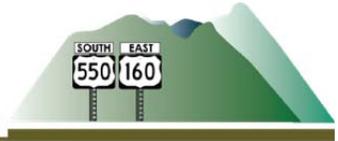


Appendix D.  
Responses to 2014 Independent Alternatives Analysis  
Public Comments





## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

**December 1, 2014**

**Durango Public Library**

A public open house was held on December 1, 2014, in the Durango Public Library. The purpose of the open house was to present information developed during the Independent Alternatives Analysis process for the project, including development and evaluation of Alternative R5 and development and evaluation of a refinement to Revised G Modified Alternative called Revised G Modified 6 Alternative. Sixty-two people attended the public open house.

Graphics available at the open house included:

- Project newsletter (dated November 2014)
- Project history diagram
- Project schedule
- Maps showing R5, RGM, RGM6, Revised F Modified and Eastern Realignment
- An aerial photo showing a detailed layout of RGM6
- Cross sections for RGM6
- Profiles for RGM6

CDOT and consultant staff in attendance and available to answer questions and take comments were:

- Kerrie Neet, CDOT R5 Transportation Director
- Ed Archuletta, CDOT R5 Program Engineer
- Tony Cady, CDOT R5 Planning and Environmental Manager
- Steven Cross, CDOT R5 Design Engineer
- Mike McVaugh, CDOT R5 Traffic Engineer
- Don Connors, AMEC
- Gina McAfee, HDR
- Steve Long, HDR
- Pete Mertes, HDR

Comments received included the following. All questions were answered by CDOT or consultant team members.

1. Recommend including business access signage—"How to get there from here."
2. Consider truck pull-off areas or widened shoulders. Semis needs to stage in town and need to hold.
3. RGM6 is a good solution for emergency responses—greatly reduces icing potential, reduces the grade, no sharp curves.
4. The green alignment (RGM6) is flexible and can provide benefits for years into the future.
5. Should build this ASAP.

6. Support not going along the Eastern Realignment or Revised F Modified.
7. The views on the bluff currently encourage travelers to pull over and enjoy the view—can a safe viewing area be constructed?
8. You folks have a tough mission unlike most other states—building roads through mountains. Thank you for your efforts.
9. Fully support this. Connections make sense.
10. Will US 160 be widened?
11. Is a roundabout safer?
12. Glad the recommendation is to use the existing bridges.
13. What will impact be to residences on the US 160 frontage road?
14. Should include better signage from Bayfield to the new hospital.
15. Consider a traffic signal that flashes on off-hours.
16. Why has this taken so long?
17. This has affected our ability to sell our property. Please make a decision.
18. How will the intersection at CR 220 and US 550 be controlled?
19. Why is there so much space between the new US 550 and the frontage road on the west side of US 550?

Formal comments were also received on behalf of the Marie J. Webb Ranch, LLC and are attached to this record.

## Webb Ranch Comments

## Responses

MJW

### Marie J. Webb Ranch LLC

Real Estate Asset Management  
through sustainable best practices  
Christopher J. Webb, Managing Member  
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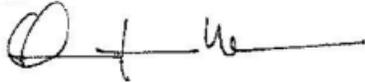
FOR PURPOSES OF SUBMISSION TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD  
AT THE PUBLIC HEARING CONVENED BY THE  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ON DECEMBER 1, 2014

On behalf of the Marie J. Webb Ranch LLC, we wish to offer the following comments for inclusion in the administrative record as follows:

1. The alignment identified in this public hearing as "R5" meets "purpose and need" as referenced in the public announcement for this hearing and employed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Colorado Department of Highways (CDOT) and is "feasible and prudent" complying with all requirements under applicable law.<sup>1</sup>
2. The alignment identified in this public hearing as "RGM" continues to fail to meet the requirements of applicable law including without limitation the legal obligations of FHWA and CDOT under Section 4(f). By example, under Section 4(f), RGM is not "feasible and prudent" and does not meet the necessary planning requirements.
3. The alignment identified in this public hearing as "RGM6" represents a commendable collaborative effort on the part of key stakeholders in the Durango community including us and deserves further consideration by the public.

Respectfully submitted,

MARIE J. WEBB RANCH LLC



Christopher J. Webb  
Managing Member

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Transportation Act (DOT Act) of 1966 included a special provision entitled Section 4(f) that governs the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and public or private historic sites for Federal highway projects. Under the current administrative process, the mandate of this Section 4(f) evaluation requires two findings: (1) That there is no feasible and prudent alternative that completely avoids the use of Section 4(f) property; and (2) That the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property resulting from the transportation use. See <http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/4f/> incorporated herein.

