

## **6.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

The FHWA, CDOT, and the City of Wheat Ridge are committed to involving the public and other agencies throughout the I-70/32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Interchange EA process. The success of the project hinges upon communication and cooperation between FHWA, CDOT, and the local community. This includes involvement of federal, state, and local governmental officials, regional transportation planning entities, community groups, civic and professional organizations, businesses, and residents.

An extensive public and agency involvement program has been conducted throughout the development and screening of alternatives. In accordance with *CDOT Policy Directive 1601 – Interchange Approval Process*, the public and agency involvement programs for the System Level Feasibility Study and the EA process were integrated (FHU 2005). This section provides a detailed discussion of the public and agency involvement program.

### **6.1 Public Involvement Approach**

The public involvement process consisted of three general areas of coordination: public, agency, and special outreach to low-income or minority populations. Public outreach efforts emphasized utilizing public meetings to disseminate project information and provide a mechanism to incorporate the public's ideas, needs, and concerns into the process.

Periodic public involvement reports were prepared. These reports included highlights of the major community outreach activities coordinated during each month; a summary of comments received with common themes and interests; and a log of major communication deliverables including press releases, mailings etc.

Agency coordination focused on involving federal, state, and local governmental agencies in providing technical expertise and assistance in the development of the EA and analysis of environmental impacts. Minority and low-income outreach efforts included identifying minority and low-income groups within the study area, providing public involvement materials in Spanish, and offering Spanish translation at the November 30, 2005 open house.

### **6.2 Outreach Logistics/Information Dissemination**

Public involvement activities to date have included four open houses, presentations to community groups, a community information telephone hotline, a project website, newsletters, news releases, and local newspaper advertisements.

#### **6.2.1 Mailing List Development and Mass Mailing**

Over the course of the public involvement process, a mailing list was developed and updated with contact information for residents, and property and business owners, in the vicinity of the project area. The list included the name, group association, mailing address, phone number, and email address of representatives from local associations, business groups, and governmental agencies. The mailing list was updated with the contact information of open

house attendees, interested individuals, and other individuals not identified on the initial mailing list. The list was used to contact public meeting attendees, interested individuals, business owners, and other residents.

In addition, residences and businesses in the neighborhoods surrounding the project area received project newsletters. These newsletters invited local residents and businesses to the open house and were sent via a mass mailing in the project area. The mailing boundaries extended from approximately 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south and from McIntyre Street on the west to Kipling Street on the east (see **Figure 6-1**).

### **6.2.2 Community Information Line**

A telephone line at (303) 376-8394 was established in March 2005 to provide individuals and groups with the opportunity to leave a message for the project team. All messages were recorded and responded to with a goal of two business days. A log of all inquiry phone calls is maintained, with the availability to generate inquiry reports as needed.

### **6.2.3 News Releases to Local Media**

Project information was provided to the local media throughout the planning and project development process in the form of press releases, direct mail pieces, and web site updates. Information was provided to the following media:

- ▶ Arvada Press
- ▶ Golden Transcript
- ▶ Wheat Ridge Transcript
- ▶ Lakewood Sentinel
- ▶ Rocky Mountain News
- ▶ Denver Post
- ▶ Mile High News
- ▶ WB 2 News
- ▶ Crawford Radio Broadcasting
- ▶ KUSA 9News
- ▶ KMGH 7News
- ▶ KCNC News4
- ▶ KVDR Fox 31
- ▶ Clear Channel Radio
- ▶ Metro Networks Radio
- ▶ Wheat Ridge High Newspaper



#### **6.2.4 Website**

A website was established on March 29, 2005 to provide public access to information on the project, including alternatives development, screening, and refinement. Links to other informational sites are provided on the website along with a link to submit a question or join the mailing list. The website address is [www.cabwheatridge.com](http://www.cabwheatridge.com). This website serves as a repository for information presented at past meetings, including maps and displays, and frequently asked questions and answers. As of January 2006, the website had been accessed over 164,800 times.

### **6.3 Agency Coordination**

The Lead Agency for the I-70/32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Interchange EA is FHWA, and CDOT is the Applicant Agency. Agency involvement activities included regular progress meetings held with agency participants and a series of agency scoping meetings.

