



4

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROFILE

4.0 Environmental Profile

4.1 Introduction

The passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the evolution of transportation legislation have resulted in changes to the transportation planning process, many of them related to one of the many environmental aspects. Since the time of Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), transportation planning has required that the adopted metropolitan transportation plan contain a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities (area-wide, not project specific). This requirement is to be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal regulatory agencies responsible for land management, wildlife, and other environmental issues. This new requirement did not apply to plans prior to SAFETEA-LU. As local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) offices have been working to comply with this new requirement, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has been providing guidance, resources, workshops, and connections to various regulatory agencies to help achieve that goal. The Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) and other MPOs in the state are now making more informed decisions about specific transportation projects while also protecting and enhancing the environment.

This chapter describes the environmental regulatory framework from which the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is developed, the methodology used to acquire and analyze environmental data with relevance to transportation plans, and the overall approach to environmental mitigation taken by the plan.

4.2 Regulatory Framework for Environmental Considerations

There are a number of environmental laws and executive orders that transportation agencies are required to address when planning for transportation within their regions. Relevant federal legislation related to the environment is cited below with a short abstract of key environmental acts and the related agencies that support and enforce them.

4.2.1 The National Historic Preservation Act (1966)

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) affects transportation projects that are federally funded. It requires government agencies to evaluate the impact to cultural resources of all federally-funded construction projects through a process dictated by Section 106 of the Act. Under the act, agencies conduct their own preservation reviews with consultation from local governments and Native American tribes, with monitoring from the National Council on Historic Preservation.

The NHPA was enacted due to public concern that so many of the nation's historical resources were not receiving adequate protection as federally sponsored public works projects impacted their integrity. Having been strengthened and expanded by several amendments, the NHPA is today the basis of America's historic preservation policy.

The NHPA expanded the role of federal preservation efforts begun by the National Antiquities Act. Federal power was diffused to the states, which in turn were encouraged to diffuse it further to localities. Historic preservation in the United States was thus broadened to include places with local or state as well as national historic significance.

NHPA mandates a three-part process: the identification of potentially historically significant resources; assessment of potential adverse effects to these resources of the proposed project; and description of resolution strategies to the adverse effects. Potentially significant cultural resources are defined as resources evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Assessments are conducted by architectural historians authorized to conduct such reviews as part of specific Section 106 reviews, usually in conjunction with the satisfaction of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In Pueblo County, there are 114 structures currently listed on the National Register, including the individual contributing buildings in the Union Ave. and Pitkin Place Historic Districts. In addition, there are 5 structures listed on the Colorado Register and 14 on the

Pueblo Register of Cultural Resources, all of which would qualify as eligible for National Register status for Section 106 review purposes. In addition, as part of the I-25 improvements EIS Section 106 review, 856 structures were tentatively identified as National Register-eligible within the Area of Potential Effect for the I-25 Improvements project.

4.2.2 The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 1969)

NEPA came into existence following widespread protests against the federal government's destruction of neighborhoods and the natural environment while building Interstate highways during the 1950s and 1960s. The focus of the law was the establishment of a U.S. national policy promoting the enhancement of the environment, but its most significant effect was to establish the requirement for EISs for major U.S. federal government actions. This law affects transportation projects in that it has since been applied to any public works project that either involves federal funding or when a federal agency is a key participant in the project's development.

4.2.3 The Clean Air Act (1970)

The Clean Air Act Extension of 1970 is a United States federal law that requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and enforce regulations to protect the general public from exposure to airborne contaminants that are known to be hazardous to human health. This law is an amendment to the Clean Air Act originally passed in 1963.

In June 1989 President George H.W. Bush proposed sweeping revisions to the Clean Air Act (The Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), 1990). Building on Congressional proposals advanced during the 1980s, the President proposed legislation designed to curb three major threats to the nation's environment and to the health of millions of Americans: acid rain, urban air pollution, and toxic air emissions. The proposal also called for establishing a national permits program to make the law more workable, and an improved enforcement program to help ensure better compliance with the Act.

