

5.0 ACCESS CONTROL PLAN

This chapter presents the Access Control Plan which has been formulated through the considerable input of the Technical Advisory Committee, the Policy Committee, and the public. After considering both existing and future conditions in the corridor, the plan defines how each access should be treated, provides cost estimates for the recommended access improvements, and establishes the relative priority for each improvement. The narratives included in this chapter have been divided into fourteen segments of the corridor and are meant to serve as a summary of the key features of the plan, with particular emphasis on public road intersections in the corridor. A detailed explanation of every access in the corridor is presented in Exhibit A of the Intergovernmental Agreement (see Appendix B). The Access Control Plan is also illustrated on aerial photographs (Figures A-1 through A-24) in Appendix A.

Because implementation of the improvements identified in the Access Control Plan will take many years, and because funding for these improvements must come through the planning efforts of three different transportation planning regions (Denver Regional Council of Governments, North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Council, and Upper Front Range Regional Planning Commission), a priority was assigned to each improvement in the plan. As it is difficult to define funding levels within specific time frames, the priorities were established on the basis of the greatest need as opposed to a likely time frame for implementation. Improvements were therefore, separated into three categories: high priority, medium priority, and long-term priority.

When reviewing these narratives, it should be noted that auxiliary lane upgrades will be part of all improvements for at-grade intersections, whether they are signalized or not. Many of the existing intersections in the corridor currently have turn lanes with substandard lengths and widths. The Plan calls for the turn lanes at all public road intersections to be improved to the standards established in the 1998 State Highway Access Code. It should also be noted that improvements to US 85 must often be made in concert with off-system improvements to local streets. Examples include frontage road realignments and auxiliary lanes on parallel roads to improve truck turning capabilities.

5.1 Segment Descriptions

I-76 to E-470

This is the most southerly section of the corridor and is part of Adams County and DRCOG. It is primarily within Commerce City's growth area, although land north of 120th Avenue may be annexed into Brighton in the future. Existing development includes residences and businesses along 104th Avenue, gravel mining to the west on 112th Avenue and Nome Street, and residential/business development north of 120th Avenue (particularly along 124th Avenue in the area of Henderson). Undeveloped areas are fallow or used for agricultural purposes. Future planned development is primarily residential in nature.

104th Avenue - This is an existing signalized intersection (see Figure A-1 in Appendix A). 104th Avenue (SH 44) is currently a major access route to Denver International Airport (DIA) for residents of the north metropolitan area as well as residents along US 85. A new interchange is planned at this location for the future (**high priority**). The new construction will include a grade separation of the UPRR tracks. This overpass would eliminate all possibility of access to the businesses on both sides of 104th Avenue between US 85 and the railroad tracks. This property will need to be purchased, and as a result, US 85 could be relocated to the east. This will allow better separation of intersections along 104th Avenue to the west of US 85. A partial cloverleaf configuration is shown on Figure A-1, but a tight diamond or single-point urban interchange (SPUI) are also possibilities. This project is not included in DRCOG's 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the use of 104th Avenue could be greatly affected by improvements to 120th Avenue (see following).

New 3/4 Access - A number of coordination meetings were held with Commerce City, Adams County, Brighton, emergency service providers, property owners, and others to determine the best access plan for the area between 104th and 120th Avenues, which has a high potential for growth. The final plan, which was accepted by all agencies, included a new partial access (3/4) between 104th and 112th Avenues. The new 3/4 access would serve a large (400 unit) residential development which is planned on the west side of US 85 immediately to the north of 104th Avenue (see Figure A-1). US 85 and 104th Avenue are the eastern and southern boundaries of the property and currently the only way to provide access. A 3/4 access is designed to allow left turns from the major street (in this case US 85) while prohibiting through movements and left turns from the side street. The new access (**medium priority**) is necessary to minimize traffic disruptions on 104th Avenue at the US 85 intersection. This access will be removed in the future when the interchange at 104th Avenue is constructed or when a connection from the development to either Brighton Road or 112th Avenue is built.

112th Avenue - This four-legged intersection is unsignalized (see Figure A-2). It is currently used by a large number of gravel trucks; this activity is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. A large residential subdivision is also under construction on the east side. Improvements of the intersection to provide adequate auxiliary lanes are recommended, particularly a deceleration lane for northbound left turns and an acceleration lane for eastbound right turns. This intersection will be signalized when warranted for traffic or safety reasons (**medium priority**). The UPRR has considered submitting a request to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to close the grade crossing on the east leg, but a joint study with Commerce City is currently underway to determine the best way to improve railroad operations in this vicinity. Sufficient right-of-way should be reserved at this intersection so that an interchange can be built in the future (**long-term priority**). A diamond configuration has been illustrated (see Figure A-2).

