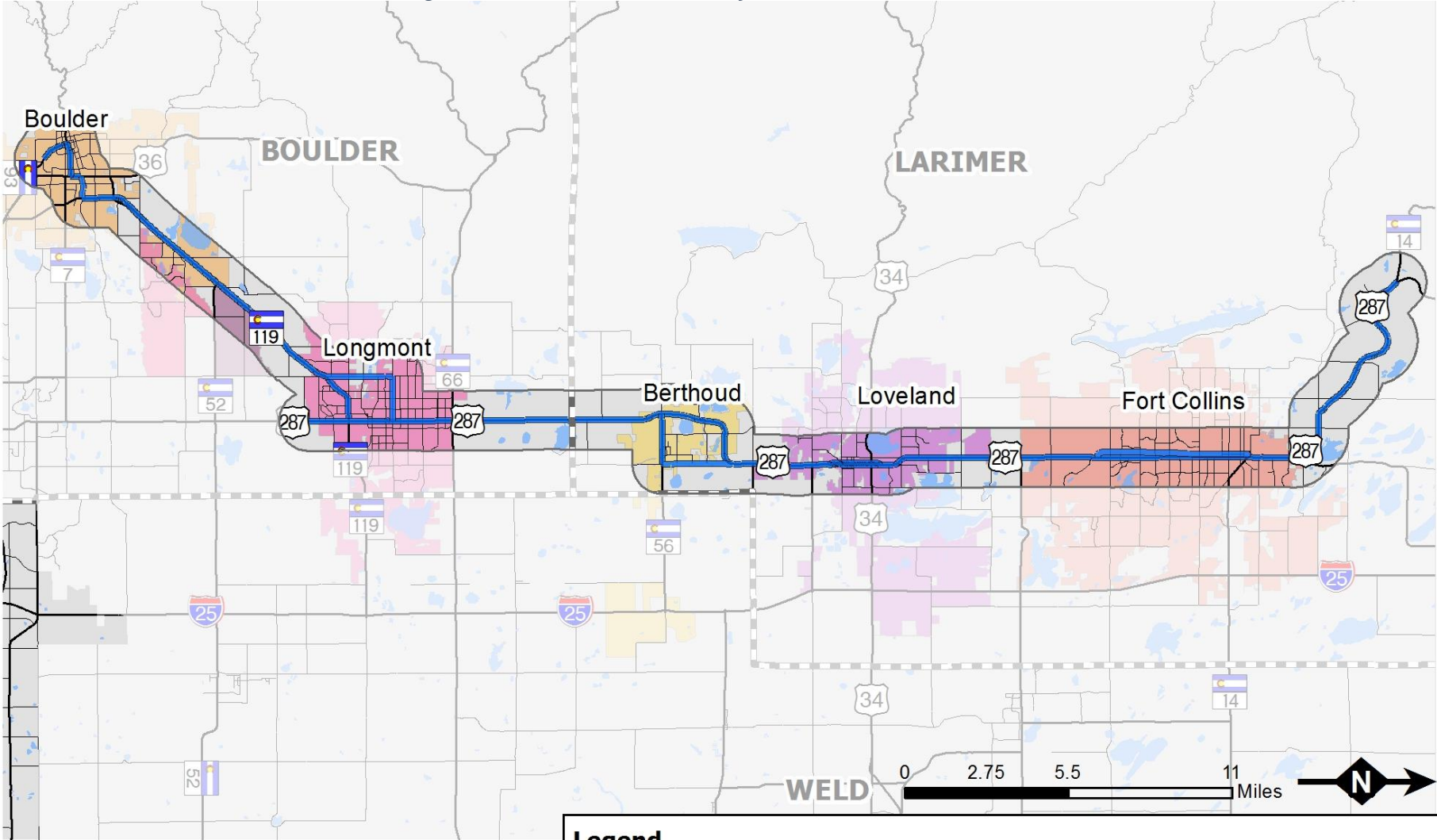


# Chapter 1: Introduction

Figure 1-1 US287 Asset Inventory Corridor and Communities



Feb, 2017  
Sources: NFRMPO, CDOT

Legend					
	US 287 Study Area		Boulder		Longmont
	US 287 / FLEX Corridor		Fort Collins		Loveland
	Berthoud		Gunbarrel		Niwot

## Introduction

US287 is a major corridor connecting the Gulf of Mexico to Montana by way of Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. In Northern Colorado, US287 connects Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont along with unincorporated sections of Larimer and Boulder counties. The corridor acts as a parallel route to Interstate 25. A significant amount of development in the region has occurred along or near this corridor, including redevelopment of the Foothills Mall, the MAX Bus Rapid Transit route, and the downtowns of Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont. With the continued development along the corridor, the US287 Coalition has partnered with the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) to create an inventory of the transportation assets and land uses in the corridor. **Figure 1-1** shows the corridor analyzed as part of the US287 Asset Inventory, which includes SH119 from Longmont to Boulder. Along SH119, Transfort's FLEX service connects Fort Collins to Boulder.

FLEX began as the FoxTrot, a route operated by Transfort between Fort Collins and Loveland. In June 2010, FoxTrot became the FLEX route, which extended the service to Berthoud and Longmont. In addition to funding from Fort Collins, FLEX operates using funds from Loveland, Berthoud, Longmont, City of Boulder and Boulder County. FLEX to Boulder operates using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding from the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG).