As part of the Clean Air Act, the concept of “non-attainment” zones was developed. Non-attainment zones are areas of the country where air pollution levels persistently exceed the national ambient air quality standards. Pueblo County is not designated as “non-attainment” by the EPA.

4.2.4 The Clean Water Act (1972)

Transportation projects that have potential water quality impacts need to address the regulations of the Clean Water Act. It is the primary federal law in the United States governing water pollution. The act established the goals of eliminating releases to water of high amounts of toxic substances, eliminating additional water pollution by 1985, and ensuring that surface waters would meet standards necessary for human sports and recreation by 1983.

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act authorizes the water quality standards and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) programs. These are risk-based (also called hazard-based) programs that set site-specific pollutant standards for individual water bodies, such as rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands.

Within Pueblo County selected toxic substances are of greatest concern for each of the two major water bodies. The pollutants of concern affecting the Arkansas River are selenium, sulfur tetroxide, and mercury found in fish species. The pollutant of concern for Fountain Creek is *e. coli*.

4.2.5 The Endangered Species Act (1973)

There are a number of Threatened and Endangered Species in Pueblo County and as such, transportation projects could potentially be affected by federal regulations regarding the protection of these species and their various habitats. The Endangered Species Act, (ESA) is the most wide-ranging of the dozens of United States environmental laws passed in the 1970s. This act was designed to protect critically imperiled species from extinction due to the consequences of economic growth and development without adequate concern and conservation.

Species with the highest potential to occur within the MPO project areas include: black-tailed

prairie dog, burrowing owl, Botta's pocket gopher, northern pocket gopher, swift fox, Townsend's big-eared bat, massasauga, Texas horned lizard and the triploid checkered whiptail. In addition, there are five rare plant species that have potential to occur in shortgrass prairie/grasslands habitats in Pueblo County including the Arkansas River feverfew, Arkansas Valley evening primrose, golden blazing star, Pueblo goldenweed, and round-leaf four-o'clock.

4.2.6 The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (1986)

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, approved November 10, 1986, authorized the purchase of wetlands from Land and Water Conservation Fund monies, removing a prior prohibition on such acquisitions. It required the Secretary of the Interior to establish a National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, required the States to include wetlands in their Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, and transferred to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund amounts equal to the import duties on arms and ammunition. Wetland areas are common within the Arkansas River, Fountain Creek and other tributaries within Pueblo County.

4.2.7 Linking Planning and NEPA

The passage of NEPA in the 1970s required transportation planners to consider the significance of environmental issues in transportation. Requirements under SAFETEA-LU, and continued under MAP-21, further emphasize both the spirit and the letter of NEPA. NEPA mandated an environmental assessment for every federally funded project with the potential to impact the environment. If no federal funding is involved, state environmental review requirements or local ordinances and plans may apply with similar requirements for study of impact and assessment of alternatives.

In addition to transportation-related environmental review requirements, a variety of local, state and federal permits that regulate wetlands, water quality, air quality, noise and other environmental resources may be needed for projects as well. Identifying the extent of

impacts and mitigation opportunities is a key consideration when planning projects.

4.2.8 Natural Resource Management Plans

It is important for Long Range Transportation project planning to understand the long-term goals of the management plans for Federal Lands within their study areas. Knowing the goals of these agencies as expressed through their management plans will help to ensure that future transportation plans are not at cross-purposes with the stated goals of these federal agencies.

4.3 Approach to Environmental Planning

4.3.1 Regional Overview

Pueblo County's snow-capped, ruggedly alpine Wet Mountains rise majestically out of the San Isabel National Forest and provide a western backdrop for one of the most spectacularly beautiful landscapes in Colorado. At their base, rolling, pine-covered foothills give way to juniper and piñon-speckled mesas that in turn break dramatically from their flat tops and fall into hidden canyon lands. These then blend into vast expanses of short-grass prairie and fragrant sand sage ecosystems. Tying all of this variety together is a laced network of braided wetlands, reservoirs, lakes, mountain streams and riparian corridors that together form the numerous tributaries of the greater Arkansas River system. This unique landscape that straddles the continental edge between the Great Plains and the Southern Rocky Mountains provides a setting for more than 250 individual species of birds and land animals. It shelters rare plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world and provides critical habitat to a number of rare, threatened and endangered species including the bald eagle.

