate the need for irrigation and provide bio-filtration of storm water run-off by use of bioswales.

3) Improved mode choice and safety benefits

The project is innovative because it will include a 90 space carpool/vanpool parking facility and will provide safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The parking facility provides the capacity for greater carpool, vanpool and public transit opportunities that reduce single occupant vehicle trips. The additional mode choices in turn reduce user and systematic transportation costs.

The existing bridge is only 28 feet wide and this compressed travel space discourages bicycle and pedestrian traffic traveling across I-25. The proposed design includes ample sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes on both sides of the bridge that will allow bicyclists and pedestrians safe travel space through the interchange. Including design of these modes in the project reduces the number of auto trips, while encouraging adjacent development to provide similar facilities. The end result is a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation network that serves all users.

The project will improve safety and mobility.

It is estimated that accidents will be reduced by 30 percent and will result in over $18.1 million in safety benefits by year 2035. By providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the project, the qualitative safety of the interchange will dramatically increase by providing features that are specifically designed to allow all modes to interact and traverse through the interchange with reduced conflict. This results in community value in terms of sustainability and livability.
4) Long-term multi-modal benefits

The project is innovative because it makes investment now in infrastructure for future multi-modal expansion.

The most notable investment will be in a bridge with enough space for all alternative modes under consideration in the North I-25 DEIS. The proposed structure is 310 feet in length; 155 feet of this length will be used to accommodate existing I-25 and the remaining additional length will allow future multi-modal expansion. Bus Rapid Transit and High Occupancy Vehicle/Toll Lanes are being considered for multi-modal expansion as part of the North I-25 EIS. The proposed interchange will not only preserve these options, it makes investment now to achieve future multi-modal expansion. Refer to Figure 11 for an illustration of the potential future build-out of I-25, for demonstration of how the additional infrastructure constructed as part of this project that will accommodate future build-out of I-25. This thoughtful and innovative decision-making today applies investment toward the long-term multi-modal transportation vision for northern Colorado.
Part 2b

Partnership

b.i. Jurisdictional & Stakeholder Collaboration

The progress of this project demonstrates collaboration and a region-wide effort unique to northern Colorado and a model for future projects in Colorado and the nation. The northern Colorado area has sometimes struggled with blending individual community identity and the need for regional cooperation to solve the problems associated with accelerated growth.

The SH 392/I-25 Interchange project has provided a model of collaboration that helps lead through example how to create and sustain benefits to a region rather than individual communities. This includes not only studying traditional transportation issues, but also an integration and involvement of natural resources within the context of project planning. The support for the project across government agencies and by many community leaders is a testament to the priority of this project.

Ten years ago, the City of Fort Collins and the Town of Windsor recognized the interchange, along with the surrounding area, would become “ground zero” for regional transportation and land use challenges. At that time, the City Council and Town Board took the initial planning step of entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”) requiring joint consideration of annexation and land use proposals for the interchange area. This IGA was fully supported not only by the two community signatories, but also Larimer County and the City of Loveland. This original IGA led to more concrete steps in March, 2006 when the City and the Town authored a more comprehensive IGA focused on land use planning and the development of a strategy to improve the interchange itself. Pursuant to the new IGA, the communities funded the I-25/392 Interchange Improvement Plan (“the Plan”). The Plan’s key objectives included an agreement on a Community Activity Center (“CAC”) designating land uses and strategies to accelerate the design of the interchange. After garnering input from the property owners, regional citizens, and other stakeholders, the Plan was adopted unanimously by both the City Council and the Town Board. The Plan continues to be the framework from which all cooperative efforts since have been based. More information about this plan can be found at http://www.fcgov.com/advanceplanning/392interchange.php.

