

EL PASO COUNTY

2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update



**Adopted
December 6, 2016**



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2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update

ADOPTED DECEMBER 6, 2016



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*In memory of Baaron Pittenger, El Paso County Deputy Public
Information Officer, for his contributions to this MTCP.*

FHU Project No. 115448-01

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFB	Air Force Base
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CFR	Central Front Range Transportation Planning Region
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECM	Engineering Criteria Manual
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
HUTF	Highway Users Tax Fund
I-25	Interstate 25
LOS	Level of Service
MMT	Mountain Metropolitan Transit
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTCP	Major Transportation Corridors Plan
NEPCO	Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations
PPACG	Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
PPRTA	Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority
SH	State Highway
TAZ	Transportation Analysis Zone
VPD	Vehicles Per Day

CHAPTER I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

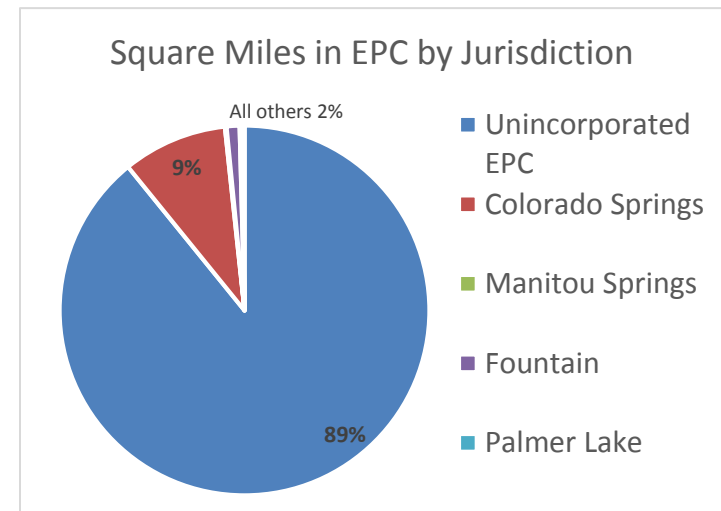
ABOUT EL PASO COUNTY COLORADO

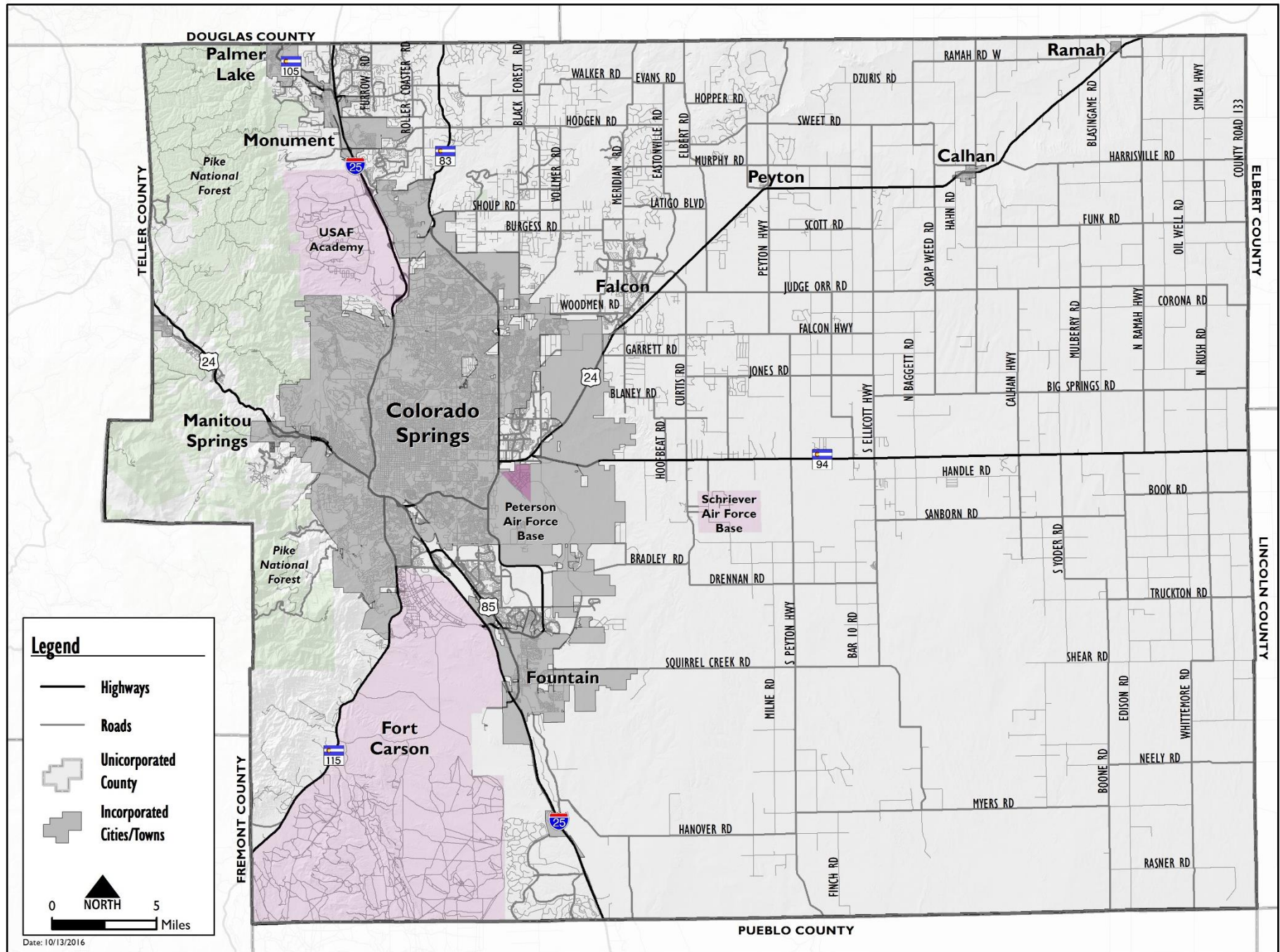
With a population of 674,000 people, El Paso County joins with Denver as the most populous counties in Colorado. El Paso County has 12.3 percent of the state's population and is home to the second largest employer in the state—Fort Carson. The County's population includes 174,000 residents who live outside cities in what is referred to as the unincorporated area (see Map 1).