While similar examples of this arid collage of ecosystems can be found throughout the North American West, they are becoming increasingly isolated. Pockets can be found to the north along the Front Range of the Rockies, as far away as Wyoming and Montana. To the south, they can be seen extensively along the southern



Sangre de Cristo Mountains to Taos and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

While these areas are all individually unique, they share many common features and qualities. Herds of elk roam across vast working ranches ringed with barbed wire fences. Black bears, mountain lions, wild turkeys, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, mule deer and the odd white tail deer leave their tracks on lands previously inhabited by Native Americans, cowboys, mountain men, pioneers, ranchers, miners, and adventurers seeking their luck in the lands of the West. These same Western lands have also been facing universal pressure from urbanization and development. The very traits that make them beautiful and desirable are the traits that attract urbanization, growth and irreversible change.

The Wet Mountains are an important example of natural lands needing protection; so too in the Fountain Creek watershed. As the urbanized Front Range in Southern Colorado continues to grow, the portion of Pueblo County that lies north of the City of Pueblo and also between the State Land Board properties on the East and Fort Carson on the West has been identified by many planning professionals, developers and investment groups as a likely area for future growth. With its current mixture of working ranches, historic trails, wetlands, wildlife corridors, and unique vistas, this sub-section of our study area is highly desirable for a number of future land uses. At its heart is the Fountain Creek watershed; a dynamic riparian zone that has been studied by a number of local groups with different goals and objectives. Historically, the Fountain Creek watershed has been the focus of concerted land use/transportation planning. That work has provided to the PACOG LRP a set of comprehensive planning goals related directly to the plan:

- Creating numerous new recreational opportunities such as camping, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, urban and wilderness hiking, horseback riding and bicycle commuting.
- Restoring natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat.
- Keeping agricultural lands productive and vibrant.
- Preserving a “greenbelt” of open space as a community separator and scenic corridor

along Interstate 25 between Pueblo and Colorado Springs.

- Finding an effective way to manage storm water discharges, attenuate flooding and reduce the dynamic changes of the Fountain Creek and other water features.
- Finding effective ways to maintain or improve the wildlife habitat within the Fountain Creek riparian and upland zones.
- Managing water quality and quantity on the Fountain Creek and other water features as growth and urbanization in the watershed changes the natural hydrograph.
- Limiting the impact of urbanization to the region.
- Protecting valuable rare plant communities and critical wildlife migration corridors.

There are many challenges facing elected officials, community leaders, planners, interest groups and the public. Prominent among them will be to integrate the numerous and sometimes disparate goals for the lands, accommodating future projected growth while protecting the rich ecological, cultural and historic resources we have inherited.

4.3.2 The PACOG “Corridor Vision” Strategy

Transportation Planning often uses the concept of “corridor plans” to analyze future roadway systems and expansions in capacity to current systems. This makes rational sense from the standpoint that people have to move from point A to point B along some route roughly between the two points. Buffers are chosen to determine the width of the “corridor” from this imaginary line (or the current facility) that is reasonable for study. That area is delineated and as much information as can reasonably be gathered is traditionally combined into a very detailed analysis of the “corridor” of the project.

The challenge with this approach is that it can miss the greater environmental context. Its surgical accuracy leaves it without a reference point. For example, is there a wildlife migration route? How important is this migration route? What does it connect on a landscape level? Is this the single connection between summer and winter habitats? If this migration route is limited by the proposed transportation project, are there other options for the wildlife? These can be

difficult questions to answer with limited information about large geographical areas.

