

Chapter 4: Larimer County

US287 traverses incorporated municipalities in Larimer County as discussed in *Chapter 5: City of Fort Collins*, *Chapter 6: City of Loveland*, and *Chapter 7: Town of Berthoud*. Within the NFRMPO region, US287 runs through unincorporated Larimer County in four sections: north of Fort Collins; between Fort Collins and Loveland; between Loveland and Berthoud; and south of Berthoud to the County boundary. Due to municipal boundaries, the Larimer County section between Loveland and Berthoud is covered in *Chapter 7: Town of Berthoud*. In the Larimer County chapter, only the north, central, and south sections are discussed. These sections are labeled on *Figure 4-1*.

Road Network

Figure 4-2 shows the bridges on state and US highways and traffic signals along the corridor. There are eight bridges in the North Larimer County section. All of the bridges are rated in good condition by CDOT. Due to the rural character of this section of US287, all but one bridge carry US287 over irrigation ditches and the Cache la Poudre River. The remaining bridge carries US287 over North Taft Hill Road. There are no bridges in the central Larimer County section within the Study Area. In the South Larimer County section, there are two bridges both rated in good condition: one over Dry Creek and one over the Little Thompson River.

Due to US287 generally being a limited-access highway in unincorporated Larimer County, there are fewer traffic signals than in Fort Collins or Loveland. Two traffic signals are located on US287 in North Larimer County, one at the intersection of SH1 and US287 and the other at LCR17/Shields Street. Two traffic signals are located in the Central Larimer County section, one at SH392 and US287, and the other at West 71st Street. No traffic signals are located in the South Larimer County section.

Figure 4-1 Larimer County - US287 with Insets

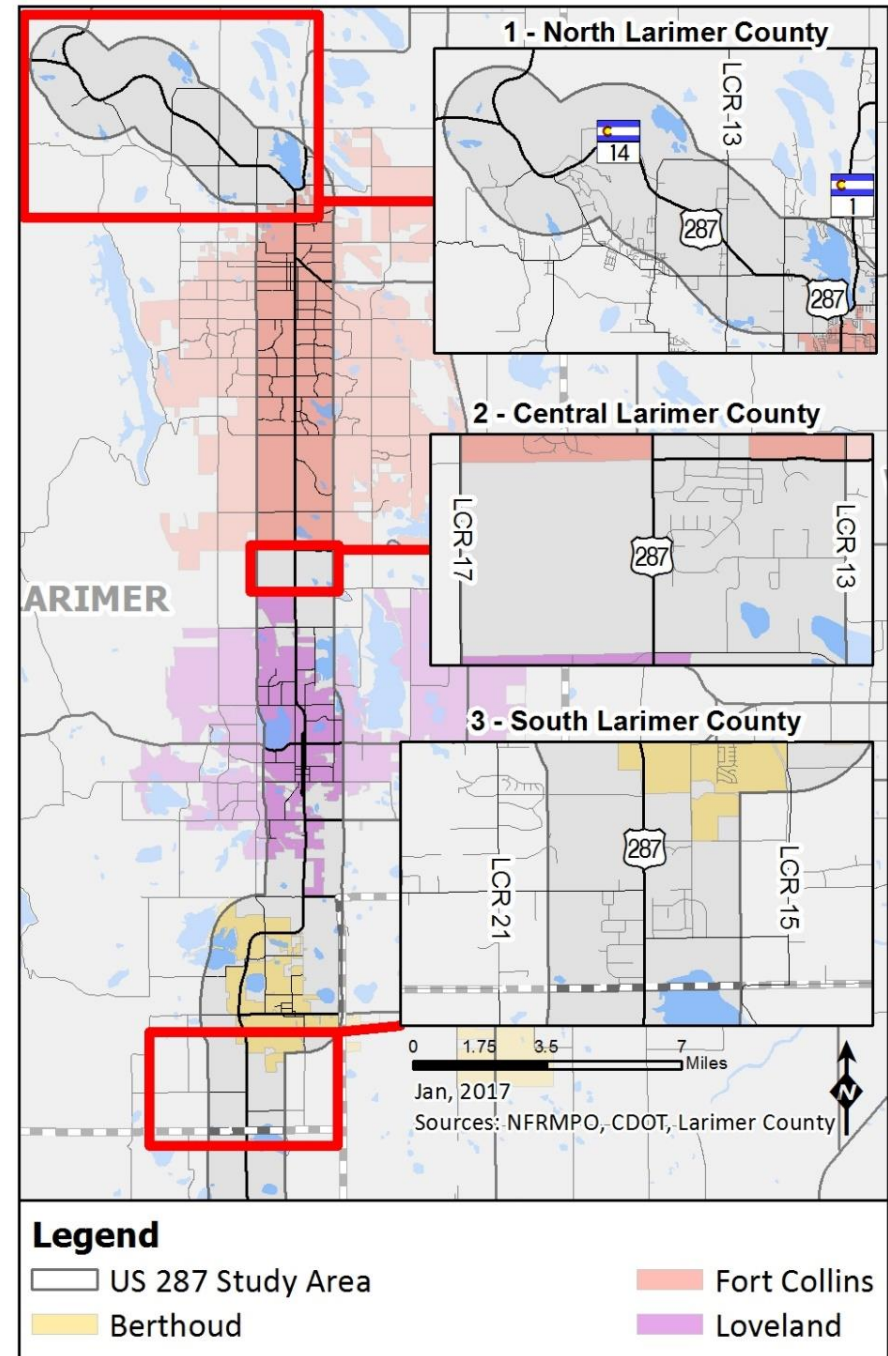
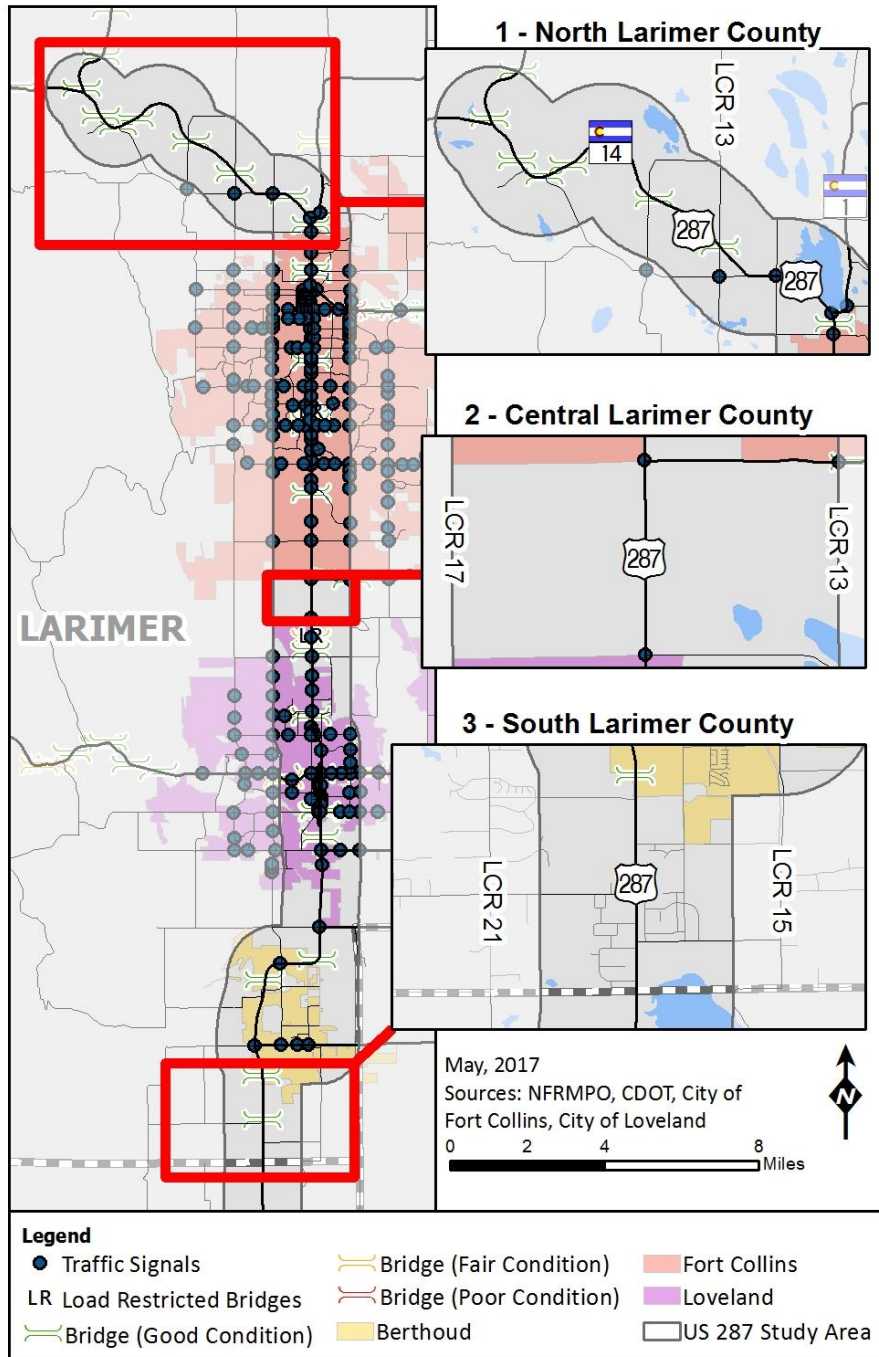