El Paso County lies in east central Colorado and encompasses more than 2,158 square miles—roughly twice the area of the state of Rhode Island. While the western portion of El Paso County is extremely mountainous, the eastern part is prairie land where dairy cows and beef cattle are the main sources of ranchers' income. The altitude ranges from about 5,095 feet (1569 m) on the southern border at Black Squirrel Creek to 14,110 feet (4301 m) on the summit of Pikes Peak, near the western boundary. The mild climate, on average, supplies 285 days of sunshine, 15 inches of rain, 35 inches of snow, and very low levels of humidity.

All can enjoy the natural physical beauty of the area, situated at the base of Pikes Peak and with an uninterrupted view of the Front Range. The magnificent scenery inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write the poem "America the Beautiful" after her visit here.

El Paso contains both urban and rural areas. It is also a rapidly growing county, particularly in the unincorporated area. Population in the entire County is projected to grow at approximately 1.0 percent per year over the next 25 years, but for the unincorporated area, annual growth of nearly 2.5 percent is projected. Annual job growth is projected at 1.6 percent for the entire County and 2.65 percent for the unincorporated area.





Map I: Study Area

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

To accommodate mobility needs associated with this growth in population and economic activity, the transportation system is carefully planned by the County, led by the Public Works Department. This 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) is the long-range plan focusing on the multi-modal transportation system in unincorporated El Paso County. To keep pace with the dynamic nature of growth and infrastructure in the County, the MTCP is updated regularly, and this 2016 MTCP represents an update to the previous plan adopted by the Planning Commission in 2011.

The MTCP is a critical step in creating effective and efficient transportation infrastructure that is ready to meet future needs. The Plan will provide:

- ▶ an updated vision for future transportation,
- ▶ a prioritized list of transportation improvements,
- ▶ a funding plan for ensuring adequate resources to build the future transportation system,
- ▶ a look at multimodal transportation needs,
- ▶ a long-term right-of-way preservation plan for each roadway corridor,
- ▶ policies and strategies to implement the plan, and
- ▶ a basis for the Road Impact Fee.