#### **6.3.1 Agency Scoping**

A series of agency scoping meetings were held with local, state, and federal resource agencies and local municipalities, in addition to CDOT Headquarters Environmental Programs Branch. Resource agencies have specific technical expertise and regulatory oversight on various environmental issues and potential impacts associated with the project. The following meetings were held as part of the agency scoping process:

- ▶ A project Scoping Meeting was held on July 26, 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives from FHWA, CDOT, USACE, CDPHE, SHPO, DRCOG, RTD, City of Wheat Ridge, Jefferson County, Coors Brewing Company, and Cabela's.
- ▶ A supplemental project Scoping Meeting was held on August 11, 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives from USFWS, CDOT, CDOW, and City of Lakewood.
- ▶ A separate scoping meeting was held on August 29, 2004 with the CDOT Environmental Programs Branch to identify their concerns and obtain input on the EA.
- ▶ A scoping and data gathering meeting was held with Jefferson County staff on September 15, 2005.

Meeting minutes from the project Scoping Meeting and supplemental Scoping Meeting were provided to resource agency representatives who were available to attend the meetings in order to solicit information and comments. The meeting minutes were distributed to the following agencies on August 25 and 26, 2005: Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company, Denver Water, and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

### 6.3.2 Project Committee

A project committee consisting of affected entities and agencies was formed to provide a forum to address concerns in preparation of this EA. Regular progress meetings were held approximately every four weeks during the System Level Feasibility Study and EA processes. Representatives from FHWA, CDOT, the City of Wheat Ridge, Jefferson County, and the City of Lakewood were some of the agencies and entities that participated in progress and discussion meetings (see **Table 6-1**).

**Table 6-1 List of Participants in the Project Committee**

Agency	Representative
City of Arvada, Public Works Department	Bob Manwaring
City of Lakewood, Public Works Department	Dave Basket
	John Padon
	Karl Buchholz
City of Wheat Ridge, Public Works Department	Steve Nguyen
	Tim Paranto
	Randy Young
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Environmental Programs Branch (EPB)	Pat Martinek
CDOT, Region 6	Ed Martinez
	Greg Jamieson
	Irena Motas
	Jake Kononov
	Jane Hann
	Jim Paulmeno
	Moe Awaznezhad
Colorado Governor's Office	Steve Hersey
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Bill Skewes
	Monica Pavlik
Jefferson County, Planning Department	Ron Speral
	Nanette Neelan
Jefferson County, Public Works Department	Kate Newman
Cabela's	Kevin French
Coors Brewing Company	Mark Nienhueser
Project One (representing Cabela's)	Neil Jaquet
	Mike Palumbo

## 6.4 Public Input

Public involvement activities ranged from a series of open houses to presentations to neighborhood associations and business groups. The following sections describe the various public involvement activities conducted before release of the EA.

### 6.4.1 Public Meeting Dates

Major meetings with the general public were held at four key points in the process to provide input into the alternatives development and screening process. Information about these meetings is summarized in **Table 6-2**.

Table 6-2 Summary of Open Houses

Description	Date	Location	Purpose
Public open house	March 23, 2005	Denver West Marriott	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Presented information about the existing transportation conditions and began to show the various improvement alternatives.
Public open house	April 21, 2005	Denver West Marriott	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Presented the results of the alternative screening conducted to that point.
Public Scoping for the EA and completion of the System Level Feasibility Study	August 17, 2005	Wheat Ridge Recreation Center	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Presented the screening process, the alternative packages (Alternative Packages 1, 2, and 3) and initiated the EA Process. Conducted as part of the EA process.
Public open house	November 30, 2005	Wheat Ridge Recreation Center	Presented the screening process, the No-Action Alternative, and the Proposed Action and other alternatives

Notification of the open house meeting was executed in the following manner:

- ▶ March 23, 2005 open house
  - Approximately 350 letters sent to the project mailing list
  - Press release issued to local media outlets in Denver and Jefferson County
  - Information distributed to more than 200 people who attended a City of Wheat Ridge March 9, 2005 open house for the proposed development
  - Direct phone calls to local elected officials and the leadership of local community groups
  