Figure 4-2 Larimer County Bridges and Traffic Signals



Active railroads and at-grade crossings are shown in **Figure 4-3**. In the North Larimer County section, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) owns and maintains tracks. In the Central and South Larimer County sections, the BNSF Railway runs generally parallel to US287. The BNSF Railway runs within the Study Area for the Central Larimer County section, but is outside the Study Area for the South Larimer County section. There are five active at-grade railroad crossings in North Larimer County, and none in Central or South Larimer County.

Figure 4-4 shows Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), which varies significantly throughout the corridor. Traffic is generally lower in North Larimer County due to lower density and development. AADT generally increases closer to Fort Collins. Central Larimer County carries a medium amount of traffic due to its location as a major connection between Fort Collins and Loveland. South Larimer County varies between low and medium traffic in comparison to the rest of the corridor.

Figure 4-5 shows the Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADTT) as measured by CDOT. Approximately 1,000 trucks travel daily between the US287/SH14 junction and the US287/SH1 intersection. Fewer trucks travel west on SH14 than those remaining on US287 toward Laramie, Wyoming. In Central Larimer County, a similar number travel between Fort Collins and Loveland. Fewer trucks use US287 south of Berthoud.

Figure 4-3 Larimer County Active Railroads and Crossings

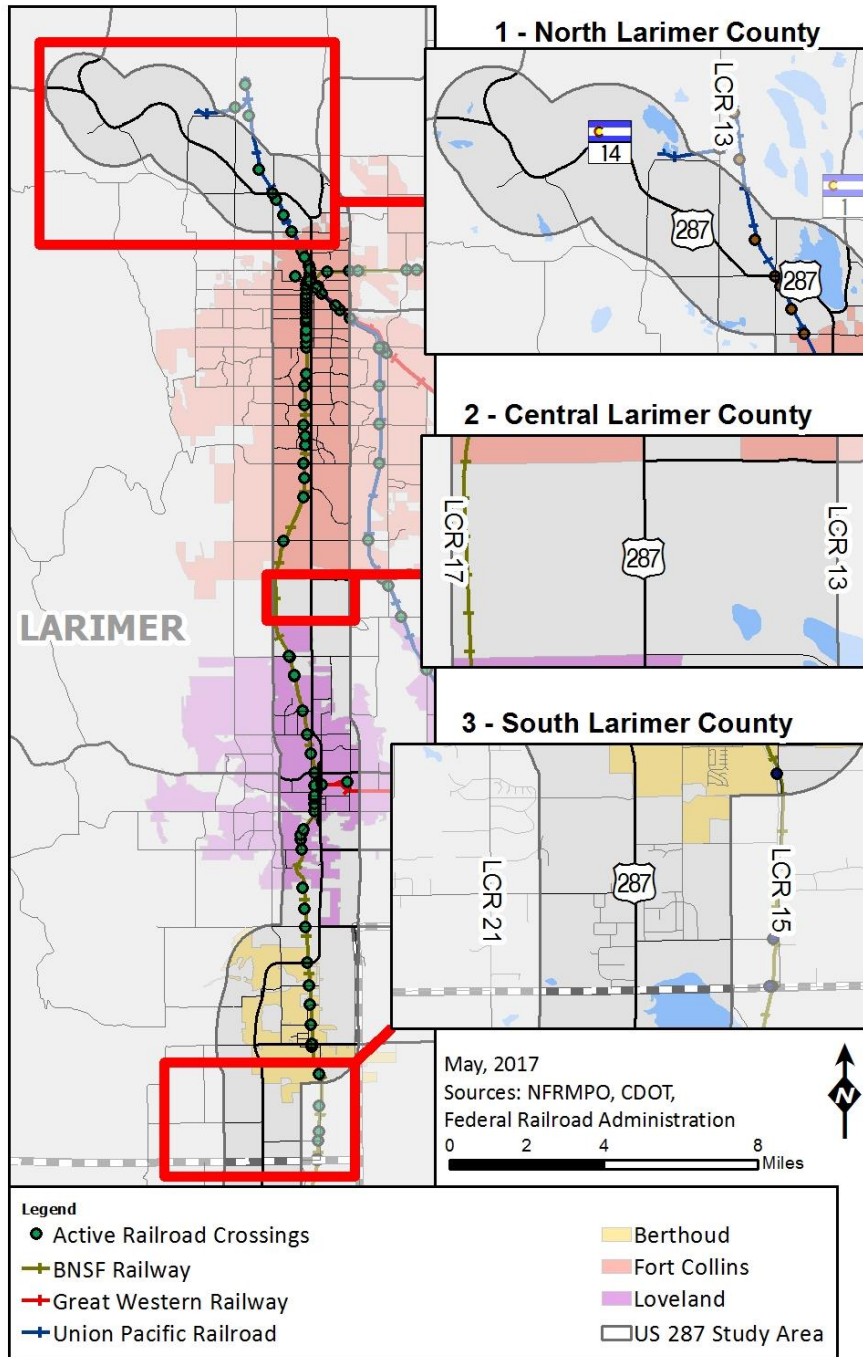


Figure 4-6 shows the number of through lanes in the corridor. In North Larimer County, the corridor ranges from two to four through lanes. Three lane sections feature a bypass lane, which allow slower cars to move to the right for faster cars to pass safely. Near the junction with SH14, the number of lanes increases to four. Central and South Larimer County remain consistent with four through lanes.

Figure 4-7 shows the speed limits in the corridor. The section north of North Taft Hill Road in North Larimer County has the highest speed within the US287 Study Area at 65 MPH. The speed limit decreases to 45 MPH as the road goes from a highway to a principal arterial. Speeds are 55 MPH in Central Larimer County, and between 60 MPH and 65 MPH in South Larimer County.

As shown on **Figure 4-8**, CDOT measures pavement condition using Drivability Life. North Larimer County has the greatest range in pavement conditions: the pavement is rated low from SH1 to North Taft Hill Road, where it the pavement is rated high. The section from SH1 to North Taft Hill Road is under construction as of January 2017. CDOT will be constructing and widening US287 to have four through lanes, a center turning lane, 10-foot shoulders which also function as bike lanes, and sidewalks. The project is expected to be completed by fall 2018. US287 north of SH14 and SH14 itself are both rated with medium Drivability Life. Central Larimer County is rated high and South Larimer County is rated medium Drivability Life.