The following steps were undertaken to prepare the 2016 MTCP update, in addition to continuous website presence and input:

1. Review and report existing conditions on the County's roadway network
2. Solicit public input on priorities and direction for the Plan's development, alternatives, and funding
3. Adjust Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) demographic forecasts to reflect the most recent development patterns in the County
4. Model future 2040 traffic on the existing roadway network to identify future deficiencies and needed improvements
5. Develop roadway alternatives from public input and in response to the needs assessment
6. Solicit input from the public, local jurisdictions, and committees on the draft 2040 roadway improvements
7. Prepare funding analysis including a draft Road Impact Fee Study Update
8. Prepare the draft 2016 MTCP update document
9. Solicit public, local jurisdiction, and committee input for final adoption of the 2016 MTCP and Road Impact Fee Study updates

This report is organized with the following eight sections:

- ▶ **Chapter I, Background and Context:** Provides background on the County, the purpose of the MTCP and the planning process.
- ▶ **Chapter II, Community Engagement:** Describes the process to engage stakeholders including County officials, committees, other organizations and the public, and summarizes what we heard and how feedback was incorporated in the plan.
- ▶ **Chapter III, Growth in the County:** Presents 2020, 2040 and 2060 household and employment forecasts and discusses areas of uncertainty and emerging trends that influence transportation planning.
- ▶ **Chapter IV, 2040 Major Transportation Corridors Plan:** This is the heart of the roadway analysis for the plan, presenting the assessment of future needs and the 2040 roadway plan.
- ▶ **Chapter V, Multimodal Transportation:** Discusses transportation system accommodations for user groups beyond general automobile traffic, including bicyclists, pedestrians, public transit and trucks.

- ▶ **Chapter VI, Corridor Preservation Plan:** Presents a long-range plan for preserving right-of-way to accommodate travel demands that may occur beyond the 2040 time horizon.
- ▶ **Chapter VII, Funding Analysis:** Discusses the anticipated costs for improving and maintaining the County's transportation system and the multiple funding sources needed to pay for them.
- ▶ **Chapter VIII, Implementation:** Provides recommendations for phasing the 2040 roadway improvement plan, with a short/ mid-range phase through 2030 and long-range phase from 2030 to 2040, and outlines implementation policies and strategies.

RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

El Paso County's MTCP planning process must be effectively coordinated with state, regional, and other county and city planning. Following is a listing of the other key recent and ongoing transportation planning process that most closely relate to the County's MTCP update:

- ▶ El Paso County Master Plan Documents
- ▶ Hodgen Road Access Management Plan
- ▶ US Highway 24 Access Management Plan
- ▶ Marksheffel Road Access Management Plan
- ▶ Woodmen Road Access Management Plan
- ▶ Woodmen Road Corridor Improvement Project
- ▶ Stapleton/Judge Orr Corridor Study
- ▶ Highway 105 Corridor Study
- ▶ Meridian Road Corridor Plan
- ▶ Moving Forward 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, PPACG, 2015
- ▶ Together We Go - Statewide Transportation Plan, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), 2015
- ▶ Highway 105 Corridor Study – Corridor Preservation Plan, El Paso County, 2012
- ▶ US 24 West Environmental Assessment, CDOT, 2012
- ▶ Powers Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) Document, CDOT, 2010
- ▶ US 24 East Planning and Environmental Linkages Study, CDOT, ongoing
- ▶ I-25, Monument to C-470 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study, CDOT, ongoing
- ▶ City of Colorado Springs Intermodal Transportation Plan

CHAPTER II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Public input is vital to the transportation planning process. Even if you never left your home, the transportation system plays a critical role in your life. It's how you get mail, how fire and police reach you in an emergency, and even how you get your utilities that may run under the road. Once you leave your home, roads and sidewalks get you where you are going and the quality of your roads and sidewalks impact your safety and access.

The MTCP determines what transportation infrastructure El Paso County needs and how projects will be prioritized for implementation. It turns community priorities into tangible transportation projects. For example, the last MTCP in 2011 led to new and improved roads, more funding through the PPRTA, and preserving land for future roads in anticipation of growth and development. For these reasons and others, community input into this planning process is highly valued. The public engagement process provided residents with several opportunities to contribute, resulting in projects and priorities that reflect the community's needs and desires.

The MTCP engagement effort began in January 2016 and continued through November 2016. Table 1 provides a high-level summary of the engagement effort throughout the project.