- ▶ April 21, 2005 open house
  - Approximately 1,400 letters sent to the project mailing list
  - Press release issued to local media outlets in Denver and Jefferson County
  - Information distributed to more than 150 people who attended the March 23, 2005 open house
  - Information posted to the project website
  - E-mail notice sent to nearly 100 people who had signed up for project updates
  - Direct phone calls to local elected officials and the leadership of local community groups

- ▶ August 17, 2005 open house
  - Approximately 1,970 letters sent to the project mailing list
  - Two press releases issued to local media outlets in Denver and Jefferson County
  - Information posted to the project website
  - E-mail notice sent to nearly 390 people who had signed up for project updates
  - Direct phone calls to local elected officials and the leadership of local community groups
  - Paid advertisements placed in local Jefferson county newspapers
  
- ▶ November 30, 2005 open house
  - Approximately 15,000 newsletters sent to the mailing area (see **Figure 6-1**)
  - Press release issued to local media outlets in Denver and Jefferson County
  - Information posted to the project website
  - Direct phone calls to local elected officials and the leadership of local community groups
  - Paid advertisements placed in local Jefferson county newspapers and the 2005 Holiday Guide, which reached 57,500 homes

#### 6.4.2 Public Scoping

This section presents a summary of common themes and issues received from various public meetings. Many of the concerns expressed by the public were addressed with the selection of the Proposed Action.

Citizens that attended the March 23 and April 21, 2005, open houses were asked to provide input in regards to the different alternatives evaluated as part of the System Level Interchange Feasibility Study (see **Chapter 2 Alternatives**). The following summarized comments were received at both of these open houses:

- ▶ Concern regarding increased traffic in the vicinity of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Youngfield Street and along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- ▶ Supported an additional interchange on I-70 or SH 58 to serve as a primary route to the Cabela's development
- ▶ Supported the proposed 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass under I-70, which is currently part of the No-Action Alternative as a local agency project
- ▶ Strong interest that Cabela's and the proposed development not open until the traffic improvements are completed
- ▶ Generally did not support round-abouts
- ▶ Concern regarding traffic congestion on westbound 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue entering McIntyre
- ▶ Concern over noise levels

- ▶ Concern regarding the overall cost of the traffic improvements and funding sources
- ▶ Concern that the Jefferson County Clear Creek Trail remain open.
- ▶ Concern with regard to the relocation of businesses and residences due to right-of-way acquisition

An open house was held on August 17, 2005, and those that attended were asked to provide input with regard to the remaining alternatives under consideration as part of the System Level Feasibility Study and public scoping comments on the EA (see **Chapter 2 Alternatives**). The following is a summary of the comments received:

- ▶ Concern in regard to keeping traffic that would access Cabela's and the proposed development off of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Youngfield Street
- ▶ Concerns regarding pedestrian and bicycle access and safety for areas within the project vicinity as well as schools and churches
- ▶ Concern over the amount of right-of-way required for the single point urban interchange as the resultant business and residence relocations and displacements
- ▶ Concern over traffic along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to the alignment of the westbound I-70 hook ramps at the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Youngfield Street intersection

An open house was held on November 30, 2005 as part of the EA process. Comments were received from the public regarded to the alternatives and EA. The following is a summary of common themes and issues received at the open house:

- ▶ Supported Alternative Package 2 with a new interchange on SH 58, which was selected as the Proposed Action
- ▶ Concern over the connection of Cabela Drive through the new SH 58/Cabela Drive interchange to 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- ▶ Concern regarding Cabela Drive connecting to 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the hook ramps being constructed at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- ▶ Air quality issues as a general concern
- ▶ Concern regarding access to the Jefferson County Open Space Clear Creek Trail from 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- ▶ Concern regarding naming the new street Cabela Drive and how that may increase traffic along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- ▶ Inquired when other retail space at the proposed development would be available for leasing
- ▶ Concern regarding utility issues for the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass

- ▶ Concern regarding the connection to 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the new SH 58/Cabela Drive interchange and traffic issues along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the at-grade railroad crossing at Eldridge Street when trains pass

Comments received between September 2005 and January 2006 were submitted to the project team via email, comment forms, and the community information phone line. The following are summarized of the comments received:

- ▶ Concern regarding the increase of traffic with the proposed I-70 eastbound hook ramps onto Youngfield Street at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and expressed a preference of having the interchange constructed on SH 58
- ▶ Concern regarding the overall cost of the traffic improvements and funding sources
- ▶ Requested information regarding FasTraks and other transportation projects that may affect/impact the I-70/32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue project proposal.
- ▶ Supported Alternative Package 2 with a new interchange on SH 58, which was selected as the Proposed Action
- ▶ Concern over traffic along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to the alignment of the westbound I-70 hook ramps at the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Youngfield Street intersection

### **6.4.3 Residential/Commercial/Neighborhood Outreach**

The project team was available for project briefings to local neighborhood homeowner associations and business groups (see **Table 6-3**).