Figure 4-4 Larimer County Annual Average Daily Traffic

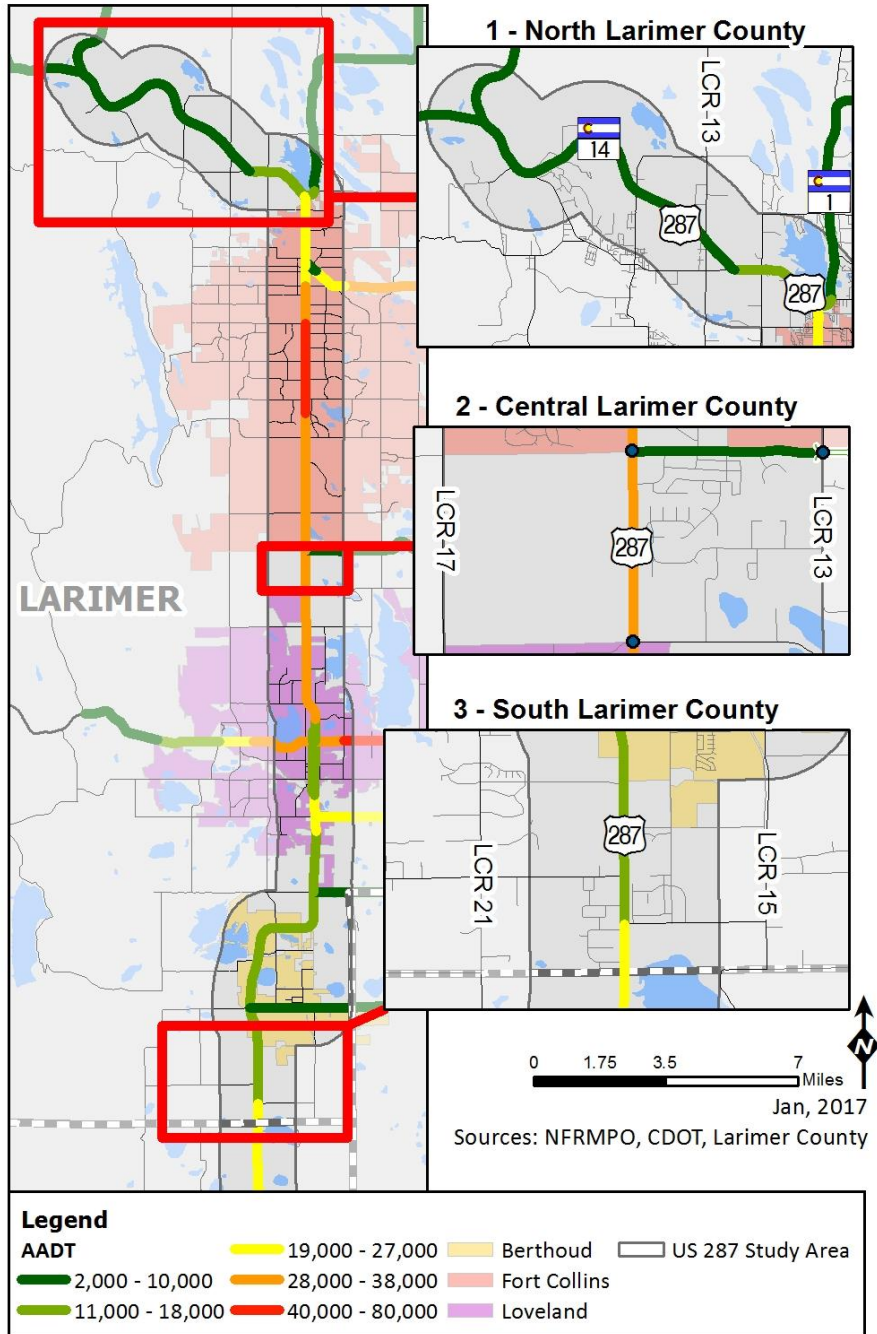


Figure 4-5 Larimer County Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic

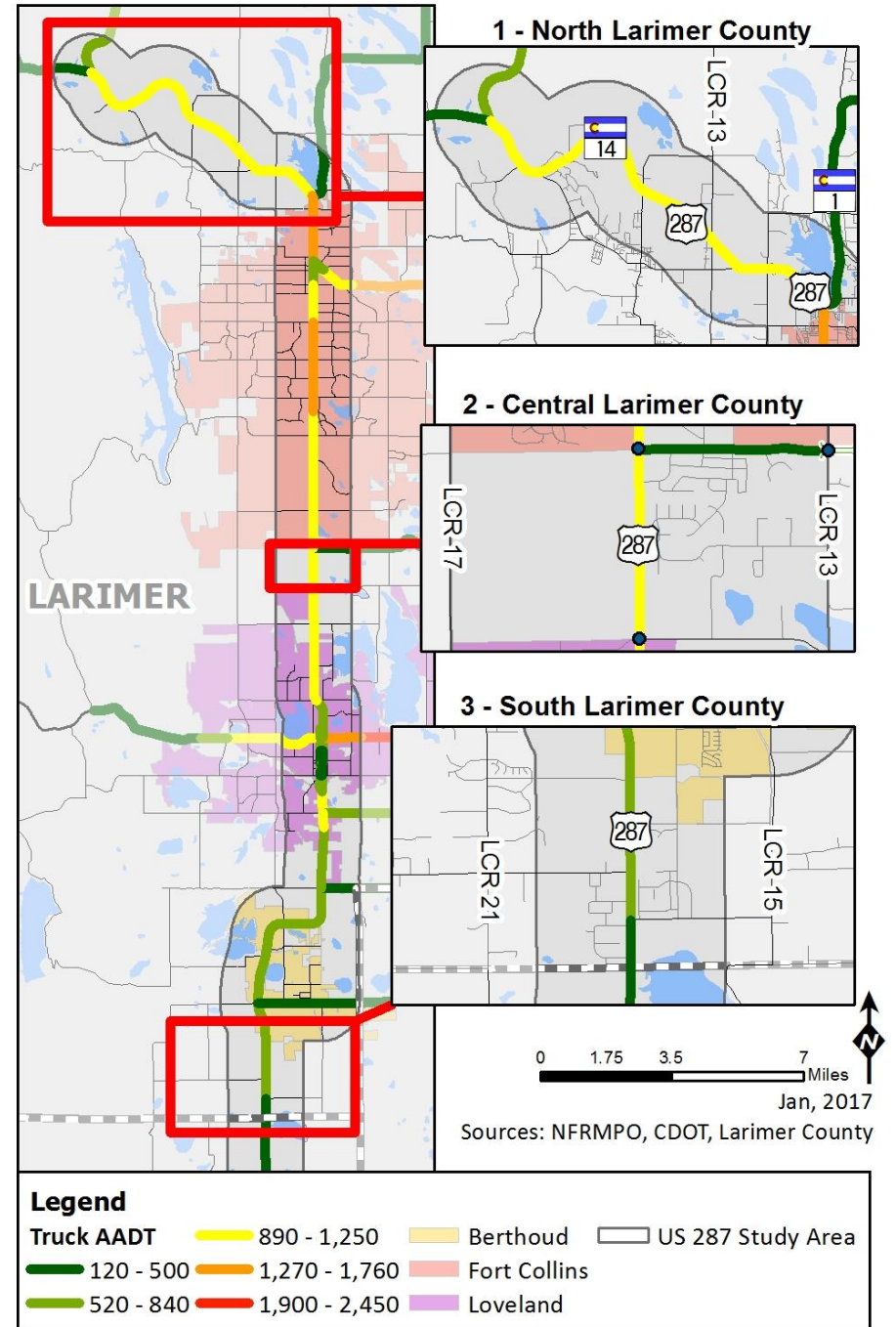