Table 1: Outreach Summary

Engagement Effort	Number
One-on-One Outreach	15
Email Updates Sent	14
Comments Received	99
Emails Received	38
Surveys Completed	204
Email Subscribers	434
Flyers Distributed	100
Posters	50
MTCP Website Business Cards	1000
Presentations	40
Interactive Web Sessions	3,405
News Articles	3

The outreach strategy included a diverse array of tactics used to both inform and engage the public. Some of those tools included:

- ▶ Stakeholder conversations
- ▶ Digital communication
- ▶ Media advisories
- ▶ Collateral (e.g., posters, flyers)
- ▶ Community meetings

Each tactic is summarized in the following discussion:

Stakeholder Conversations

Prior to starting outreach, the program team had a handful of informal conversations with previously engaged stakeholders in the area who had participated in the planning process in 2011. The informal check-ins helped preserve previous planning effort support and maintain strong relationships within the County as the team worked towards kicking off the update. These check-ins occurred periodically throughout the project to help clarify questions from the community and outline key update milestones.

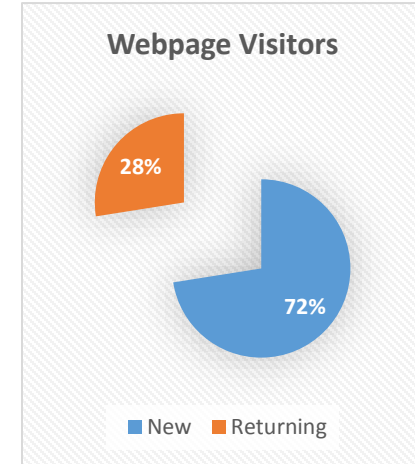
Digital Communication

Project Website—A highly interactive project webpage (epcroadplan.com) went live in February 2016. The webpage includes a program overview, information on past planning, details on fees and funding, how to attend Highway Advisory Commission meetings, the project schedule, and links to public involvement opportunities (e.g., mailing list sign-up, an online contact form and program contact information). The page also featured interactive maps and surveys that were heavily promoted through e-mail updates. The team received more than 90 comments through the online comment form and surveys, and over 30 emails were sent to the program manager.

In addition to digital resources, like the interactive map, another opportunity for public input and education was an interactive Tax Allocation exercise. This activity allowed the user to determine how property tax money should be spent. With a total of \$1000, residents filled in how much they'd spend on six main services: County General Fund, Roads and Bridges, Schools, Libraries, Fire Protection and Groundwater. Once they had submitted their fees, they saw how much El Paso County has allocated to each and how it ranks among other counties. Almost all users allocated between \$200-\$300 for Roads and Bridges, a stark contrast to the actual \$6 allocated. Two users suggested \$350 and \$375, respectively, and none of the participants allocated less than \$200.

The website has received over 7,987 page views, with an average session lasting well over two minutes. For comparison, as reported in 2014 by Chartbeat, a data analytics company, 55 percent of users spend less than 15 seconds actively on a web page.

E-mail Updates—The EPC MTCP Update email database consists of 434 individuals. The database includes the participants from the 2011 master plan update, elected officials, business/civic leaders, and other community members that submitted comments or registered on their own. The email distribution list was used to provide regular e-mail updates on the program, announcements at key milestones, and upcoming opportunities for public involvement.



Media Advisories

The project team worked closely with County officials to raise community awareness on the program and engagement opportunities through strategically promoting the project to local media outlets. The team sent news releases to media outlets in the region at each major project milestone, and responded to media inquiries throughout the planning process. The news release was also shared by partners on social media and included links to the MTCP update website:



El Paso County PIO @epcpio · Feb 4

El Paso County Seeks Citizen Input to Update Transportation Priorities:
news.elpasoco.com/Pages/default. ...

← ↻ 1 ❤️ ⋮

► **Eastern Plains Chamber of Commerce**

do Springs · 🌐

This is a copy of the [MTCP](#) update that I receive. Anyone that has an interest in this can sign up for updates or become involved through <http://epcroadplan.com/>

Public social media posts regarding the 2016 MTCP Update



Collateral

The use of a postcard mailer, community flyers and posters allowed the project team to create broader, community-powered outreach. The postcard included a survey that was also made available online, allowing for wider reach and visibility. Flyers and posters encouraged community members to visit the project website for more information and a call-to-action to get involved.

Five hundred survey cards, 150 flyers and posters, and 1,000 business cards with the program website were placed in state, city and county office buildings, at military bases, libraries, stores, churches, and restaurants around the county.



About the Plan

Updating the El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan is a critical step in meeting the future infrastructure needs of the community.