120th Avenue - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized. It will be signalized when it is warranted for traffic or safety reasons (*high priority*). Adams County has been conducting studies (alignment, environmental, etc.) for a number of years to complete 120th Avenue across the South Platte River. The plan would include a diamond interchange at US 85 and a grade separation of the UPRR tracks to the east (*high priority*). This project has been included in DRCOG's 2020 Regional Transportation Plan. The interchange is included in the 1999-2004 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), but it is slated for discretionary funds. Preliminary geometry (alignments and grades) has been analyzed at US 85, and the interchange shown in Figure A-2 is based on these studies.

124th Avenue - This is an existing signalized intersection (see Figure A-2). There will be no major change at this intersection until interchanges have been built at both 120th Avenue and E-470. It would not be a safe situation to have a signal midway between two interchanges. When the signal is removed, the intersection will be converted to a right-in/right-out only (RIRO) in order to maintain reasonable access to the business(s) on the east side of US 85 (*medium priority*). If these businesses close another access can be provided, the intersection should be closed (*long-term priority*).

E-470 - A new interchange for E-470 is proposed near the current intersection at Nome Street (*high priority*). A conventional diamond interchange is proposed at US 85 (see Figure A-2). Loop ramps are proposed for the connection to the E-470 tollway which will cross US 85 just south of 132nd Avenue (see Figure A-3). Concern has been expressed by people living to the north on US 85 about the amount of out-of-direction travel that the basic interchange configuration will require, especially for people returning from DIA. A ramp which would directly connect westbound E-470 with northbound US 85 has been proposed to alleviate this situation. This ramp could potentially conflict with a potential interchange at 136th Avenue (weaving distances would be short). The final configuration of the interchange will be analyzed in detail in upcoming feasibility and environmental studies which E-470 is required to complete according to Federal and CDOT regulations.

Rural Accesses - In this section, there are a total of five minor access points which serve either fields or residences. They will be closed: one will be displaced by interchange construction (120th Avenue), one when 124th Avenue is modified, one when an interchange is constructed at 136th or 144th Avenues, and the two others will be replaced by the new 3/4 intersection north of 104th Avenue.

132nd Avenue to 144th Avenue

Most of this section is currently in unincorporated Adams County (and the DRCOG region), but it is included in the City of Brighton's future planning area. Currently, this section is primarily used for agriculture, although there are scattered businesses and farm residences in the area. Because of floodplain considerations, Brighton's draft Comprehensive Plan shows much of the area east of US 85 as remaining agricultural, with future business development shown west along 136th Avenue and north of 144th Avenue.

132nd Avenue - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized. The west leg will be closed when E-470 is constructed (see Figure A-3). The median will be closed to create a RIRO intersection when required to address safety or traffic volume problems. Ultimately, this intersection will be closed (*long-term priority*) when interchanges are built on both sides (E-470 to the south and either 136th or 144th Avenue to the north).

136th Avenue - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized. It will be signalized when it is warranted for traffic or safety reasons (*medium priority*). Sufficient right-of-way should be reserved on the west side of US 85 so that an interchange can be built in the future (*long-term priority*). A diamond configuration has been illustrated (see Figure A-3). This project is not included in DRCOG's 2020 RTP.

144th Avenue - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized. The intersection will be converted to a 3/4 configuration (*medium priority*) in the future to address safety or traffic volume problems. Sufficient right-of-way should be reserved on the west side of US 85 so that an interchange can be built in the future (*long-term priority*). A diamond configuration has been illustrated (see Figure A-3). This project is not included in DRCOG's 2020 RTP.

Rural Accesses - In this section, there are three minor access points which serve fields. Their medians will be closed when adequate turn lanes have been provided to the north and south. The access points will be closed when there are interchanges on each side, and this segment of US 85 can be considered a freeway.

Bromley Lane to CR 2

This section of US 85 serves the developed portions of the City of Brighton (and is included in the DRCOG Planning Region). No changes in land use are specifically planned, but traffic volumes will continue to increase on all intersecting roadways because of continued growth in the community and redevelopment of existing land uses.

Bromley Lane - This is an existing signalized intersection (see Figure A-4). Because of operational problems (traffic congestion and safety), the City of Brighton has long planned for an interchange at this location (*high priority*). This project has been included in DRCOG's 2020 RTP, but no date for implementation has been definitely set since it is not included in the 1999-2004 TIP. A single-point urban interchange (SPUI) configuration is shown in Figure A-4 to minimize the taking of business property in the vicinity. As shown, it would be beneficial to relocate several city streets. Unfortunately, a grade-separation of the UPRR tracks can only be achieved if the businesses between US 85 and the tracks on both sides of Bromley Lane are displaced.

