

## 2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

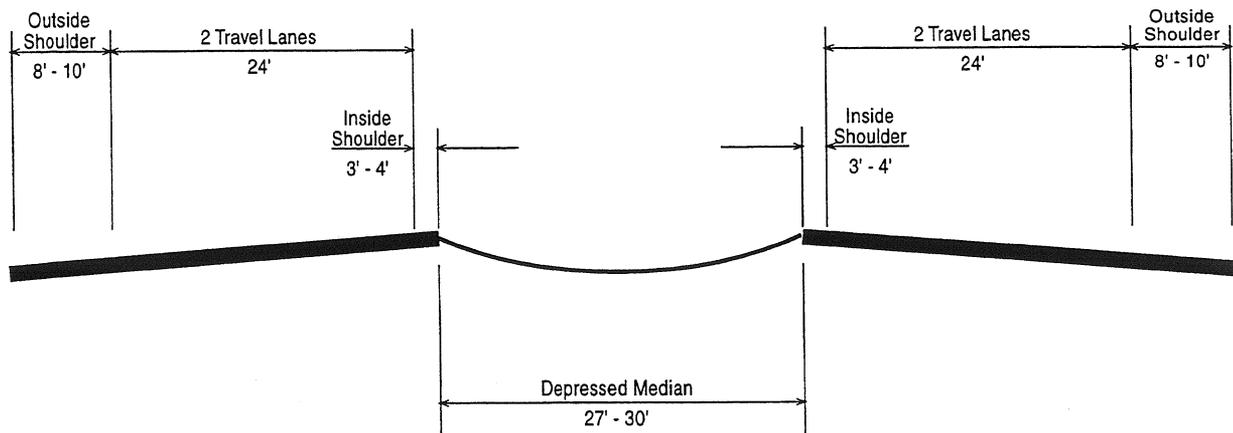
### 2.1 Roadway Physical Characteristics

The report entitled US 85 Corridor Study, Inventory of Existing Roadway Conditions, August 1991 inventoried the physical attributes of US 85 from I-76 to "O" Street in Greeley. Supplemental field reviews were conducted to inventory physical attributes north of "O" Street to WCR 80. A summary of the report and the additional field reviews is presented in the following sections.

#### *Typical Section*

The typical cross-section for US 85, shown in Figure 2, is comprised of four 12-foot travel lanes, paved outside shoulders, paved inside shoulders, and a depressed median. The dimensions vary throughout the corridor, but the most common dimensions are:

- Outside shoulder: 8 feet - 10 feet
- Inside shoulder: 3 feet - 4 feet
- Depressed median: 27 feet - 30 feet (edge of pavement to edge of pavement)
- Right-of-way: 145 feet - 155 feet



Right-of-Way Width Typically Ranges from 145' to 155'

Figure 2  
**Typical U.S. 85 Cross Section**

Right and left turn deceleration lanes and right turn acceleration lanes are commonly provided at major intersections but are generally accommodated by striping the shoulder (plus a small amount of extra pavement) for this purpose. As a result, many of the turn lanes do not meet current design standards. They can be too short or too narrow and can have inadequate paved shoulder width.

The most noticeable exceptions to the typical section are:

- The median in south Platteville is extremely wide, accommodating Fort Vasquez and the weigh station.
- Within LaSalle, an "urban" section (with curb, gutter, and raised median) is provided. Right-of-way is only 96 feet, the median area is 18 feet wide, and parking areas are provided in lieu of paved shoulders.
- The mile-long northbound segment between WCR 66 and SH 392 is the last remaining "unimproved" roadway section within the corridor; paved inside and outside shoulders are only 2 feet wide.
- Within Eaton, an "urban" section (with curb, gutter and raised median) is provided. Right-of-way is just over 100 feet and the median area is 12 feet wide.
- Right-of-way in excess of the typical dimension exists within Brighton (175 - 200 feet), Fort Lupton (up to 400 feet), Platteville (230 feet), Gilcrest (200 feet), Evans (up to 300 feet), and Greeley (200 feet - 310 feet). In many of these locations, one or more frontage roads are accommodated within this expanded right-of-way.

### ***Railroad Crossings***

Currently, there are three at-grade railroad crossings of US 85 within the corridor, at the following locations:

- Just south of 112th Avenue in Adams County
- Just south of Denver Street in Brighton
- Immediately north of 16th Street in Greeley.

The railroad crossings south of 112th Avenue and south of Denver Street are owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and are planned to be closed in the summer of 1999. The railroad crossing in Greeley is owned by the Great Western Railroad. Use of these crossings averages less than one train per day.

US 85 generally parallels the Union Pacific Railroad mainline throughout the entire corridor. Between I-76 and Brighton, the highway is about 250 to 300 feet from the track. Upon entering Brighton, US 85 separates from the railroad alignment and remains about ½ mile distant until north of Fort Lupton. At this point, the road comes to within 600 feet of the railroad. The highway remains near the track, coming as close as 70 feet, until reaching LaSalle where it separates once again. Through LaSalle, Evans, and Greeley, US 85 lies 150 feet to ½ mile away from the railroad. North of "O" Street to just south of SH 392, the tracks and US 85 are immediately adjacent (approximately 100 feet). Upon approaching SH 392, US 85 turns slightly to the west, separates from the railroad alignment, and remains about 150 feet distant until WCR 70. At this point, it turns back to the east and remains less than 100 feet from the railroad until reaching Eaton, where it separates once again. Through Eaton, to WCR 76, US 85 lies 100 to 550 feet from the railroad. From WCR 76 to WCR 80, the highway is less than 100 feet from the railroad.