PACOG has chosen to supplement this traditional “corridor” approach with a more holistic, contextually rich approach. GIS) technology makes it possible now to analyze entire landscapes at a level once only available to a small locale. The technology is such that reducing this global perspective to the traditional “corridor” model is actually more difficult and more expensive, although only slightly so. In an attempt to understand the landscape-level functionality of the PACOG region we have gathered data at state and regional levels and are able to answer questions on a project-by-project basis from that the ecosystem perspective. The fiscal constraints to transportation development in our region provide us with the opportunity to focus on the larger picture as opposed to the project-driven constraints of areas of the state that are growing more rapidly. The stable growth of Southern Colorado also allows us to examine a range of transportation modes more freely. Is it reasonable to believe that the single-occupant, petroleum-fueled vehicle will be the major mode of choice in 30 years? If not, what mode would we recommend as an alternative? How can we begin to imagine a transition to that mode? What would be the relative environmental cost of the new mode?

PACOG will still identify corridors and report on them in the same format as our previous transportation plans. This approach allows the 2040 plan to be easily and seamlessly combined with the reports of the other transportation planning regions at the state level. However, the analysis behind our corridor visions is radically different from what has been done locally in the past.

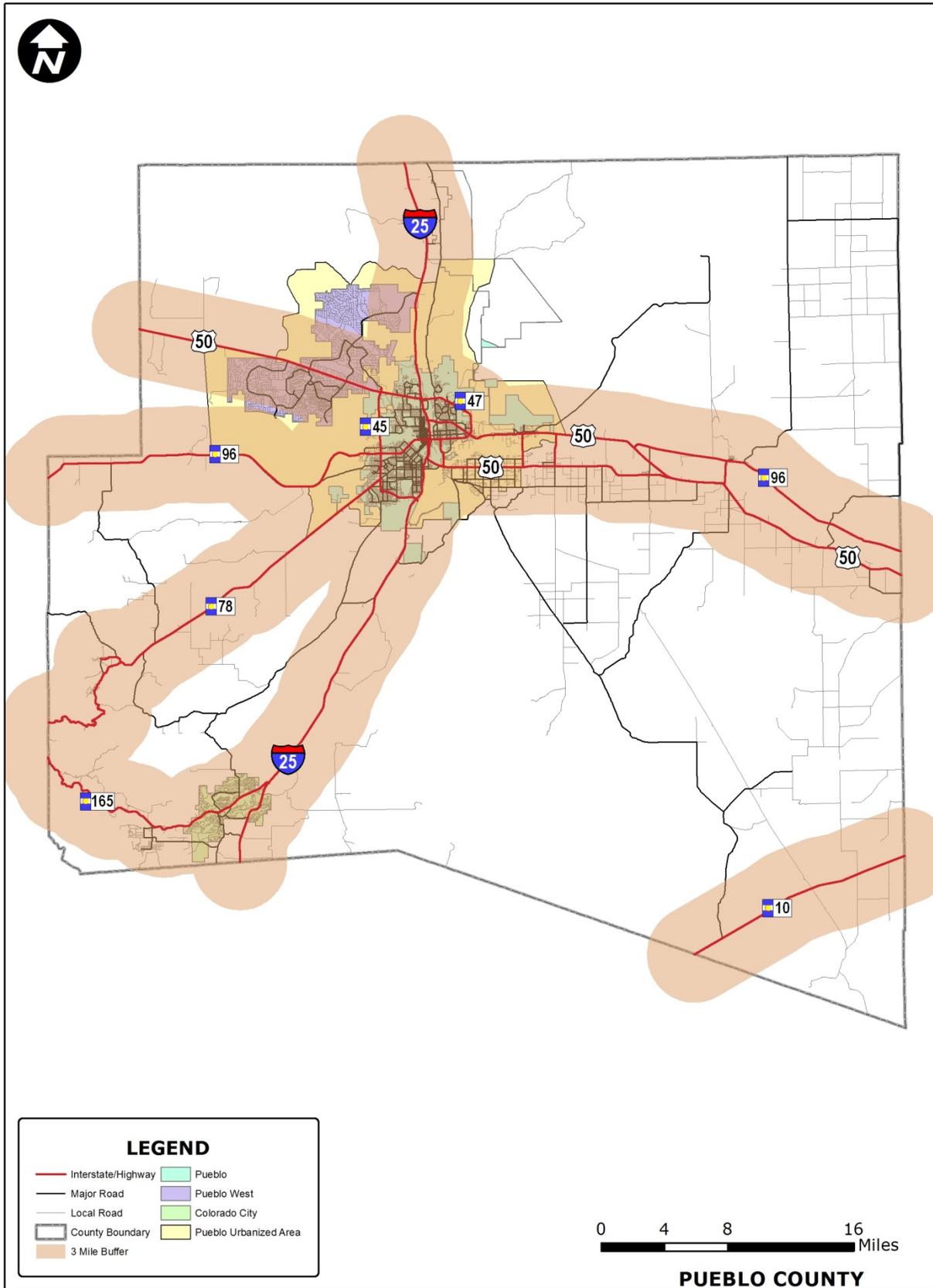
Figure 4.1 below illustrates the areas we would find if we only studied the buffers (shown as lighter areas) three miles in each direction away from existing facilities. By viewing the relatively large amount of landscape that is not included in these corridors it can be seen that had we used a traditional approach, our ability to understand the greater functionality of the landscape would be severely diminished. The present approach is consistent with the spirit and letter of the latest regulations for Long Range Transportation Planning as delineated by both CDOT and the

