

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

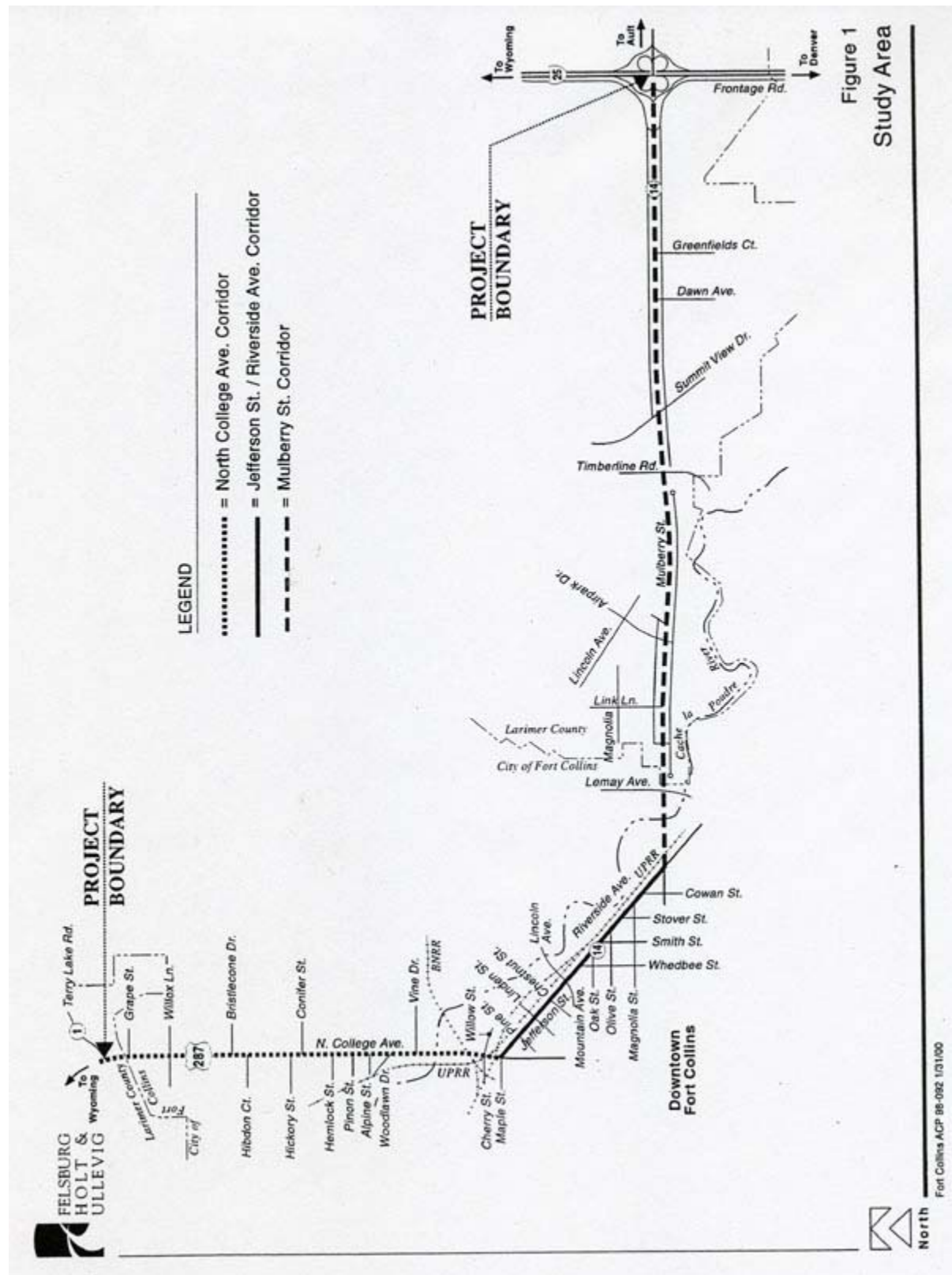
### 1.1 Project Background

The City of Fort Collins (City), in concert with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Larimer County (County), is promoting the development of three Access Control Plans along two regional highways that are also major arteries of the City and County street system. The establishment of Access Control Plans is authorized by the State Highway Access Code (Code), Section 2.12. These two highways, United States Highway 287 (US 287) and State Highway 14 (SH 14) are two of the most important regional highways in northern Colorado, providing both north/south (US 287) and east/west (SH 14) access throughout the front range and eastern plains of Colorado. To the west of Interstate 25 (I-25), and northward from the City of Fort Collins, the combination of these two routes provide an alternative for interstate traffic to the north into Wyoming. As such, these routes carry a wide range of vehicle and travel types: long distance interstate traffic, semi-truck delivery vehicles within the Fort Collins city limits and Larimer County, tourist traffic between I-25 and Poudre Canyon, and commuter traffic to the employment bases in Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland and the Denver metropolitan area. Development pressures within the study corridor will continue to increase the travel demand along these routes. Therefore, providing good mobility and a safe operating environment for all modes of transportation is essential.

In 1995, the DRAFT Access Control Study of the US 287 and SH 14 Corridor study was pursued to develop an Access Control Plan along the same corridors. The study recommended access control measures that would also have met the objectives of this report; however, that report was not finalized and an Access Control Plan was not formally adopted.