An important accomplishment of the I-25/392 Interchange Improvement Plan was coordination of not only land use and transportation planning, but also integration of the surrounding natural resources. Natural resources play a significant role in the character of the northern Colorado ecosystem health. Just west of the interchange lies Fossil Creek Reservoir and Open Space, home to bald eagles and other regionally significant species. A mixture of riparian areas, grasslands, and water resources here provide critical habitat for migratory waterfowl. The Plan provided a framework to maintain the integrity of the environment around Fossil Creek Reservoir through adherence to specific buffers that protect sensitive species and habitat. Refer to Figure 12. Wetland mitigation measures, both on site and off site, will take place to enhance key resources.
The improvement of the interchange has long been a high-priority project for CDOT Region 4. Like so many other public projects, high-priority needs exceed available revenues. Armed with this reality, Fort Collins and Windsor agreed to move forward with the Plan to advance design and construction of the interchange. This implementation initially included a public-private partnership with a potential development in the northeast corner of the CAC. With the precipitous decline of the national economy in 2008, the public-private partnership evaporated. The communities faced “shelving” the Plan or allocating additional local funding and going it alone. In cooperation with CDOT and the North Front Range MPO, the communities were able to fund and complete a Separate Action/1601 Interchange Approval Process in January 2009. At the same time, NEPA clearance for the interchange was granted. An IGA between CDOT, Fort Collins and Windsor allowed the communities to tap available monies for final interchange design. The final design was completed in August, 2009, making the project “shovel ready”.

An impressive investment of over $2.25 million in funds from CDOT, Fort Collins, Windsor, and the North Front Range MPO have already been applied to prepare this project for implementation. However, it is clear that the project cannot be built without Federal funds. Local and State resources are willing to contribute available dollars over a period of time, but it is unrealistic to believe this pool of funds would reach the required $27 million dollars.

b.ii Disciplinary Integration

As is evident from the multiple letters attached to this application, all of northern Colorado stands strongly together in support of this project. This unified support ranges from fire protection services, school districts, and emergency medical services to economic development corporations, local businesses, and chambers of commerce. Refer to Figure 13 for a list of support letters for the project.

This breadth of support from non-transportation public and private agencies is clear indication of the importance of this project in improving livability in northern Colorado. Not only will livability be impacted, as is reflected elsewhere in this application, the economic health of the region will be strengthened by the elimination of this transportation chokehold. The proposed interchange improvements will connect our communities in an efficient, environmentally sustainable manner that will benefit the citizens of northern Colorado for years to come.

Our partnership is justifiably proud of a ground-breaking demonstration of regional cooperation reflected in this project, and we recognize the many public agencies contributing to this success. This includes FHWA, CDOT and the North Front Range MPO, but also includes private industry and employers, regional emergency services, hospitals, regional facilities such as the Fort Collins-Loveland Airport and the Events Center at the Larimer County Fairgrounds. In actuality, we have all joined together in this ground-breaking effort. We now respectfully request financial infusion to convert this ground-breaking effort into a true groundbreaking.

“This proposed project is before you for consideration as a result of a unique and innovative partnership between the City of Fort Collins, the Town of Windsor and CDOT. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for this important project.”

- United States Senator, Michael Bennet
United States Senator - Michael Bennet
United States Senator - Mark Udall
United States Member of Congress - Betsy Markey
Colorado Governor - Bill Ritter, Jr.
Colorado State Senator - Bob Bacon
Colorado State Representative - Randy Fischer
Colorado State Representative - John Kefalas
Larimer County Manager - Frank Lancaster
Weld County Commissioners Chair - William F. Garcia
Mayor Pro Tem of City of Loveland - David J. Clark
City of Greeley Councilmember - Don Feldhaus
Town of Severance Administrator - John C. Holdren
North Front Range MPO Executive Director - Cliff Davidson
Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce CEO - David L. May
Windsor Chamber of Commerce President - Erich Ehrlich
Fort Collins-Loveland Airport Manager - David C. Gordon
Thompson Valley Emergency Medical Services Chief - Randy Lesher
Weld RE-4 School District Superintendent - Karen Trusler
Windsor-Severance Fire Protection District Chief - Brian Martens
Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Center Director - Bob Herrfeldt
Upstate Colorado Economic Development CEO - Larry Burkhardt
Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp. COO - Michael Masciola
Vestas Blades of America Inc. Manager - Hans Jespersen