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). PACOG is also aware of the added benefit that this level of analysis provides when working with the local governments within our jurisdiction.

The emphasis on land use in the transportation setting will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.



Figure 4.1: Pueblo County Transportation Corridors



4.4 Transportation & Land Use Planning

MAP-21, like SAFETEA-LU, has expanded upon the required environmental and land use guidance. Specifically, MPOs are required to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

4.4.1 Overview

The need to cooperatively plan transportation systems in conjunction with land uses is now widely recognized. There exists a recommended philosophy for integrating land use planning issues into LRTPs. The primary goals of this transportation planning philosophy include the following:

- A desire to improve the connection between transportation and land use.
- Recognition that land use decisions are made by many, often independent, actors and actions.
- An interest in empowering local organizations through a bottom-up approach.
- A readiness to work within the traditional planning process available to MPOs.
- Willingness of the MPO to act as a leader during project conception but ultimately play the role of facilitator for local solutions and innovations.

Consistent with this philosophy, the FHWA recommends MPOs address the following issues, which implicitly require an examination of land use and transportation issues concurrently.

- **Corridor Planning:** State DOTs, MPOs, cities, and counties can develop transportation corridor plans considering land use as well as transportation issues. Some State agencies have developed handbooks for corridor planning as an aid to district staff and consultants when conducting planning studies.

- **Interchange Area Planning:** Agencies at various levels have developed and/or implemented land use plans and zoning overlay ordinances to guide land development around freeway interchanges. Interchanges become magnets for development, but unplanned development and unmanaged access can quickly lead to a breakdown of traffic conditions in the vicinity of the interchange, affecting both safety and capacity. State agencies and nonprofits have sponsored the development and adoption of model codes and regulations for interchange areas, while regional agencies and local jurisdictions have sponsored the development of interchange area plans that address access, local circulation, land uses, site design, buffers, and landscaping. In Pueblo County, many of these areas are designated as “special development areas”.
- **Special Development Areas:** These are areas where there appear to be multiple possibilities for development as well as significant care to be taken with the development. These areas are lands with significant development, redevelopment and/or open space potential in strategic locations that suggest the need for careful, location-specific plans for infrastructure and private development. Master plans should be prepared prior to development or redevelopment occurring.
- **Linking Planning and NEPA:** Transportation planning agencies are increasingly expanding the scope of their statewide, regional, and corridor planning efforts to address NEPA issues, including land use impacts, at an early stage. Methods include: collecting and using regional data on environmental conditions in the long-range transportation planning process; evaluating combined transportation and land use scenarios; involving federal and state resource agencies in long-range transportation planning; conducting Tier 1 environmental analysis for transportation corridors; and recommending projects and policies in statewide and corridor plans that are designed to reduce environmental impacts.