The purpose of the current study effort was to work closely with residents, property and business owners, and highway users to develop detailed, long-range Access Control Plans for the US 287 and SH 14 corridors. The limits of the corridors extend from the juncture of US 287 with SH 1 at the northern Fort Collins city limit to the intersection of SH 14 with I-25 through Larimer County. Within these limits, each highway also has a local street designation, being North College Avenue, Jefferson Street, Riverside Avenue or Mulberry Street. The study limits are illustrated on Figure 1.

During the development of this project, the I-25/SH 14 Interchange Area Study was also being prepared. The interchange study evaluated several alternatives for the reconstruction of the existing I-25/SH 14 cloverleaf interchange while also focusing on access and pedestrian issues to the east and west of I-25. The study addressed changes in access to improve safety and operations on SH 14. The influence area of this study included as its western boundary the SH 14/Timberline Road intersection and, therefore, all decisions regarding access management as part of the interchange study process are reflected in this report.



This plan summarizes all of the collected data, analyses and access control recommendations for the three study corridors: North College Avenue, Jefferson Street/Riverside Avenue and Mulberry Street. The goal of the plan is to develop three separate Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's), one for each corridor. The IGA's provide the legal basis for the implementation of the Access Control Plans and furnishes direction to property owners and the governing agencies for the continued development of these areas.

## **1.2 Project Coordination**

The physical and operational characteristics of US 287 and SH 14 are managed by the CDOT; however, these roadways also traverse the boundaries of two governmental agencies within the study limits, the City of Fort Collins and Larimer County. The City of Fort Collins, through the office of Transportation Planning, was the primary force behind the development of this project with direct input and cooperation with the CDOT. Larimer County was also involved in the Access Control Plan preparation along Mulberry Street since approximately 85 percent of the SH 14 alignment in this area is within the County.

The primary project team for development of the Access Control Plan was comprised of City and County staff, the access manager for the CDOT, and representatives of three consultants. Plan progress was coordinated with other departments within City, County and CDOT organizations, while meetings with local business owners, property owners and residents were conducted.

## **1.3 Public Involvement**

One of the most critical elements of this project was involvement with the public at open houses that were held at key stages of the study. For each corridor, a series of four open houses were conducted. The first meeting included a formal presentation that addressed the objectives of the access management efforts and provided information as to the plan process, access management principles and techniques, and how the project may be implemented. The second open house provided exhibits on the conceptual plans to obtain public input, while the third presented the recommended plan. Comment sheets were used to record property and business owner concerns. Final plan revisions were presented at the last open house, organized for all of the corridors.

Visual aids were used that included a video on access management prepared by the Federal Highway Administration. Exhibits showing historic accident data, existing and proposed traffic volumes, and existing and proposed access locations were available, with City, County, CDOT, and consultant representatives in attendance to answer questions and to receive comments, concerns, and input. Mailing lists of adjacent property owners within 500 feet of each highway were maintained for the study, with each property owner and business being notified of each public meeting. Press releases were also used to inform the general public.

City, County and CDOT staff also visited numerous sites along each corridor to talk individually with property owners, business owners and residents that were not able to attend one of the public meetings. These meetings were very informative since issues related to a specific access or property owner need could be addressed on a one-to-one basis.

In addition to the public open houses and individual meetings, City and CDOT staff met with the North College Business Association, the Old Town (formerly East Side) Neighborhood Association and the Northeast Business Association. These meetings provided good feedback from organized groups within the study corridors. Larimer County staff attended meetings with the Northeast Business Association and Mulberry Street corridor business/property owners. A summary of the public outreach program in each corridor is provided in Appendix G.

Public involvement for this project resulted in business and property owners being actively involved in developing access solutions. This involvement represents a valuable piece of the project and has led to the development of Access Control Plans that are supported by the majority of business and property owners within each corridor with a high potential for success.

## 1.4 Report Format

The Access Management Report summarizes the efforts to complete three separate Access Control Plans, one for each of the three corridors. The remainder of the Access Management Report is divided into five sections. **Section 2.0** describes the objectives of the study, the access management principles that were applied to each corridor and the strategies for developing the plan. These goals define the guiding rationale for the development of the plan.

Since the Access Management Report is a summary of the planning efforts for three separate corridors, the data collection, analyses and recommendations for each corridor area were divided into three separate sections, being **Section 3.0** - North College Avenue (US 287), **Section 4.0** - Jefferson Street/Riverside Avenue (SH 14) and **Section 5.0** - Mulberry Street (SH 14). Each of these sections includes the following information:

- Existing Conditions
  - Roadway Physical Characteristics
  - Number of Accesses & Access Category Information
  - Traffic Volumes/Operation
  - Accident Data
- Projected Conditions
  - Year 2020 Traffic Projections
  - Traffic Signal Capacity/Progression Analyses
- State Highway Access Control Plan
  - Traffic Control
  - Roadway Improvements
  - Cost Estimates & Project Priority
- Illustrative Access Control Plan

**Section 6.0** documents implementation and funding strategies for the Access Control Plans.