## 2.2 Inventory of Access Points

With the adoption of the new State Highway Access Code in 1998, a new series of access categories was defined for highways in the state. CDOT and local jurisdictions have agreed on access category for each segment of US 85. The recommended access category for US 85 within this corridor is primarily E-X (Expressway). The only NR-A designation in the corridor is the US 85 segment 2,025 feet south of Collins Avenue to Collins Avenue in Eaton. Within the city limits of LaSalle and north of Collins Avenue to 7th Street in Eaton, the US 85 access category designation is NR-B.

The allowable spacing of intersecting streets in the E-X category is one mile (section line alignment); one-half mile is permissible only when no other reasonable alternative access exists. Private direct access is not permitted to an Expressway road unless the property has no other reasonable access to the general street system. Categories NR-A and NR-B provide for more access to the roadway. In the NR-A category, the desirable standard for spacing of all intersecting public roadways and other accesses that will be full movement, or have the potential for signalization, is one-half mile. The NR-A category allows one access per parcel, if reasonable access cannot be obtained from a local roadway. The NR-B category does not designate a desired spacing for public road intersections that will be full movement or will have the potential for signalization. One access will be granted to each parcel under the NR-B category, if it does not create an operational or safety problem. The access, at a minimum, will provide for right turns only. Additional right-in/right-out accesses will be allowed where required auxiliary lanes can be provided.

Most of the existing accesses within the corridor were developed prior to the adoption of the State Highway Access Code and, therefore, have been "grandfathered". The classification of these accesses is quite diverse. At one extreme are seldom used field accesses and lightly traveled private drives. At the opposite end of the spectrum are freeway-type interchanges. In between, there are numerous intersections with state highways, city streets, and county roads, most of which are stop-controlled, but some of which are signalized. Specifically, in the corridor, there are 282 accesses (not including interchanges), which fall into the following classifications:

- Public Road Unsignalized Intersection (PRU) - These types of highway accesses are full movement, at-grade, stop-controlled intersections. Public roads along the corridor are state highways, county roads and city streets. Most unsignalized public road intersections have at least one acceleration and/or deceleration lane, but typically these accel/decel lanes do not meet the State Highway Access Code standards.
- Public Road Signalized Intersection (PRS) - Public road signalized intersections are at-grade, full movement public road intersections with a traffic signal. Signalized public roads are state highways, county roads and city streets. All signalized intersections have at least one acceleration and/or deceleration lane, but typically the accel/decel lanes do not meet the State Highway Access Code standards.
- Rural Access (RA) - Rural accesses are full or partial movement, private highway accesses located in rural areas. Typical rural accesses are gravel, have a median crossing and have no acceleration or deceleration lanes. Rural accesses fall into one of the following categories:
  - Field Access - The primary purpose of a field access is to provide direct highway access to agricultural land. They are generally used only seasonally, most intensely during planting and harvesting seasons. Field accesses can also allow highway access to oil and gas wells located on agricultural land.
  - Single Family / Private Drive Access - These accesses provide direct highway access to single family residences and/or businesses and are generally used multiple times daily. Single Family / Private Drive accesses can also provide access to agricultural land and/or oil and gas wells.
  - Oil and Gas Access - Oil and gas accesses allow vehicles to access oil and gas wells from the highway. There are few highway accesses that exclusively serve only oil & gas wells. Most accesses to oil and gas wells use a field access and/or a single family access.
  - Other Access - Other accesses are rural accesses that do not fall into the above categories. Along US 85 these include the exit and entry points for the weigh station, Fort Vasquez Museum, picnic area and historical markers.
- Urban Access (UA) - Urban accesses are full or partial movement highway accesses found in urban areas. They typically do not have acceleration / deceleration lanes and are generally used multiple times daily. Urban accesses can be a drop curb or other highway access that serves a business such as a gas station, restaurant, or a retail area; or an access serving a single family home along the highway.

Based on the above classifications of accesses, the 282 accesses along the corridor are distributed as follows:

- 15 public road intersections with signals
- 68 unsignalized public road intersections
- 115 rural accesses
- 84 urban accesses

Along the study area corridor, there are five interchanges, each with some unique features:

- The I-76 interchange serves only three movements; the southbound US 85 to eastbound I-76 movement is not provided.
- The SH 7 (Bridge Street) interchange is a compressed diamond configuration and the west frontage road intersects SH 7 immediately adjacent to the southbound ramps.
- The SH 52 interchange in Fort Lupton is a standard diamond configuration, but the ramp intersections are spaced only 350 feet apart.
- The US 85/Business 85/US 34 interchange complex in Greeley extends over nearly a mile, does not accommodate all movements, has major weaving sections, has unique ramp geometry, and even has side street access provided to/from one "ramp".
- The Business 85 interchange complex north of Greeley serves Business 85, Stockyard Road, and "O" Street.

## **2.3 Existing Traffic Conditions**

### ***Traffic Volumes***

Between December 1997 and February 1998 traffic counts were conducted along the US 85 corridor between I-76 and WCR 84. Figures 3a through 3e illustrate both daily traffic volumes and peak hour turning movement volumes along the US 85 corridor. Traffic counts south of WCR 2 were conducted by Counter Measures Inc. of Denver, while traffic counts north of WCR 2 were performed by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

As shown in Figures 3a through 3e, daily traffic volumes are the greatest in the southern end of the corridor, ranging from over 30,000 vehicles per day (vpd) south of 104th Avenue to just over 20,000 vehicles per day north of WCR 2. From WCR 2 to LaSalle, daily traffic volumes range between 12,000 and 16,000 vehicles per day. In LaSalle, daily traffic volumes increase to nearly 19,000 vehicles per day. They range between 17,000 and 20,000 vpd through Evans. Along the US 85 Bypass in Greeley daily traffic volumes range between 14,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day. North of Greeley, daily traffic volumes gradually taper off to less than 6,500 vpd between Eaton and WCR 80.