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Located in La Plata County, Colorado

Alternative R5 as developed during the 2014 Independent Alternatives Analysis meets the purpose and need for the project. It is not reasonable under NEPA, for reasons described on page 6 of the Reevaluation document (CDOT, 2015). It is also not prudent under Section 4(f) for reasons described in Section 7.3.4 of the Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation (CDOT, 2015.)

Alternative RGM was previously determined to meet all requirements of federal laws, including Section 4(f) of the US DOT Act of 1966. It has been recently refined through an extensive stakeholder process, including numerous meetings with representatives of the Webb Ranch family and is now called RGM6. RGM6 has now been identified as the Selected Alternative.

Adam Howell Comments	Responses
<p>On Tue, Feb 17, 2015 at 11:07 PM, Adam Howell &lt;<a href="mailto:athowell@gmail.com">athowell@gmail.com</a>&gt; wrote:</p> <p>Colorado Department of Transportation's Region 5 Officials,</p> <p>What would Florida Mesa look like if the Colorado Department of Transportation excavates 1.82 million cubic yards of material from the northern end of it in order to realign US Highway 550 to the Bridge to Nowhere at the Grandview Interchange?</p> <p>I would prefer not to see the geographical impact of this alternative called RGM6.</p> <p>I would prefer not to see those one hundred thousand dump truck loads (18 cubic yards per load) of material get removed from Florida Mesa.</p> <p>The visual impact of what CDOT is hoping to accomplish will be staggering.</p> <p>Over time, though, the terraced retaining walls, landscaping and associated vegetation would help their human-made canyon blend in to the surrounding terrain. In the end, I won't forget what the landscape used to look like.</p> <p>At a cost of \$78 million, CDOT's "Preferred Alternative" realignment of this 1 ½-mile stretch of road seems to be disproportionately high compared to the cost of building that much road somewhere else. But I am certainly no road engineer.</p> <p>It's been fifteen years since CDOT initially decided that they were going to realign U.S. Highway 550 to cross Chris Webb's property and connect it with the so-called Bridge to Nowhere at the Grandview</p>	<p>The 2015 Independent Alternatives Analysis has a rendering of this. It is Exhibit 6-36.</p> <p>The visual impact of Alternative RGM6 is described in the 2015 Independent Alternatives Analysis in Section 7.8</p>

Adam Howell Comments	Responses
<p>Interchange.</p> <p>Since the Interchange was first built, CDOT has modified their “Preferred Alternative” from going straight across the Webb ranch, to their current proposal (RGM6), which contours along the western to northern edge of Florida Mesa.</p> <p>This most recent “Preferred Alternative” of the CDOT is improved from their original proposal in the sense that it avoids fragmenting the existing Webb ranch landscape.</p> <p>Either way, I still have a different preference.</p> <p>I refuse to believe that the existing alignment on Farmington Hill cannot be straightened out a little bit with the grade reduced, visibility around corners increased, shoulders constructed, rumble strips and guardrails installed and an overpass built at the bottom for less money than what CDOT is proposing to spend on their Preferred Alternative RGM6.</p> <p>Aside from the cost, I truly believe that the existing alignment of Farmington Hill can be modified in such a way as to help reduce rollover accidents, collisions with wildlife and rear-end accidents.</p> <p>At the bottom of Farmington Hill I would support the idea of building an overpass for vehicles that crosses over US Highway 160 diagonally for northbound traffic on US Highway 550 only.</p> <p>If that means supporting what the Webb representatives are calling the R5 Alternative, then that’s what I believe CDOT should implement.</p> <p>Sincerely, Adam Howell Horse Gulch Blog LLC</p>	<p>What you are describing is Alternative R5 which was fully developed and engineered in the 2015 Independent Alternatives Analysis. Its estimated cost is twice that of RGM6.</p> <p>While Alternative R5 improves safety compared to the existing situation, it is not as safe as Alternative RGM6.</p> <p>Alternative R5 has been developed and analysis and found to be not reasonable because it has more environmental impacts, more impacts to residential and business properties, has safety and constructability issues, costs twice as much to construct and would cost more to maintain when compared to Alternative RGM6.</p>