- Planning for Transit Oriented Development:** Transit agencies, MPOs, and local jurisdictions lead planning processes focusing on existing or planned transit station areas and/or corridors. These processes may involve education and outreach on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles and concepts; station area conceptual planning; market assessment; detailed station area plans; development and adoption of overlay districts or other zoning changes to facilitate transit-supportive development; and application of other tools and incentives. The Pueblo Transit Center is a good example of TOD.
- Regional Agency Support for Local Area Planning:** MPOs, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), and Councils of Government (COGs) provide technical and/or financial assistance for local comprehensive planning and/or small-area planning activities that link transportation and land use. Financial support is provided from Federal sources, including Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Planning (PL) funds, as well as from funds appropriated by State legislatures.
- Regional Visioning and Scenario Planning:** MPOs and nonprofit/community groups lead public processes to develop a transportation and land use "vision" for a region or multi-jurisdictional corridor and to evaluate future transportation and land use scenarios. The results of this process are typically implemented through the next updates of the LRTP and TIP, and through additional actions to encourage land use changes at the local level.
- State DOT support for Comprehensive Planning:** State DOTs provide assistance for integrating transportation considerations into local comprehensive planning and land use considerations into statewide transportation planning. Activities have included the development of agency policies on considering land use in transportation planning, training for State DOT staff and consultants, and provision of technical and financial assistance for local governments.
- Sub-area and Neighborhood Planning:** Local agencies develop plans for sub-areas that include both multi-modal transportation and land use strategies to address issues such as

traffic circulation, parking, transit service, and pedestrian and bicycle access. Planning sub-areas have included central cities, activity centers, and neighborhoods. Plans are implemented through capital improvements, changes to zoning, and other strategies.

- Tier I EIS's for Transportation Corridors:** A Tier 1 EIS is a broad environmental impact statement (e.g., for a general transportation corridor) that is prepared prior to a subsequent statement or environmental assessment on a more specific action (such as a specific highway alignment). The use of a tiered EIS approach to transportation corridor studies can assist in streamlining project development, by addressing large-scale issues up front (such as growth-related impacts) and then incorporating these issues by reference into a second-tier EIS dealing with specific projects and alignments.

The Pueblo Area 2040 RTP addresses land use/transportation plans based on best knowledge to date of the land uses projected by the City of Pueblo and Pueblo County.

4.4.2 Framework for Land Use/Transportation Planning

A useful taxonomy of major land use categories which may be helpful in understanding Pueblo County's land use and transportation planning interface is shown in **Table 4.1**. Note that there are two primary categories, the built environment and greenspace.

Table 4.1: Land Use Categories

Built Environment	Greenspace
Residential (single- and multi-family housing)	Parkland
Commercial (stores and offices)	Agricultural
Institutional (schools, public offices, and other)	Forests and undeveloped land
Industrial	Shorelines
Transportation facilities (roads, parking, sidewalks, and other)	
Plazas and urban parks	
Brownfields (old, unused and underused facilities)	

Land use patterns can be evaluated based on the following attributes:

- **Density** – number of people, jobs or housing units in an area.
- **Mix** – whether different land use types (commercial, residential, etc.) are located together.
- **Clustering** – whether related destinations are located together (e.g., commercial centers, urban villages, residential clusters, etc.).
- **Connectivity** – number of connections within street and path systems.
- **Impervious surface** – land covered by buildings and pavement, also called footprint.
- **Greenspace** – portion of land devoted to gardens, parks, farms, woodlands, and other.
- **Accessibility** – ability to reach desired activities and destinations.
- **Non-motorized accessibility** – quality of walking and cycling conditions.

