With Colorado’s rapidly growing population, the I-25 corridor between Denver and Colorado Springs has surpassed its capacity to handle the escalating transportation demands. Recognizing the need to fix this, in 2016 the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) undertook a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study to identify transportation issues and environmental concerns, streamlining the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The early findings of the I-25 South PEL were so revelatory that CDOT paused the study to address the most urgent safety and congestion issues. The I-25 South Gap Project, an early action project to fix these criticalities along an 18-mile segment from Monument to Castle Rock, became the governor’s top transportation priority. Working alongside CDOT, Jacobs performed the preliminary legwork and significant outreach during the initial PEL activities, which fed into the Environmental Assessment (EA) that was initiated for the Gap project, completing it in just eight months. From there, Jacobs was able to jumpstart solutions and accelerate project design. As a result, construction of the Gap began in August 2018, just two months after the EA decision document was signed—a timeframe almost unprecedented in transportation planning.

Once construction of the Gap project was underway, the PEL study was resumed. Completed in 2019, this humble planning document resulted in rapid design, approval, and construction of the Gap project, and also identified a wide range of additional solutions to address the corridor’s remaining myriad needs.

**Top Left:** The I-25 PEL was necessary to identify solutions to improve safety, mobility, travel time, and provide for wildlife crossings.

**Top Middle:** The I-25 PEL study provided a platform for assembling stakeholders, officials, and members of the public to collaboratively identify and define issues and solutions for this section of I-25. Approximately 800 people attended one or more of the five sets of public meetings held in Douglas and El Paso counties.

**Bottom Left:** Accidents and bad weather can close this section of highway altogether or cause extensive backups.

**Right:** The I-25 PEL study spans the state’s largest urban areas, two metropolitan planning organizations, two CDOT regions, two Transportation Commission districts, and numerous jurisdictions. Officials and members of the public worked to collaboratively identify and define issues and solutions for this section of I-25.