Figure 4-6 Larimer County Number of Through Lanes

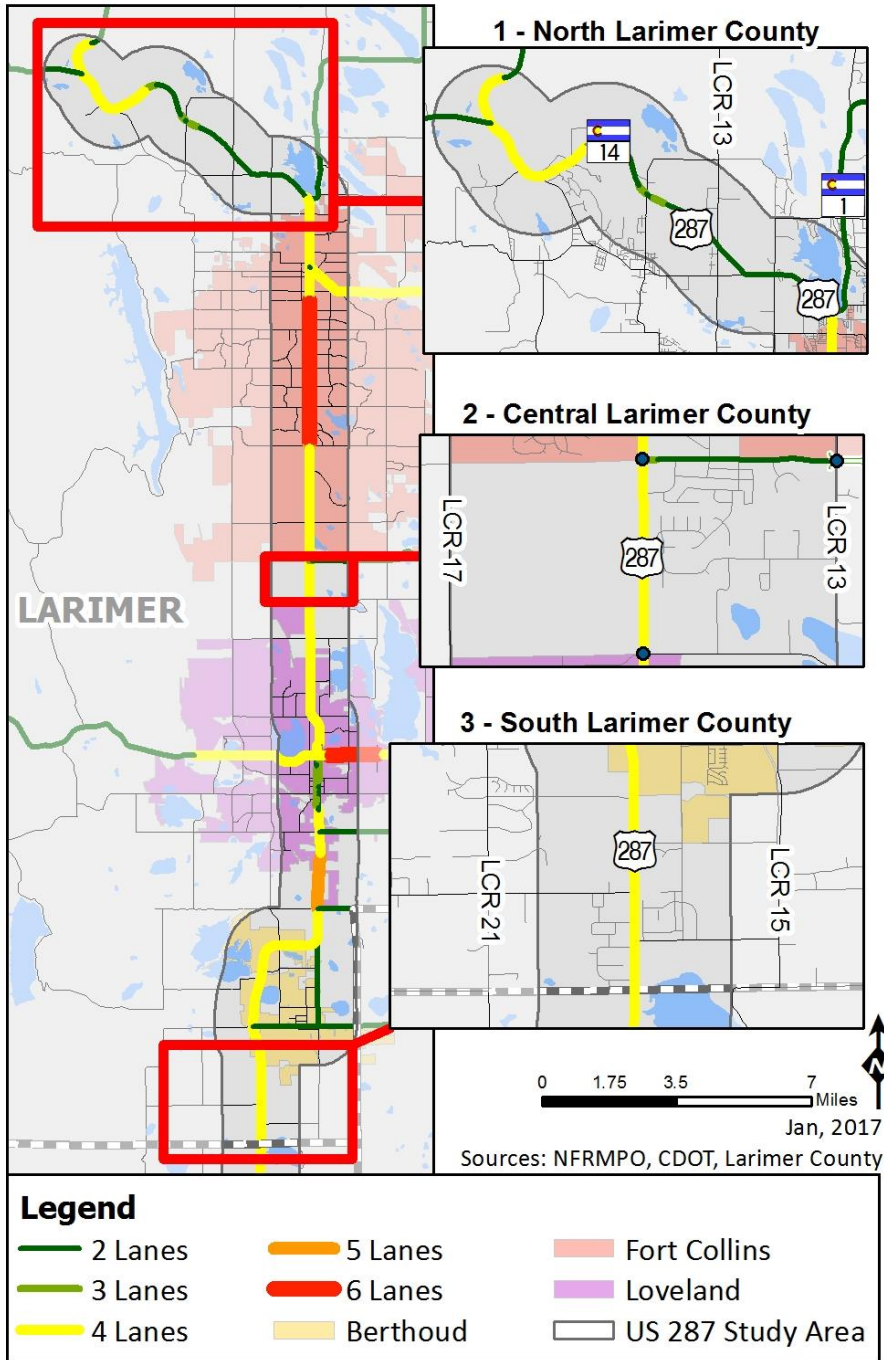


Figure 4-7 Larimer County Speed Limits

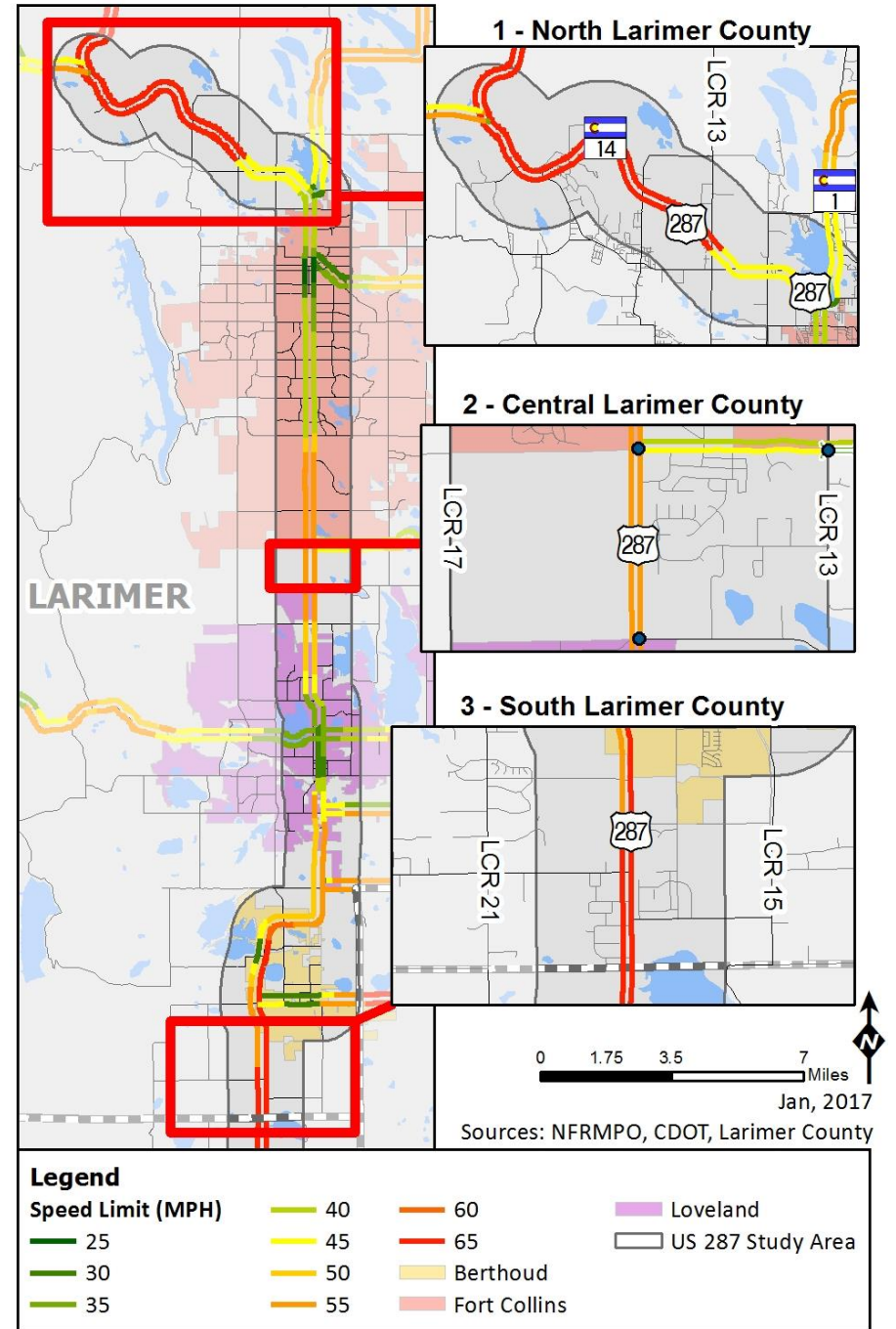
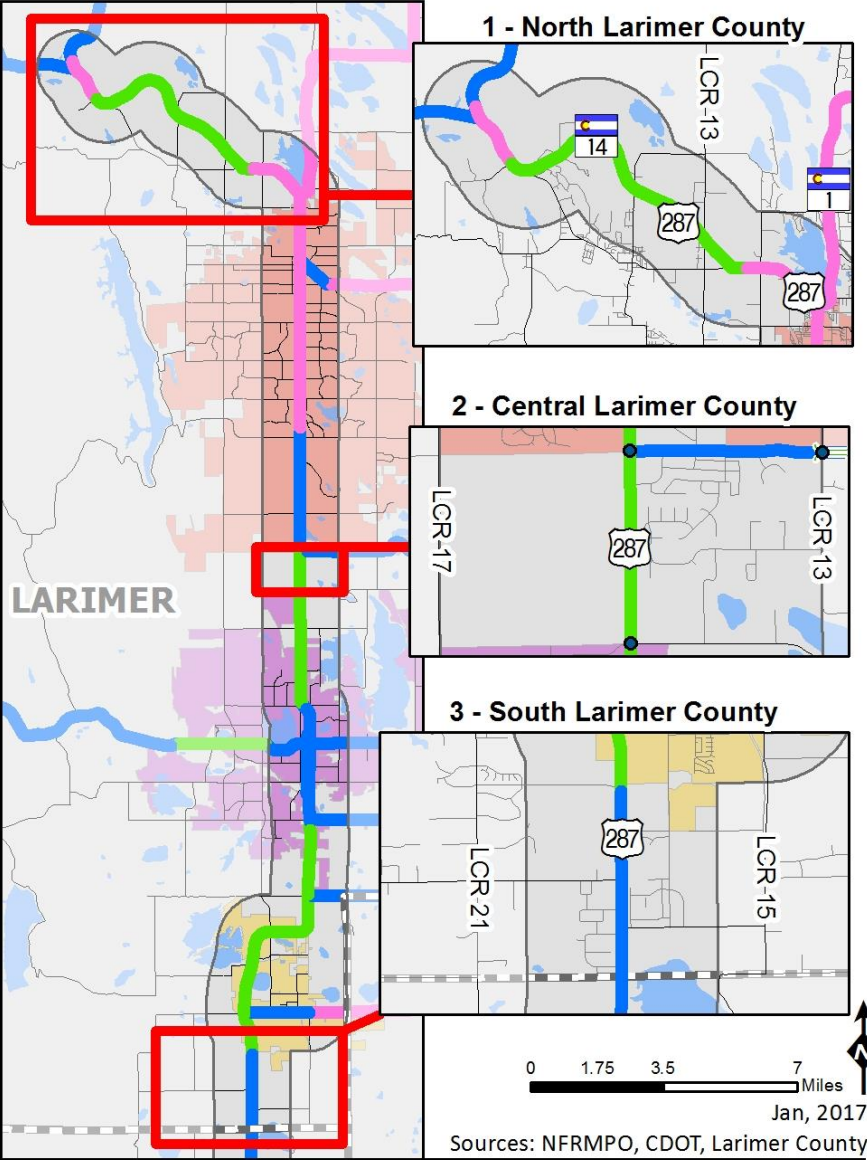