## Purpose

With the extension of FLEX to Boulder in January 2016, the US287 Coalition decided to study the corridor between Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, Longmont, and Boulder. As the initial step in this study, the *US287 Asset Inventory* was prompted. The main purpose of the *US287 Asset Inventory* is to identify and improve amenities along the FLEX route to Boulder.

The US287 Asset Inventory provides a synopsis of the entire corridor between Fort Collins and Longmont, including lane miles, crashes, traffic volumes, truck volumes, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, environmental features, transit routes and FLEX stops, and land uses. For further

information, chapters 4 through 10 provide data by jurisdiction to present additional and localized information about the corridor. Chapter 3 provides a stop-by-stop analysis of the FLEX route, including bicycle and pedestrian access, amenities, and handicap-accessibility. Handicap-accessibility is based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and more in-depth information about stop accessibility is available through Transfort.

## Study Area

To narrow the scope of the Asset Inventory, a one-mile study area was established from US287 and other roadway used by FLEX. The Study Area extends from one mile in both directions from US287, beginning at SH14 in the northwest and extending through Longmont in the south. The Study Area continues along the FLEX corridor into Boulder on SH119. Going forward, this two-mile section (a mile in either direction from the road) is mentioned as the *US287 Study Area*.

## Involved Entities

### North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization

Established in 1988, the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) is a regional agency whose responsibilities include transportation and air quality planning. The NFRMPO is the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Fort Collins and Greeley urbanized areas. The NFRMPO works at the regional level to identify, plan for, and integrate the needs and goals of its member communities to fulfill its mission of transportation planning for federally-funded transportation projects. Federal law requires regions with populations of 50,000 or more to form such an organization and complete federal requirements to be eligible for federal transportation funds. Additionally, the NFRMPO is the designated lead air quality planning organization for carbon monoxide (CO) in the North Front Range. The NFRMPO works alongside the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) in Denver, which is the lead air quality planning organization for ozone for both Denver and the North Front Range.

The NFRMPO serves a diverse region in Northern Colorado and is centered on the Interstate 25 (I-25) corridor. NFRMPO has 15 member governments, including: Berthoud, Eaton, Evans, Fort Collins, Garden

City, Greeley, Johnstown, LaSalle, Loveland, Milliken, Severance, Timnath, Windsor, and portions of both Larimer and Weld counties. The combined area is over 600 square miles, with a 2015 population of more than 482,000.<sup>1</sup>

### Northern Colorado Highway 287 Corridor Coalition (US287 Coalition)

The US287 Coalition was formed by staff and/or elected officials from the Town of Berthoud, City of Boulder, City of Loveland, City of Fort Collins, City of Longmont, Boulder County, Larimer County, Aims Community College, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the NFRMPO, and the offices of U.S. senators and representatives from Colorado. The purpose of the group is to support and advocate for investment in the US287 corridor. The US287 Asset Inventory is seen as a first step toward coordinated long range planning.

### Asset Inventory

Throughout this Asset Inventory, the following items will be mapped and described:

- **Road Network**, which includes state-maintained bridges, active at-grade railroad crossings, intersections with traffic signals, 2015 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), 2015 Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADTT), the number of through lanes, speed limits, and pavement condition/Drivability Life<sup>2</sup>;
- **Crash Data**, which includes serious injury and fatal crashes for 2009 to 2013 in Boulder County and 2011 to 2015 in Larimer County;
- **Right-of-Way**, which includes publicly-owned land and an estimation of the right-of-way for US287;
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure**, which includes sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, and bicycle-sharing stations;

- **Transit**, which includes the routes operated by each municipal or regional transit agency, including the FLEX route, and is displayed by frequency of service during peak periods<sup>3</sup>;
- **Environmental Features**, which includes flood hazards, environmentally-sensitive areas described in terms of biodiversity significance, and wetlands; and
- **Land Use**, which includes current and future land uses from the NFRMPO 2040 Land Use Allocation and local jurisdictions.

Much of this information was collected from CDOT and the local jurisdictions. Where information did not exist, NFRMPO staff used the best information available to create new shapefiles and maps. Sources are noted on each map, and use the most recent available information.

CDOT provides roadway information using its Online Transportation Information System (OTIS). Roadway system data is primarily downloaded from OTIS, and is updated with Your CDOT Dollar data when available. With the exception of bridge load restriction data, which reflects conditions as of December 2016, the CDOT data reflects conditions as of December 31, 2015.

**Right-of-Way** information was estimated by inverting parcel data from Larimer and Boulder counties. More current right-of-way information will be available from CDOT when it completes its own inventory over the next several years.

The **Environmental Features** section uses the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Potential Conservation Areas rating to demarcate environmentally-sensitive areas. Ranging from B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance to B5: General Biodiversity Significance, these categories "identify a land area that can provide the habitat and ecological processes upon which a particular element or suite of elements depends for their continued existence".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Local Affairs, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> See **Appendix B: Drivability Life** for the rating system's methodology.

<sup>3</sup> The most frequent service is displayed on top if more than one service line overlaps.

<sup>4</sup> Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Data Dictionary for Potential Conservation Area Transcription Reports, 2005. <http://bit.ly/2kjT9Uf>