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Funding secured to complete I-225 interchange to serve the Anschutz Medical Campus and Fitzsimons Life Science District

AURORA, Colo. – A major component of Colorado’s bioscience and health care industries received an economic boost to help it contribute to the state’s economy. The city of Aurora received a total of \$16,320,000 in funding to complete the final phases of the I-225 and Colfax Avenue/17th Place interchange that will serve the Anschutz Medical Campus and Fitzsimons Life Science District. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Board of Directors approved the funding from the Additional FY 2010-2011 Formula Funds that will allow for the completion of Phases 3 and 4 at its regularly scheduled board meeting last night. The new interchange has an overall price tag of approximately \$46 million.

Phase 1 of the new interchange has been completed and Phase 2 is well underway. Phase 3 includes the completion of a slip ramp which will provide access to southbound I-225 from 17th Place as well as the 17th Place bridge that provides access between Fitzsimons and I-225. Phase 4 includes the portion of the 17th Place bridge that allows two-way traffic to travel over I-225 and it will create access points both to and from the bridge for northbound I-225.

Within one square mile adjacent to the interchange are the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, which includes the University of Colorado Hospital and The Children’s Hospital, the new Veterans Administration Hospital, and several other centers for health care, biomedical research and workforce development. Additionally, Forest City Science + Technology Group is currently working on developing the Colorado Science + Technology Park at Fitzsimons that will consist of more than 6 million square feet of corporate and research space for companies focused on the science and technology sectors. Furthermore, the site is projected to grow to 9.7 million square feet in the next three years with projects such as the recently announced \$400 million expansion of the University of Colorado Hospital and the \$228 million expansion of The Children’s Hospital. In all, the site is projected to be a \$5.2 billion investment that will reach 18.5 million square feet and employ more than 44,500 people (not including patients, students and other visitors). Nearly 16,000 employees currently work at the site. Currently there are 55,000 vehicle trips in and out of Anschutz and Fitzsimons everyday (employees, patients, students, faculty and visitors). The current I-225 and Colfax Avenue interchange, that was built decades ago, serves a majority of this traffic and was designed to have a capacity of 4,000 vehicles per day. This interchange is critical to the effective and efficient operation of all the facilities on Anschutz and Fitzsimons.

“We are delighted the Denver Regional Council of Governments Regional Transportation Committee and Board of Directors identified this interchange as having a huge significance not only to Aurora but to the entire state of Colorado,” stated Wendy Mitchell, President and CEO of the Aurora Economic Development Council. “According to a recent study by Sammons/Dutton, this project contributed \$3.5 billion dollars to our state’s economy in 2008 with \$1.4 billion generated in personal income. By 2013 the site will employ 21,041 people directly, contribute \$4.5 billion annually to Colorado’s economy including \$1.8 billion in personal income.”

Mitchell credits the coordination between Colorado’s Congressional delegation and the Anschutz/Fitzsimons Stakeholders Group as making the funding a reality. Stakeholders include the city of Aurora, the Aurora Economic Development Council, the University of Colorado, the Anschutz Medical Campus, the University of Colorado Hospital, The Children’s Hospital, Forest City Development, Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“This project is a unique example of how effective a public-private partnership can be,” stated Aurora City Council Member and City of Aurora Representative to the DRCOG Board of Directors Sue Sandstrom. “The city of Aurora, the Aurora Economic Development Council and the Anschutz/Fitzsimons Stakeholders have been working together diligently over the past several years with a unified voice justifying the importance of the interchange to Colorado’s economy. This funding decision is an acknowledgement of our efforts.”

About the Aurora Economic Development Council

A partnership between business and government for more than three decades, the Aurora Economic Development Council champions Colorado’s most promising growth industries including aerospace and defense, bioscience, transportation logistics and energy, positioning Aurora and Colorado to win new jobs in an intensely competitive market. We create new primary jobs through innovative deal creation, strategic partnerships, and by advocating for economically sustainable public policy. The Aurora Economic Development Council is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(6) corporation comprised of the leading 100 companies in the Aurora/Denver metro area, the city of Aurora, and Adams and Arapahoe Counties. A-List, Colorado’s premier business event of the metro area bringing together 2,000 regional business and political leaders to celebrate the economic successes of the region, is produced by the Aurora Economic Development Council. Accelerate Colorado, the only statewide advocacy partnership between business and local governments that works with the U.S. Congress and key federal leadership on issues critical to the state’s economic development, top industries and business community and conducts an annual business mission to Washington, D.C., is an affiliate of the Aurora Economic Development Council. For more information on the Aurora Economic Development Council, visit www.auroraedc.com.