Why this Matters

The time to prepare for the future is now. Your input directly guides the development of a transportation system that is meaningful to you.

How To Participate

This is your plan.
There are a number of ways to make your voice heard.



Sign-up for
project updates
on our website



Attend a
Highway Advisory
Commission Meeting



Take a survey or
submit comments
online



Contact
project manager
Victoria Chavez
719-520-6884

Visit the project website to learn more:
www.EPCRoadPlan.com



Community Meetings

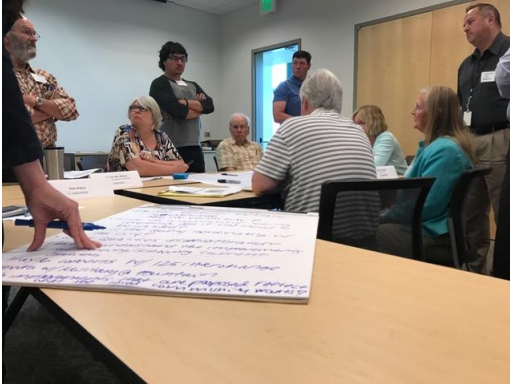
The project team provided program updates at a variety of meetings, both public and community-centered. Meetings ranged from regular updates at Highway Advisory Committee meetings to presentations with the Black Forest neighborhood group and the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO). These presentations served as important progress updates to stakeholders, and were also an opportunity for residents to raise questions and comment on the plan.

On September 21, 2016, the team hosted a facilitated discussion with over 15 community members on the MTCP process. The meeting also included an important break out session, where stakeholders reviewed two maps proposed in the plan and suggested edits and improvements.

Below is a list of additional public meetings with links to their respective presentations.

- ▶ December 2016 Board of County Commissioners
- ▶ November 2016 Planning Commission
- ▶ November 2016 Central Front Range Transportation Planning Region Meeting
- ▶ October 2016 HAC presentation
- ▶ October 2016 Department of Public Works Open House
- ▶ September 2016 Facilitated Discussion meeting summary
- ▶ August 2016 PPACG Community Advisory Committee
- ▶ July 2016 HAC presentation
- ▶ June 2016 HAC presentation





- ▶ April 2016 Meeting with Black Forest Residents
- ▶ April 2016 HAC presentation
- ▶ February 2016 PPACG Community Advisory Committee
- ▶ February 2016 Central Front Range Transportation Planning Region Meeting
- ▶ December 2015 HAC Update
- ▶ NEPCO presentation

- ▶ Monthly updates at the Housing and Building Association Land Use Committee Meetings
- ▶ Monthly updates to the Road Impact Fee Advisory Committee



WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the MTCP Update process, the team gathered extensive feedback on the various aspects of the overall plan. Some of the comments were general in nature, while others offered direct feedback on suggested improvements. Here are examples of how community input is being incorporated into the MTCP Update:

Community Feedback	Action Taken
"Connect Howell's Lane with a bridge"	We modeled this bridge and see it as a valuable improvement. It is included in the draft plan.
"There is a great deal of development that is happening in Monument – consider adding lanes to Higby Road."	We worked with the Town of Monument to ensure that our growth projections were consistent with their plans. We've included the analysis in the model.
"Connect Briargate Parkway and Stapleton Road"	This connection is included in the draft plan.

Through the online and mailed survey specifically, the following themes emerged:

- ▶ **Maintenance**—Many respondents agreed that maintaining the County’s existing transportation system is a high priority.
 - A few expressed a concern for County growth and a desire to consider smart planning and regional partnerships as part of the plan update.
 - Many comments discussed a need to improve the condition of existing infrastructure before adding new roads or highways.
- ▶ **Funding**—Many of the comments expressed a desire for transparent and accurate funding, and for the plan to be diligent in discussing funding sources and costs.
- ▶ **Safety**—Community members expressed that safety should come first in planning future roadways. Many of the comments about safety encouraged a perspective that focused on getting places safely rather than quickly.
 - Safety concerns included a desire to improve the safety of bicycle facility conditions.
 - Several comments focused on the needs for people with disabilities, as well as the aging population.
- ▶ **Connectivity**—Numerous community members stated the importance of increasing and prioritizing bicycle/pedestrian connections, road connections and transportation connections to other areas.
 - Some encouraged inter-County connectivity through roadways and recreational trails.
 - Specific roads related to connectivity were mentioned a few times, including Briargate-Stapleton.
 - Some encouraged transportation connections between more distant destinations, such as Colorado Springs and Denver International Airport, and Colorado Springs and the City of Denver.
 - Many expressed a need for more connectivity of designated bike lanes and bike paths.
- ▶ **Choice**—Several community members expressed an interest in more diversified transportation options.
 - Residents expressed a desire for more designated bicycle lanes, ease of safe access for pedestrians, and more walkability.
 - The project team was encouraged to consider parks/trails master plans as part of planning and development.
 - Many encouraged multimodal alternatives like streetcars, expanded bus routes and connected metro systems.