SH 7 - This is an existing diamond interchange (see Figure A-4). There are currently operational problems because the ramp intersections and frontage road intersections are too closely spaced. The ramp intersections need to be signalized, but this cannot be accomplished until the existing frontage roads are closed and alternative connections made farther away from the interchange (**medium priority**). The plan illustrates using Miller Avenue (via Egbert Circle and Walnut Street) for the west frontage road and Strong Street and First Avenue for access to the east frontage road.

Denver Street - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized. The median will be closed to create a RIRO intersection (**high priority**). When this modification is made, adequate turning radii for large trucks should be included at the intersection of Denver Street and the east frontage road. There are several businesses on the east side that rely heavily on large trucks for their operations. Other improvements at local intersections may be necessary to accommodate these trucks. Ultimately, this intersection will be closed after the frontage road improvements have been made at the SH 7 interchange and implementation of the interchange at CR 2 is imminent (**long-term priority**).

CR 2 - This is an existing signalized intersection (see Figure A-5). A new interchange is planned at this location for the future (**medium priority**). A single-point urban interchange (SPUI) configuration is shown in Figure A-5 which would minimize the taking of residences and business property in the vicinity. This project has not been included in DRCOG's 2020 RTP. When an interchange is built at either CR 6 or CR 8, a frontage road system should be implemented to serve properties on the west side of US 85 so that US 85 can function as a freeway. The southern terminus of this frontage road would be at CR 2 with sufficient separation from the US 85 interchange so that interference between the intersections would be minimized. Turn lane improvements to the intersection of CR 2 and CR 27 (**high priority**) may be necessary to accommodate large trucks, similar to the intersection improvements to the north that are discussed in the next section.

Rural Accesses - In this section there is one minor access point serving a business and residence just north of CR 2. The access will be closed when the interchange at CR 2 is built.

CR 2.5 to CR 8

This section is the southernmost part of Weld County and is included in the area served by the Upper Front Range Regional Planning Commission (UFRRPC). The land uses are general industrial with a mixture of residences and agricultural. In the future, the City of Fort Lupton foresees continued development to the south from the currently developed portions of the city. This will affect traffic volumes at CR 8 and, to a lesser extent, at CR 6. In addition, traffic volumes will increase on all intersecting roadways because of continued growth in the area.

CR 2.5 - This is a "T" intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-5). Properties on the west side of US 85 have access at the intersection. As soon as possible, this intersection will be modified to a 3/4 access (**high priority**). Weld County must make auxiliary lane improvements on CR 27 at CR 2.5 and adjacent intersections so large trucks can safely make turns. Ultimately, this intersection will be closed (**long-term priority**). At that time,

property on the west side will have access from a new frontage road between CR 2 and CR 8, and east side properties will have access from CR 27.

CR 4 - This is a "T" intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-5). Properties on the west side of US 85 have access at the intersection. The future treatment of this intersection is the same as at CR 2.5. As soon as possible, this intersection will be modified to a 3/4 access (**high priority**). Weld County must make auxiliary lane improvements on CR 27 at CR 4 and adjacent intersections so large trucks can safely make turns. Ultimately, this intersection will be closed when interchanges are built at CR 2 on the south and either CR 6 or CR8 to the north (**long-term priority**). Property on the west side will have access from a new frontage road between CR 2 and CR 8, and east side properties will have access from CR 27.

CR 6 - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-6). It will be signalized when it is warranted for traffic or safety reasons (**high priority**). The intersection has a fifth approach (northeast leg) which serves a small residential area. This approach will need to be relocated to the east away from the intersection before it is signalized. Sufficient right-of-way should be reserved at this intersection so that an interchange can be built in the future (**long-term priority**). A diamond configuration has been illustrated (see Figure A-6). Weld County must make auxiliary lane improvements on CR 27 at CR 6 at the same time as adjacent intersections on CR 27 are improved so large trucks can safely make turns.

CR 6.25 - This is a "T" intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-6). A residence on the west side of US 85 has access at the intersection. As soon as possible, this intersection will be modified to a RIRO by closing the median (**high priority**). Weld County must make auxiliary lane improvements on CR 27 at CR 6.25 and adjacent intersections so large trucks can safely make turns. Ultimately, this intersection will be closed (**long-term priority**) when an interchange is built at CR 6. At that time, property on the west side will have access from a new frontage road between CR 2 and CR 8, and east side properties will have access from CR 27.

CR 8 - This four-legged intersection is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-6). The intersection will be converted to a 3/4 configuration (**medium priority**) in the future to address safety or traffic volume problems (as stipulated in the Design Guidelines). Weld County must make auxiliary lane improvements on CR 27 at CR 8 and adjacent intersections so large trucks can safely make turns. Sufficient right-of-way should be reserved so that an interchange can be built ultimately (**long-term priority**). A diamond configuration has been illustrated (see Figure A-6).