Land use attributes can also be evaluated at various scales:

- **Site** – an individual parcel, building, facility or campus.
- **Street** – the buildings and facilities along a particular street or stretch of roadway.
- **Neighborhood or center** – a walkable area, typically less than one square mile.
- **Local** – a small geographic area, often consisting of several neighborhoods.
- **Municipal** – a town or city jurisdiction.
- **Region** – a geographic area where residents share services and employment options. A metropolitan region typically consists of one or more cities and various suburbs, smaller commercial centers, and surrounding semi-rural areas.

Geographic areas are often categorized in the following ways:

- **Urban** – relatively high density (5+ housing units per gross acre), mixed land use, with multi-modal transport (typically including walking, cycling, public transit, automobile and taxi service).
- **Suburban** – medium density (2-10 residents, 1-5 housing units per acre), segregated land uses, and an automobile-dependent transportation system.

- **Town** – Smaller urban centers (generally less than 20,000 residents).
- **Village** – Small urban center (generally less than 1,000 residents).
- **Exurban** – low density (less than 1 house per acre), mostly farms and undeveloped lands, located near enough to a city for residents to commute and use services there.
- **Rural** – low density (less than 1 house per acre), mostly farms and undeveloped lands, with a relatively independent identity and economy.
- **Greenspace (also called Openspace)** – biologically active lands such as gardens, parks, farms, woodlands, and other.

Many experts are concerned that sprawl (dispersed, low-density, automobile-dependent land use development patterns) imposes various economic, social and environmental costs, and so from a public policy perspective Smart Growth development is preferable.

Transportation and land use decisions affect each other. Some types of land use patterns increase automobile travel, while others are more multi-modal and accessible, reducing the amount of vehicle travel needed to access goods, services and activities. Communities designed primarily for automobile transportation are called automobile-dependent. Some types of transportation policies and programs also tend to encourage automobile dependency, while others tend to encourage multi-modal distribution of demand, as summarized in **Table 4.2**.

The following best practices in transportation/land use planning help achieve effective development:

- Planning should be integrated, so individual, short-term decisions are consistent with broader, strategic goals.
- Analysis should be comprehensive, reflecting all significant perspectives, impacts and objectives.
- Planners should be objective, fair and respectful.
- Stakeholders should be kept informed and have opportunities for involvement.
- The planning process should be understood by all stakeholders, with a clearly defined vision or problem statement, goals, objectives, evaluation criteria and performance indicators.



Table 4.2: Transportation Policy and Program Land Use Impacts

Encourages Automobile Dependency	Encourages Multi-modal Distribution of Mobility Demand
Maximum Roadway Capacity and Speed	Transit Service Improvements
Generous parking supply	More affordable public transit fares
Low road user charges and fuel taxes	Pedestrian and cycling improvements
Poor walking and cycling conditions	Reduced parking supply with parking management
Inferior public transit service	Road and parking pricing
High public transit fares	Traffic calming and traffic speed reductions

- A wide range of possible solutions should be considered, including some that may initially seem unrealistic but could be appropriate as part of an integrated program. Staff should support innovation: trying new strategies recognizing that some may fail since even unsuccessful experiments provide useful information.
- Resources, constraints, and conflicts must be identified, with attention drawn to potential problems.
- Results should be conveyed in ways that are comprehensible by the intended audience using suitable language and visual information (graphs, maps, images, etc.). Highlight differences between options.
- Token solutions, which fail to really address a problem, should be avoided. Modest actions may be appropriate if they are the beginning but not the end of more substantial solutions.
- A planning process will sometimes initially fail but later succeed if repeated, due to changing circumstances or more stakeholder understanding and commitment.
- Changes should be implemented as predictably and gradually as possible.
- When appropriate, contingency-based planning should be used identifying a wide range of potential solutions and implementing the most cost-effective strategies justified at each point in time, with additional strategies available for quick deployment if needed in the future.