Figure 4-8 Larimer County Drivability Life



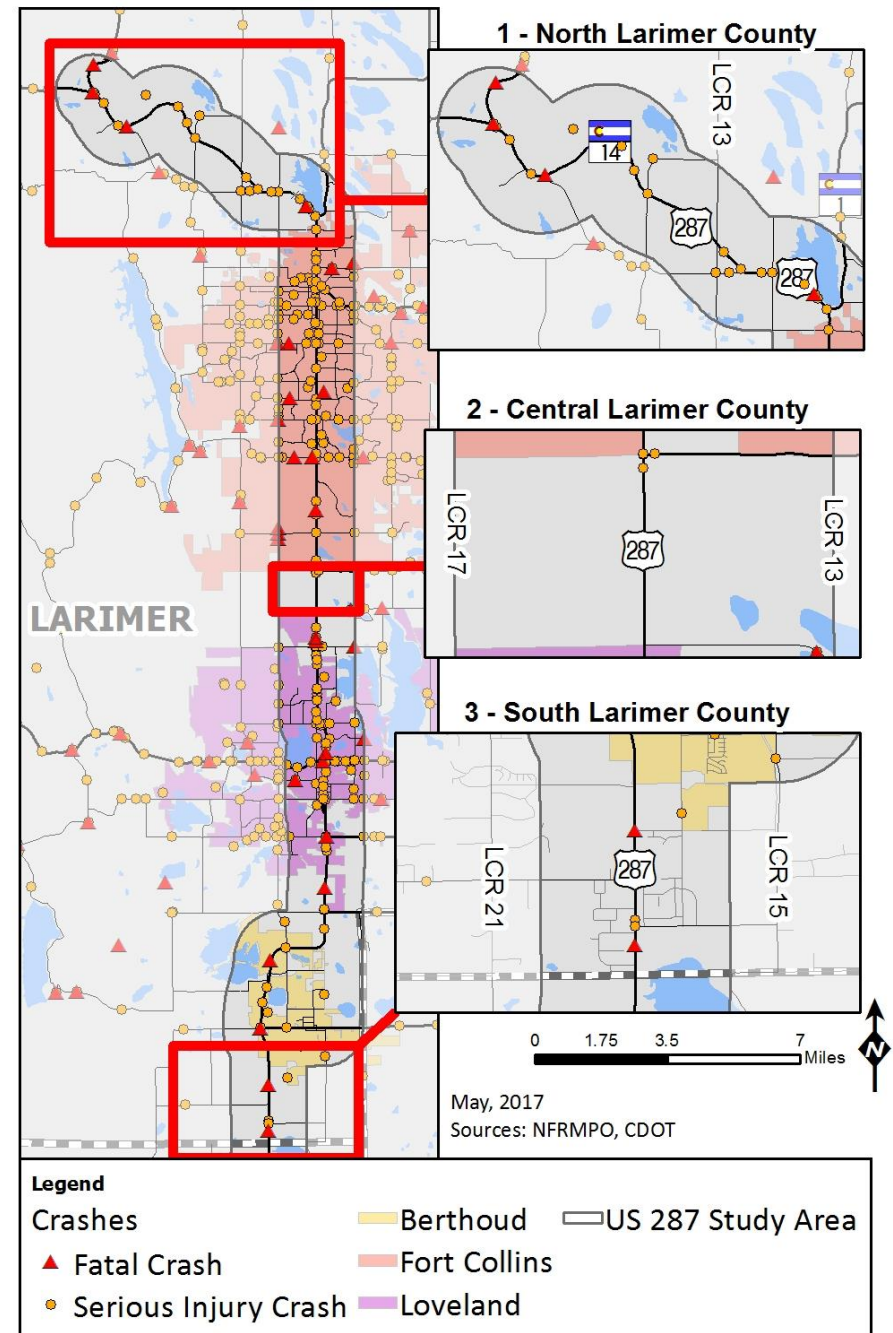
Legend

Drivability Life	Low	Loveland
High	Berthoud	US 287 Study Area
Medium	Fort Collins	

Crash Data

Serious injury and fatal crashes from 2011 to 2015 are presented on **Figure 4-9** for Larimer County. There were four fatal crashes in North Larimer County, zero fatal crashes in Central Larimer County, and two fatal crashes in South Larimer County.