Rural Accesses - In this section, there are a total of eight minor access points which serve fields and residences. Their median openings will be closed (except where the same owner has property on both sides of US 85) when adequate auxiliary lanes have been provided at the intersections to the north and south.

SH 52 to CR 14.5

This section of US 85 serves the currently developed portions of the City of Fort Lupton, which is a member of the UFRRPC. No changes in land use are planned directly along US 85, but traffic volumes will increase on all intersecting roadways because of continued growth in the community.

SH 52 - This is an existing diamond interchange (see Figure A-7). The ramp intersections with SH 52 should be signalized when warranted for traffic or safety reasons (***medium priority***). These signals will not affect through traffic on US 85.

CR 14.5 - This is an existing signalized intersection (see Figure A-7). A new interchange is planned at this location for the future (***long-term priority***). A single-point urban interchange (SPUI) configuration is shown in Figure A-7, which would result in the least disruption to nearby properties and businesses. Interim intersection improvements may be necessary to address safety and operational problems.

Rural Accesses - In this section there is a rest stop which has two access points on southbound US 85 and one minor access point serving a field just north of CR 14.5. These accesses will be closed when the interchange at CR 14.5 is built.

CR 16 to CR 28

This is a rural section of US 85 in Weld County between Fort Lupton and Platteville, and is included in the UFRRPC. The primary land use is agriculture, with scattered residences to serve this use. No changes in land use are specifically planned, but minor increases in traffic volumes are expected on the intersecting roadways.

CR 16 - This is a "T" intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-8). The intersection may be converted to a 3/4 configuration (***medium priority***) in the future to address safety or traffic volume problems. Because this intersection is close to CR 14.5, it will be closed (***long-term priority***) when this interchange is built.

CR 28 - This is a four-legged intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-10). In addition to the auxiliary lane improvements (***medium priority***) discussed in the following paragraph, the intersection of CR 28 with CR 25.5 (from the south) and Main Street (from the north) should be relocated farther to the west (***long-term priority***). There have been recent developments between US 85 and CR 25.5, and this change will improve the safety of maneuvers at the intersection.

Intersection Improvements - There are currently nine unsignalized public road intersections with US 85 in this section (see Figures A-8 through A-10). Full movement intersections occur at CR 18, CR 26, and CR 28. "T" intersections are located at CR 16 (east leg), CR 18.5 (east leg), CR 20 (east leg), CR 22 (east leg), CR 22.5 (west leg), and CR 24.5 (west leg). There will be significant improvements to the auxiliary lanes at all of these intersections (*medium priority*) to bring them up to State Highway Access Code standards. This will include left and right turn deceleration lanes as well as right turn acceleration lanes on US 85 in both directions so that it will be safe for large trucks (WB-50) to make U-turns, as illustrated in Figure 8. This will allow field accesses and residential median openings between the intersections to be closed (*medium priority*). These intersections may be converted to RIRO or 3/4 access to address safety issues (*long-term priority*).

Fort Vasquez Museum and Port of Entry - These two facilities are owned and operated by the State of Colorado. They are located in the median of US 85 (which has been widened to accommodate them). Long deceleration and acceleration lanes are provided for trucks, and they are generally adequate for cars stopping at the Museum. There is an overflow parking lot on the north side of the Museum which has two access points on both the east and the west sides. Two of these four access points will be closed. These changes have been coordinated with a new master plan which was recently completed for the Museum.

Field and Residential Accesses - In this section, there are a total of 15 median openings that serve residences or field accesses. In accordance with the Access Principles (Section 4.2), all median openings at these private drives, will be closed over time as the public road intersections to the north and south are improved to adequate standards.

Platteville (CR 30 to CR 34)

This section of US 85 serves the Town of Platteville, which is a member of the UFRRPC. The Town is currently in the process of updating its comprehensive plan. The following access improvements resulted from extensive coordination between Platteville, Weld County, and the Union Pacific Railroad. The UPRR has a passing (double) track between CR 30 and CR 34 and is very interested in working with the local agencies to develop a future plan which minimizes interference between automobile and train traffic, particularly when trains must stop on the siding track. The plan includes creating a new connection from the east at SH 66 on the south end of Platteville. This new road and CR 34 will be emphasized, and one or more parallel north-south arterials will be constructed on the east side of the railroad tracks to connect them. This will provide alternative routes for vehicles when a train is blocking the at-grade crossing at CR 32.

CR 30 - This is a "T" intersection which is currently unsignalized (see Figure A-11). The distance between US 85 and the UPRR tracks and the approach grade between them create a very substandard at-grade crossing. This intersection will be closed (*high priority*) when a new connection is constructed to the east side of SH 66 (see following discussion).