4.4.3 Roadmap for the Future

In the PACOG region, the complex relationships among existing and proposed land uses and existing and proposed transportation

facilities are being constantly examined and modified where necessary until each of the components “best fits” with all of the others. Future land use changes will be incorporated into the transportation modeling and planning process and, reflexively, changes in transportation plans are available to be incorporated into regional development planning, development standards, and zoning decisions. To the extent that both land development and transportation planning remain tightly interwoven in the future, the process will truly be deserving of the term “regional plan.”

Recognized development action areas of Pueblo County have naturally evolved during the period between RTPs. Future development has been anticipated to concentrate around the existing Pueblo City limits, especially to the southwest, as well as existing lots within Pueblo West. The taxonomy of future land uses has generally remained constant. Fifteen broad future land use categories classify densities and uses across the county, with a general expectation of zoning designations consistent with these land use types. Locations of these land use types, and proposed density levels are summarized in **Table 4.3** below.

A number of development directions have changed in the years since the previous plan was adopted; these directions raise issues that PACOG keeps firmly in mind. First, the growth of the City of Pueblo is expected to shift northward towards El Paso County rather than be accommodated within and adjacent to the City of Pueblo. As new development occurs, additional connections between portions of the existing network should be made. If higher classifications of roads are not constructed by

“Future land use changes will be incorporated into the transportation modeling and planning process and, reflexively, changes in transportation plans will be incorporated into regional development planning, development standards, and zoning decisions.”

Pueblo Regional Development Plan, PACOG LRTP, 2015

developers, then there needs to be an additional mechanism to pay for the upgrades from local roads, or a very conscious effort not to allow development that has limited access to occur. If only a local roadway network is to be constructed, it will need the greatest amount of connectivity to reduce the need for minor and principal arterials. Second, as Pueblo West has grown, traffic patterns have been anticipated to change to utilize routes other than U.S. Highway 50 West.

Additional connections to the City will be called for, with additional funding mechanisms. Third, the growing emphasis on non-motorized travel, including both walking and bicycling, is reflected on the infrastructure side by investing in paths and trails. It is further emphasized on the environmental side by the preservation of existing open lands. And finally, the regional role of Ft. Carson is important to keep in mind since it affects Pueblo County.

Table 4.3 Proposed Future Land Use Intensities

Land Use Definition		Geographic Area			
Land Use Type	Typical Density	Pueblo	Pueblo West	Colorado City	County/ Towns
Rural/Ranch	1 unit/35 acres				✓
Production Agriculture	1 unit/35 acres				✓
Large Parks/Open Space	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Residential	1 unit/acre	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Village	1 unit/acre				✓
Suburban Residential	1-3 units/acre	✓	✓	✓	
Urban Residential	4-7 units/acre	✓	✓	✓	
High Density Residential	>7 units/acre	✓			
Urban Mixed Use (MXD)	16 units/acre and 1.5 FAR	✓			
Arterial Commercial MXD	.50 FAR	✓	✓	✓	✓
Office Park/Employment Center	.25 FAR	✓	✓		
Institutional MXD	.50 FAR	✓	✓		
Light Industrial MXD	.25 FAR	✓	✓	✓	✓
Industrial	.25 FAR	✓			✓
Special Development Area	TBA				

Source: The Burnham Group; FAR = Floor Area Ratio (ratio of building to lot size); ✓ - land use found in this geographic area



4.5 Summary

PACOG understands the MAP-21 legislation affects environmental planning in the Pueblo region. The MPO is cognizant of the evolution of environmental legislation, much of which directly affects Pueblo. A land use density guidance for Floor Area Ratio (FAR) provides a table of typical values useful for future planning. Regional goals relate closely to the natural resources of the area and include emphasis on recreational opportunities, the preservation of natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat, preserving a “greenbelt” of open space, managing storm water discharges, and protecting critical wildlife migration corridors. The environmentally-based tactics are interwoven with the human needs for recreation, for the enjoyment of beauty and for mobility by walking or bicycling.