



**Project:** South Powers Extension Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

**Date:** January 30, 2023

**Subject:** South Powers Extension (SPE) Purpose & Need, and Goals Statement

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El Paso County initiated this Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) to identify and assess potential alignments for the South Powers Extension (SPE) corridor in El Paso County. This Purpose and Need statement was developed in coordination with stakeholders, including the state and local jurisdictions.

#### **PURPOSE OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

The purpose of the study is to recommend an alignment to extend South Powers Boulevard (CO 21) from CO 16/Mesa Ridge Parkway to a connection with Interstate 25 (I-25), south of Colorado Springs and Fountain, Colorado. This new corridor aims to enhance regional mobility and integrate future multimodal opportunities. The study will define the phasing and next steps for implementing Powers Boulevard to the south.

#### **NEED FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

This section discusses the transportation needs for the Fountain Valley area. Transportation improvements are needed to:

**Advance Local and Regional Mobility** –SPE is needed to complete the regional transportation network in the Fountain Valley area to adequately serve future travel demands associated with continued growth. Improvements would enhance north/south mobility in the region by providing a connection to I-25, increasing access to future east/west routes, and adding an alternate route to other destinations.

**Incorporate Multimodal Opportunities** — Stakeholder input and prior planning efforts identified the need to increase connectivity and accessibility to multimodal opportunities. Through improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, enhanced trail network connectivity, and potential public transit connections, SPE would support an integrated transportation network.



## GOALS OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The recommended transportation improvements were developed to support the project needs. The project goals should include:

- **Accommodate Local and Regional Plans and Economic Growth**– The recommended alternative should build upon previous local and regional planning efforts that document proposed growth and development and the need for the extension of South Powers Boulevard.
- **Corridor Preservation Footprint** - Recommended project alternatives will be used to define the estimated right-of-way (ROW) needs to support future growth along the corridor. Although the Access Control Plan (ACP) is a separate and concurrent process, it will show the estimated ROW line developed during the PEL process to support local agencies in land use decision-making.
- **Consider Impacts to the Natural & Built Environment** – The proposed corridor should minimize impacts to documented environmental resource constraints to the greatest extent possible. Environmental resource constraints documented in the Existing Conditions Report included wetlands, aquifers, stream channels, floodplains, potential habitat for threatened and endangered (T&E) species and general wildlife, underground and above-ground utilities, historic resources, recreational resources, easements, and hazardous materials. Improvements should also consider impacts to residential, agricultural, and commercial properties.
- **Resiliency** – The rapidly increasing population surrounding the proposed corridor, coupled with the increasing rates of natural disasters and emergency response conditions, means that the corridor should be developed resiliently to withstand potential natural threats, such as fire and flood. Identifying risks that would require resilient solutions to protect the assets will reduce the likelihood of severe damage to those assets.
- **Support Technology and Green Infrastructure** – Improvements should consider that increases in development and traffic volumes will result in changes in implementation and advancement of technology along the corridor. Transportation technology is anticipated to change within the next 20 to 30 years, and improvements should consider the potential for technological advancement and opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure and practices. This includes possible utilization of ROW, techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and technology that will facilitate the efficient movement of people, goods, and services.