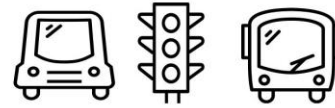
Other themes that emerged but were not as supported as strongly, include the following:

- ▶ **Economic Vitality**—Many residents ranked *Supporting Economic Vitality* as a higher priority and considered it an important part of the planning process.
- ▶ **Environment**—While not expressed through comments specifically, many residents highly ranked the need to be considerate of environmental impact during the planning process.
- ▶ **Involvement**—A common theme throughout the comments received was a desire to be included and involved in the MTCP Update. Several community members asked to be added to the mailing list and to be included in upcoming conversations regarding the update.

Survey Summary—189 respondents completed our survey either online or through direct mail. The table that follows ranks priorities from highest to lowest, based on averages and percentages.

How important are the following goals?
1 = least important, 5 = most important

	High Priority	Low Priority
Maintain our existing transportation system	86%	3%
Find adequate sources of funding	81%	7%
Offer transportation choices (bike, walk)	81%	30%
Provide safe and secure transportation	70%	15%
Support economic vitality	66%	12%
Protect the environment	60%	22%
Minimize travel time and distance	60%	22%
Add new lanes and roads	52%	16%



What's Most Important to You?



EL PASO COUNTY
2016 MAJOR TRANSPORTATION
CORRIDORS PLAN UPDATE

The 2016 El Paso Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) Update
 will build on the vision from the 2011 plan and identify new transportation services and infrastructure needs for the county. How important are the following goals?
 Circle the number that best reflects your response.

	1 = Least Important 5 = Most Important				
Maintain our existing transportation system	1	2	3	4	5
Add new lanes and roads	1	2	3	4	5
Find adequate sources of funding	1	2	3	4	5
Offer transportation choices (bike, walk)	1	2	3	4	5
Provide safe and secure transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Support economic vitality	1	2	3	4	5
Minimize travel time and distance	1	2	3	4	5
Protect the environment	1	2	3	4	5

Are there other priorities not listed, or additional thoughts you'd like to share?

NAME:

EMAIL (OPTIONAL):

ZIP CODE:

Want to know more? Have more to say? We want to hear from you!



www.EPCRoadPlan.com



Take the Survey Online

Five hundred survey cards were placed at community gathering centers and businesses in the county and were available as a digital survey online. Surveys helped the project team determine stakeholder priorities and plan for funding opportunities.

Feedback from Online Maps—Mid-way through the planning process, the project team posted roadway improvement and multimodal maps to the project website and invited the public to comment on the proposed improvements to help refine the plan recommendations.

The project team revised its year 2040 evaluation of operations and conditions for County roadways and based on these evaluations, developed recommendations for roadway improvements and upgrades to address the long-term transportation needs for the County.

The Draft 2040 Roadway Improvement Projects map shows proposed projects to address long-term transportation needs including new connections, roadway paving and roadway widening.

Here are the themes that emerged from those comments:



Themes	Description
Connectivity	Many respondents pointed out opportunities for more connectivity through bridges and road repairs. We also heard comments about how these proposed projects would fit in with other community projects and initiatives. Choice remained a priority through comments about bicycle routes and how they would connect to improved roads and trails.
Growth and Development	Growth and development considerations are a high priority for stakeholders. Comments challenged the project team to consider growth in Fountain and around Monument.
Suggested Improvements	Some comments suggested new road improvements, like added lanes, less traffic lights on certain roads, and new highway ramps.
General Questions	Questions were raised on City/County coordination, what qualifies for inclusion in the plan, and general inquiries on new transportation trends (Uber, Lyft, and high-speed rail).