Figure 4-9 Larimer County Serious Injury and Fatal Crashes (2011-2015)

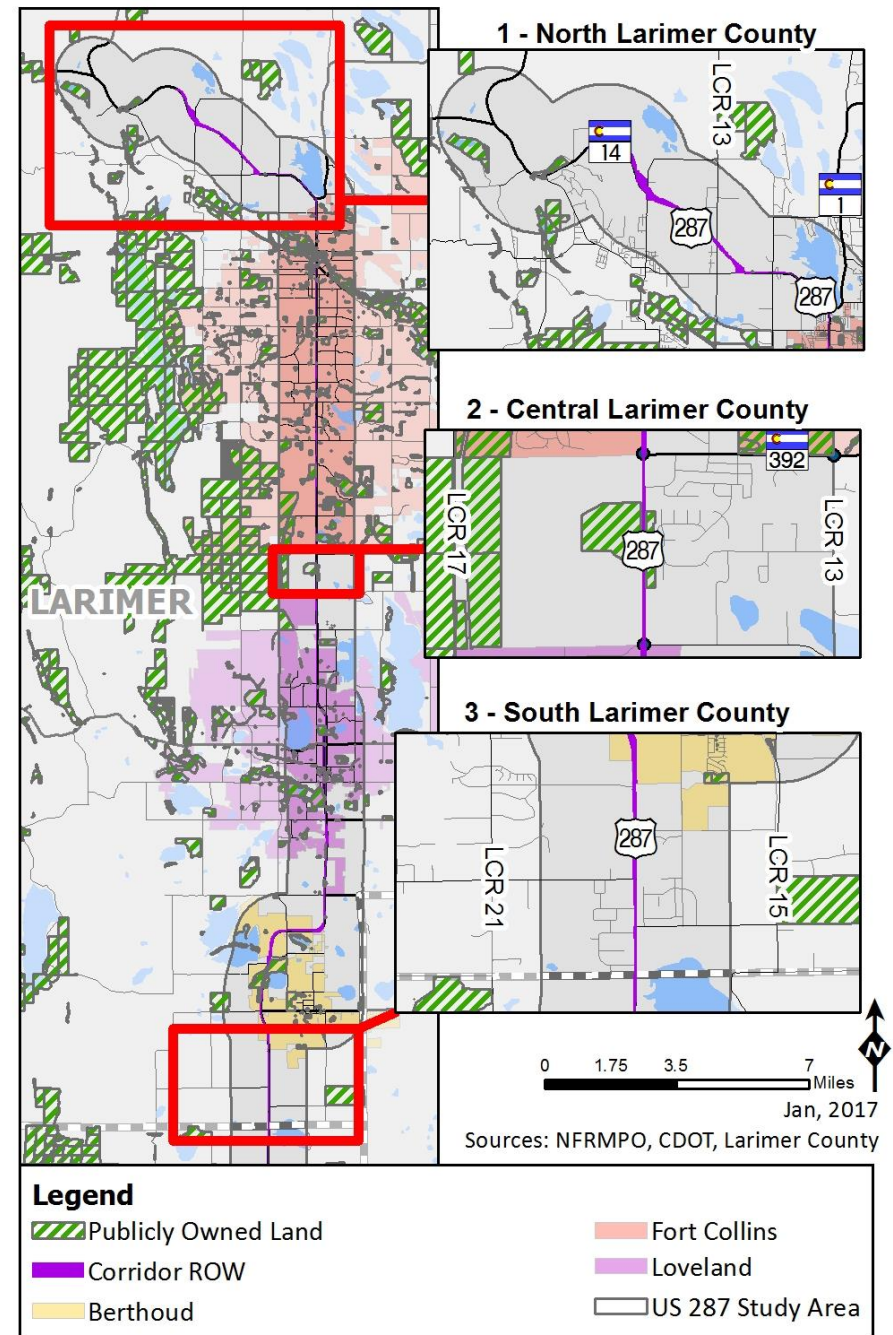


Right-of-Way

An estimate of US287 right-of-way is shown on **Figure 4-10**. Based on Larimer County parcel data, the right-of-way is colored in between the parceled land. The width of the right-of-way estimate along US287 ranges from 66-986 feet in unincorporated Larimer County. Due to the irregular borders of the right-of-way, a general map is presented in the figure. In-depth maps are available upon request.

Also shown is the land owned by the City of Fort Collins, City of Loveland, Town of Berthoud, Larimer County, the State of Colorado, or the US. CDOT is in the process of creating a right-of-way database, which will be available in the future. The expected timeline is three to five years.

Figure 4-10 Larimer County US287 Right-of-Way and Publicly Owned Land



Bicycle and Pedestrian

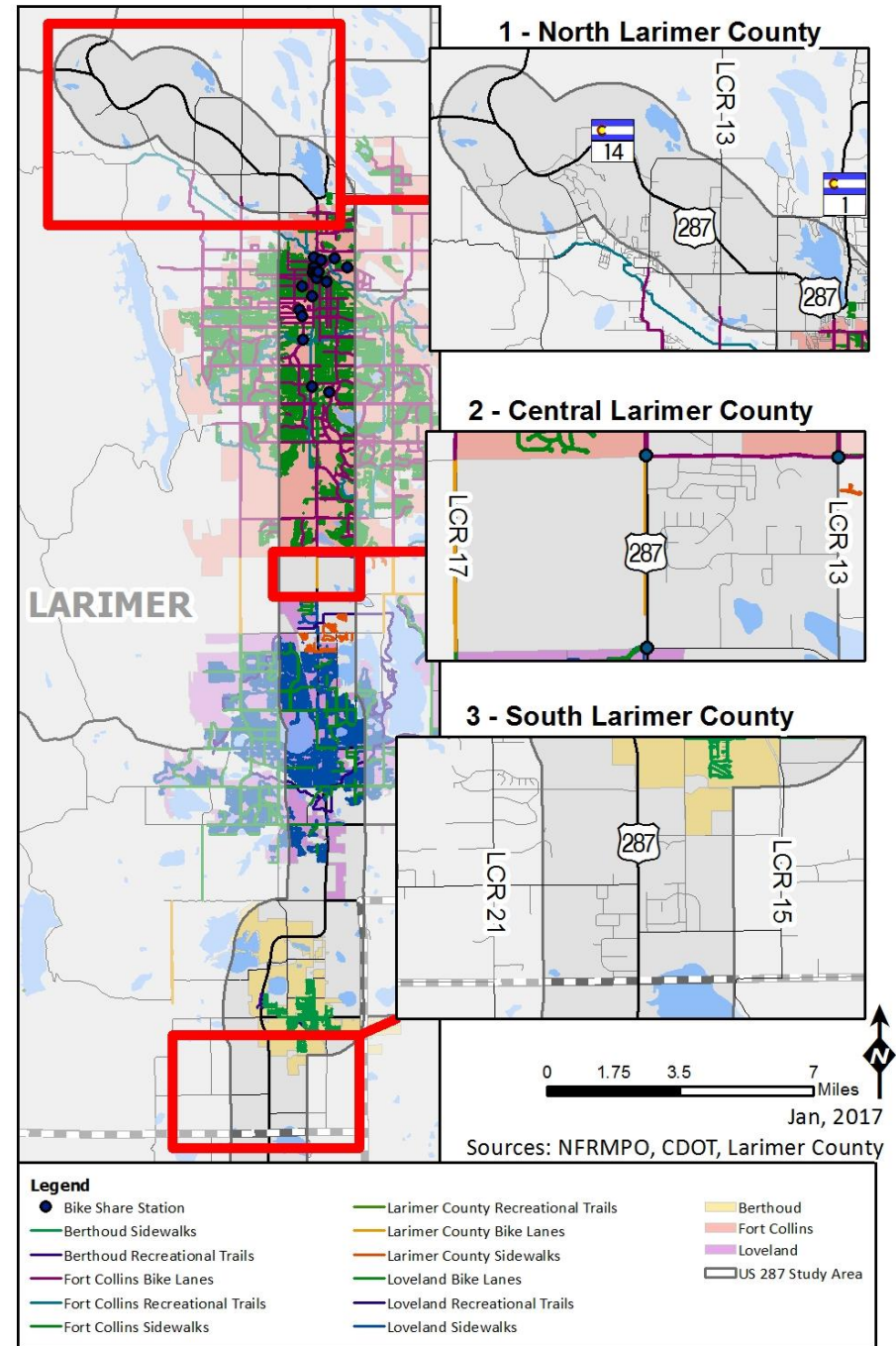
Figure 4-11 shows unincorporated Larimer County’s bicycle and pedestrian network mapped during the 2016 *Non-Motorized Plan* development.