Table 6-3 Summary of Community Presentations

Description	Date	Purpose
Fairmount Improvement Association Annual Meeting	March 30, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Association Meeting	March 31, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	April 4, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	May 12, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Association Meeting	April 28, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	June 9, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Wheat Ridge Business Owners Breakfast	June 16, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	July 14, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Applewood Valley Homeowner Association Workshop	July 26, 2005	Conducted as part of the System Level Feasibility Study. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	August 19, 2005	Conducted as part of the EA. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status, including the System Level Feasibility Study.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	September 21, 2005	Conducted as part of the EA. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the project status.
The Manning School and Maple Grove Elementary School Principals	November 28, 2005	Conducted as part of the EA. Discussed pedestrian and school safety along 32 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue and mitigation strategies.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	January 18, 2006	Conducted as part of the EA. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the Proposed Action.
Clear Creek Valley Neighborhood Council	January 27, 2006	Conducted as part of the EA. Discussed school safety issues along 32 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Jefferson County Clear Creek Trail access options, and the City of Wheat Ridge development approval process. Meeting was attended by representatives from CDOT, Prospect Recreation District, and Coors.
Fairmount Improvement Association	March 27, 2006	Conducted as part of the EA. Provided remarks and fielded questions on the Proposed Action.

## 6.5 Special Outreach to Low-income and Minority Populations

Low-income and minority populations were identified in the community study area (See **Figure 4-5**) through the 2000 US Census Bureau data and through local community outreach. The area south and east of I-70 along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue was identified as having between two and five percent of the homes with limited English proficiency (no one in the home over 14 years of age is proficient in English) and with Spanish as the primary language (FHU 2006b). Minority or low-income populations were generally not found in the portions of the study area that would be directly impacted by the Proposed Action. A more detailed discussion on environmental justice and low-income and minority populations is included in **Section 4.1 Land Use, Socio-Economics, and Land Use** and the *Environmental Justice Evaluation Technical Report* (FHU 2006b).

Improvements associated with the Proposed Action in the vicinity of I-70 and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue include restriping of the Ward Road and westbound I-70 on-ramp intersection, the addition of a second right-turn lane for the eastbound I-70/Ward Road off-ramp, and the addition of a second lane for the westbound I-70/Ward Road on-ramp. No additional right-of-way will be required for these improvements other than the right-of-way identified as part of the I-70/SH 58 interchange project (CDOT 2002a, FHWA 2005). The Proposed Action does not appear to directly impact minority or low-income populations or businesses or community facilities providing specialized services to minority or low-income populations, although low-income and minority groups are located in the vicinity of the project. None of the businesses that will be displaced during right-of-way acquisition (See Section 4.2 *Right-of-Way and Displacements*) provide specialized services to minority or low-income groups. Although low-income and minority groups will not be directly impacted through right-of-way acquisition or displacements, special outreach activities to low-income and minority populations were conducted. The special outreach activities consisted of dissemination of project information through a bilingual (Spanish/English) newsletter that was mailed to residents in the study area (see **Figure 6-1**) and the availability of a Spanish/English translator was present at the November 30, 2005 open house (although the translator was not utilized). A copy of the bilingual newsletter is included in Appendix B.

## 6.6 Future Public Involvement

A Public Hearing will be conducted by FHWA and CDOT regarding this EA. A Notice of Availability of the EA and the date for the Public Hearing will be announced in one or more of the media outlets previously mentioned at least 15 days in advance of the Hearing. Notice of this Public Hearing will also be mailed to those individuals included in the project mailing list.

At the Public Hearing, the general public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the project and the EA. Written comments, to be included as an official part of the record, will be accepted for 30 days following the Notice of Availability.