The proposed multi-modal improvements are a combination of the 2040 Roadway Improvement Projects map above and the suggested projects from the El Paso County Parks Master Plan. The combination of these two maps allowed the team to continue refining proposed projects based on community input and countywide coordination with other departments.

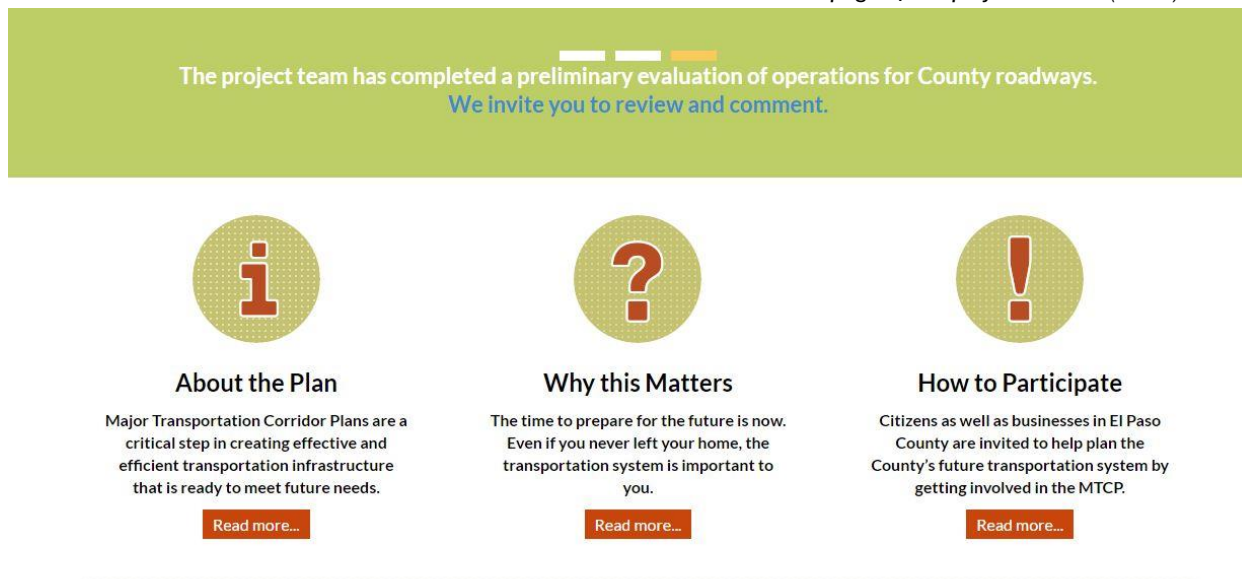
Here are the themes that emerged from community comments:




Themes	Description
Development and Growth	The growing Fountain area was again discussed as an important consideration; comments suggested opportunities for more trails and bike paths in the area.
Use and Access	Stakeholders were helpful in pointing out areas with high volumes of cyclists and discussed roadways with too much vehicular traffic for bike lanes.
Map Improvement Suggestions	Some comments suggested improvements for the map itself, like adding in recreational attractions, identifying commuter versus recreational routes on the maps, and showing anticipated development (homes, businesses, etc.)
Suggested Improvements	A few direct projects were suggested, including adding bike lanes to certain roads, considering opportunities for connection, and adding pedestrian bridges with bike lanes, like those found in Denver, CO.

General Comments—The project website also allowed for general comments throughout the entirety of the program. The comment form and contact us page never changed and was therefore a steady means for members of the public who wanted additional information, to sign-up for project updates, or make recommendations. The project team received 85 general comments through the contact form on the webpage.

The homepage of the project website (below) served as a clear call-to-action.




The project team has completed a preliminary evaluation of operations for County roadways.
[We invite you to review and comment.](#)



About the Plan

Major Transportation Corridor Plans are a critical step in creating effective and efficient transportation infrastructure that is ready to meet future needs.


[Read more...](#)



Why this Matters

The time to prepare for the future is now. Even if you never left your home, the transportation system is important to you.

[Read more...](#)



How to Participate

Citizens as well as businesses in El Paso County are invited to help plan the County's future transportation system by getting involved in the MTCP.

[Read more...](#)

In summary, the project team reached an estimated 3000 people through impressions, organized outreach, project presentations, and digital content. Thank you to the many community members and valued stakeholders who took the time to provide input on the plan and shape the future of our County roads and highways.