Within the Study Area, the North Larimer County section does not have bicycle lanes or sidewalks. This may be explained by the fact this section of road is built to rural standards. Experienced bicyclists use wider shoulders on this portion of US287. Although just outside of the US287 Study Area, Laporte and Bellevue have recreational trails. These Census-designated places are located south of the US287 Study Area.

In Central Larimer County, there are wide shoulders which function as bicycle lanes on LCR17 and US287. The wide shoulders may be more conducive to more experienced cyclists using the road due to the higher roadway speeds. A portion of sidewalk exists within a small development at Wyndham Hill Road, but only connects to a dirt path parallel to LCR13.

No bicycle lanes or sidewalks exist in South Larimer County. Wide shoulders may act as bicycle lanes for more experienced riders. The rural character of this corridor may limit sidewalks or bicycle lanes.

Figure 4-11 Larimer County Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

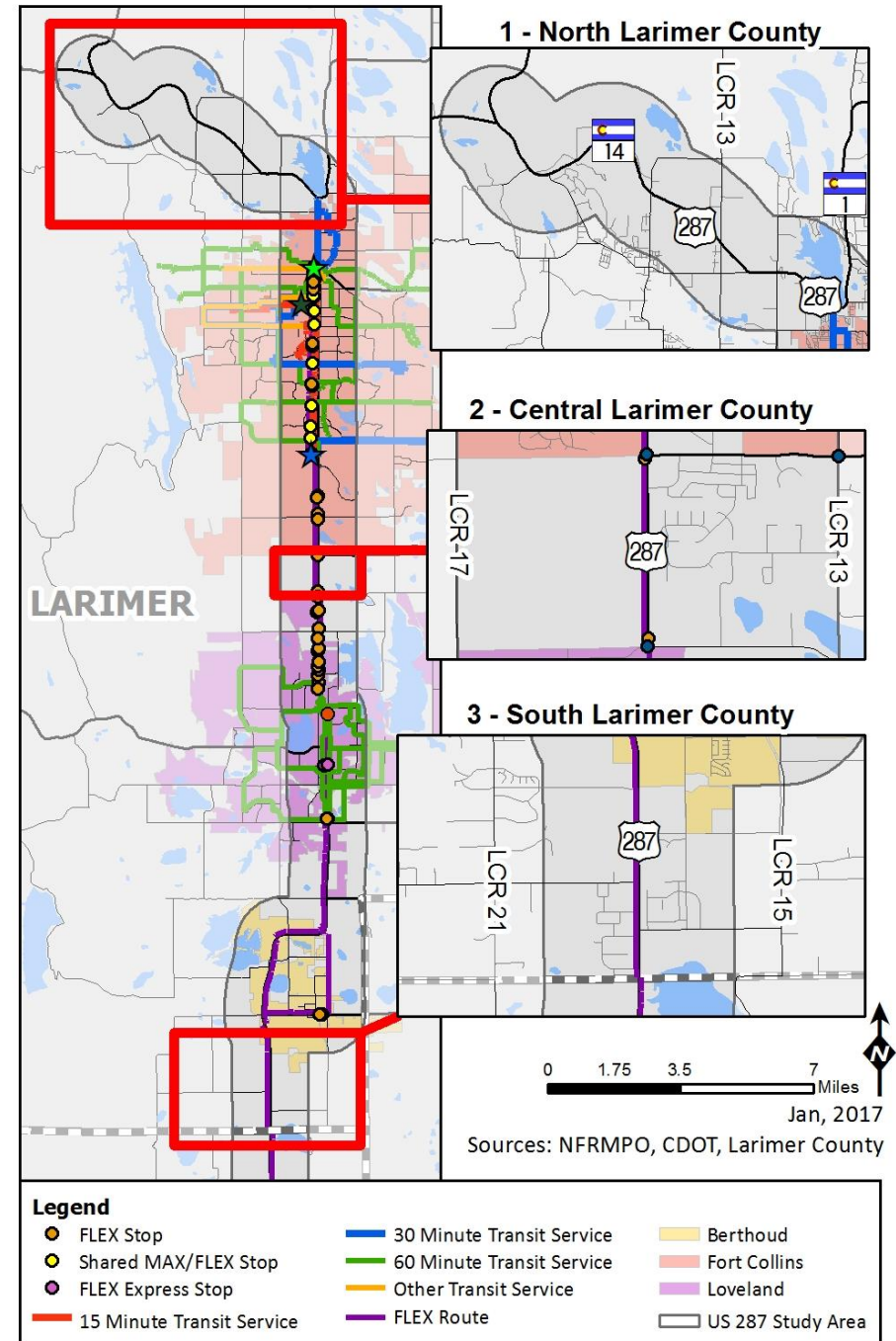


Transit

Larimer County has not directly operated transit since the cancellation of the Larimer Lift service in 2012. Some funding is available through the Larimer County Office on Aging for human service transportation. No fixed-route transit operates north of the Poudre Valley Mobile Home Park, which is the last stop for Transfort's Routes 8 and 81 located near the US287 and SH1 junction.

As shown on **Figure 4-12**, Central and South Larimer County have both FLEX routes: the Loveland/Longmont Route and the Boulder Express. The FLEX Loveland/Longmont route has two stops in Central Larimer County: one at SH392 and one at 71st Street. The FLEX to Boulder does not stop at either of these stops. No stops are located in South Larimer County.

Figure 4-12 Larimer County Transit Routes



Environmental Features

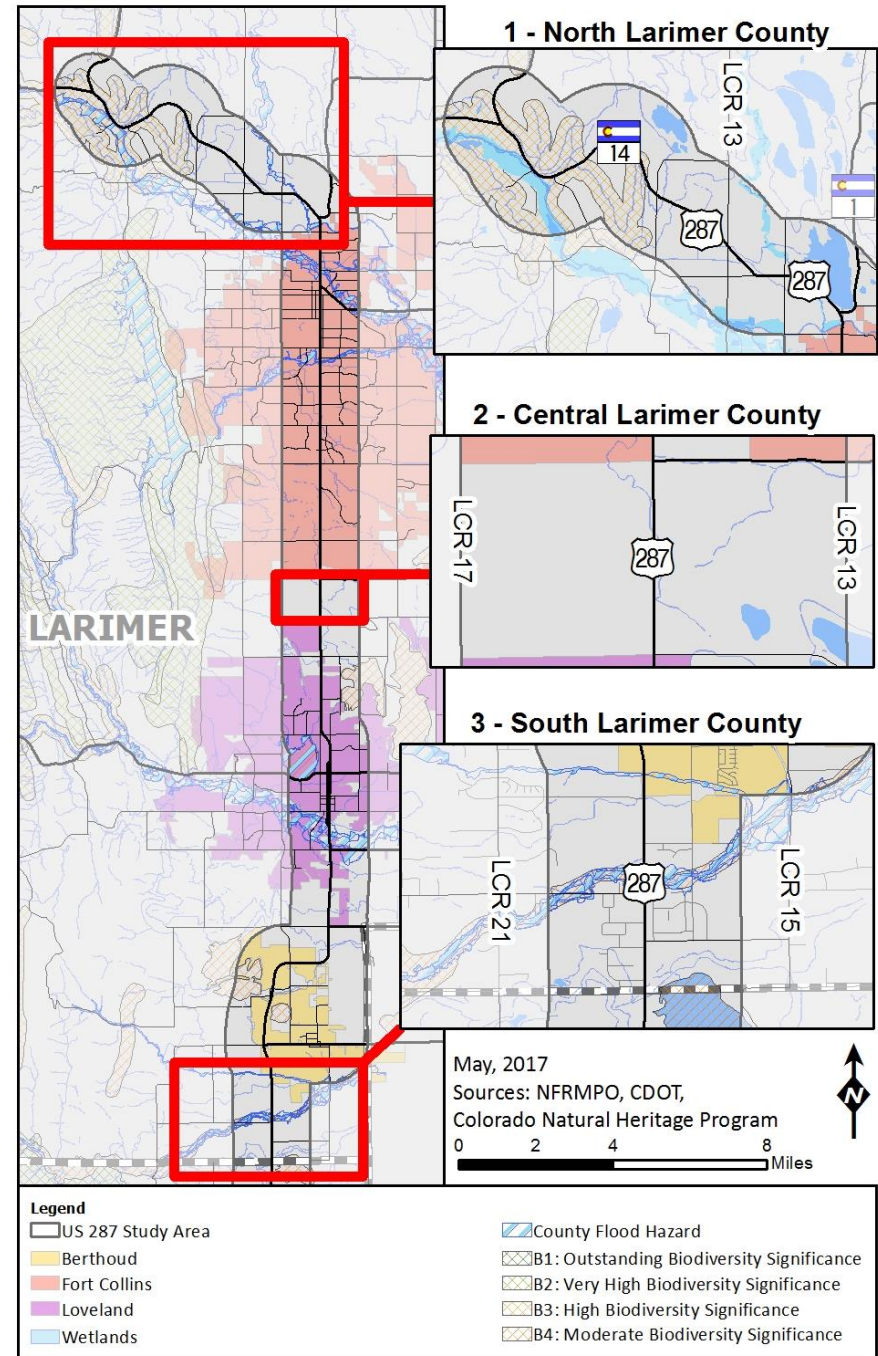
Figure 4-13 shows the environmental features for Larimer County. Due to its location along the Rocky Mountain foothills, Larimer County has a diverse environment and landscape. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has studied various habitats and uses the Potential Conservation Areas methodology to rate the habitats' ecological sensitivity. The rating scale of B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance to B5: General Biodiversity Significance is a reflection of how ecologically sensitive the area is.

US287 descends from the mountains in North Larimer County through primarily rural areas. Farms require ditches to irrigate the land, and the ditches take advantage of the Cache la Poudre River. Together, these make up the Larimer County Flood Hazard and wetlands for this section of Larimer County. The Cache La Poudre River near the SH14 junction is part of a High Biodiversity Significance area according to the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Ditches connect a network of wetlands in Central Larimer County, but no major rivers or environmental features are located in this section.

The Little Thompson River and Dry Creek converge in South Larimer County and both have potential flood risks and Moderate Biodiversity (B4).

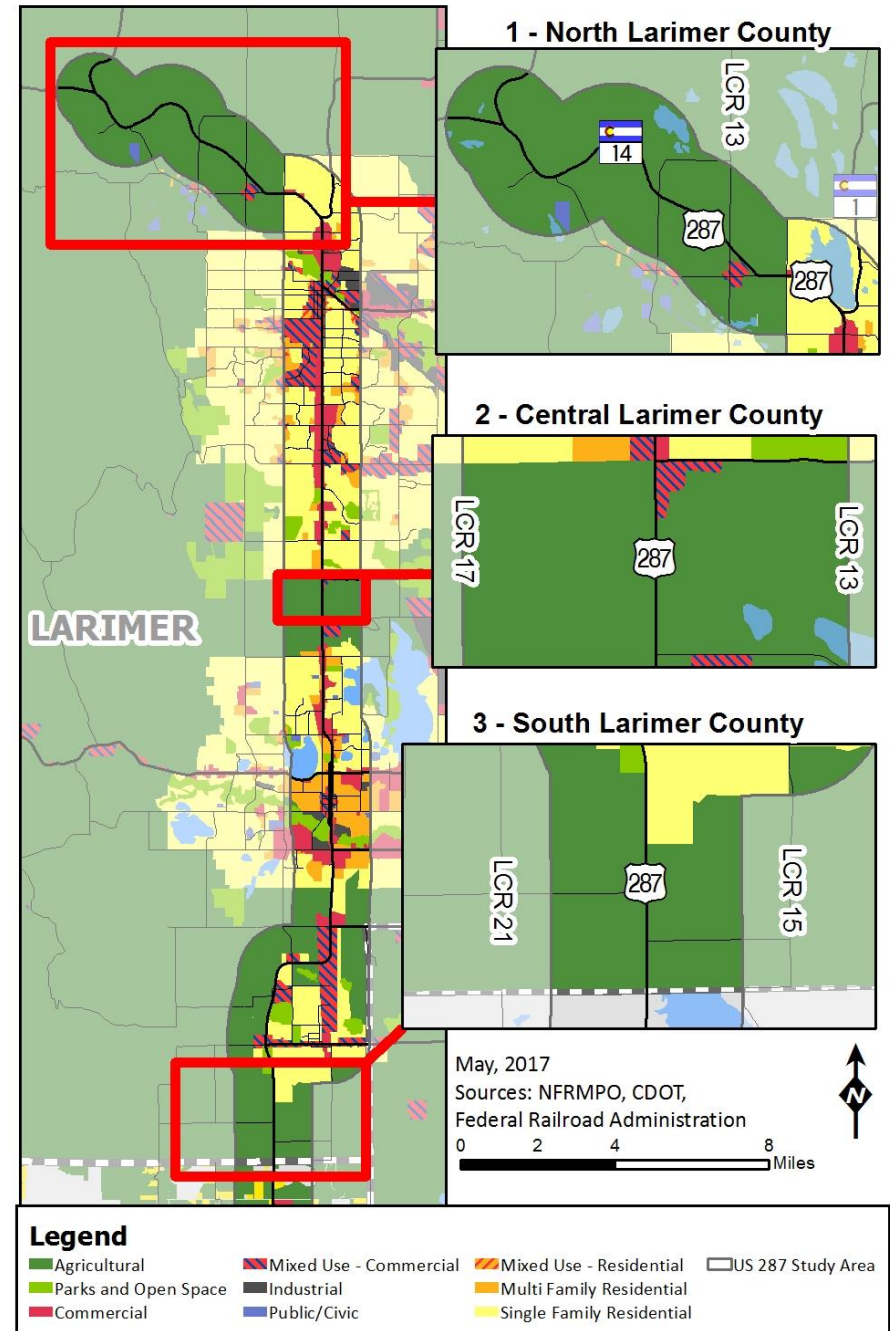
Figure 4-13 Larimer County Environmental Features



Existing Land Use

The land uses displayed on **Figure 4-14** represent 2012 land uses as compiled for the NFRMPO 2040 Land Use Allocation Model. Almost all of the Study Area in unincorporated Larimer County is identified as agricultural, which includes very low density residential uses. A few sections are identified as Mixed Use - Commercial.

Figure 4-14 Larimer County Existing Land Use



Future Land Use

The land uses displayed on **Figure 4-15** represent future land uses as compiled for the NFRMPO 2040 Land Use Allocation Model. Data was provided by Larimer County zoning (2013), the 2011 City of Fort Collins Comprehensive Plan, and the 2007 Town of Berthoud Comprehensive Plan. The City of Loveland’s future land uses were updated based on the 2015 Create Loveland Comprehensive Plan. The future land uses represent built out conditions identified by local communities, and does not adhere to a specific forecast year. Within the Study Area in unincorporated Larimer County, future land uses primarily include Agricultural land uses, which include very low density residential uses, as well as Parks and Open Spaces, Commercial, and Residential land uses.

Figure 4-15 Larimer County Future Land Use

