

SECTION 5

Response to Public Comments

This section summarizes the public and agency comments that were received during the 45-day public comment period for the I-25 Environmental Assessment and provides FHWA’s responses. During the public comment period, approximately 700 e-mail messages, letters, public hearing comment forms, and transcribed public hearing verbal comments were received from citizens, organizations, and agencies. The vast majority of these were e-mail comments provided through the EA Web site. The fewest were verbal comments made to a court reporter at the hearing. Many of these submittals included multiple comments, and some commenters made multiple submissions.

All public comments in their entirety are contained in the Appendices to this NEPA decision document except for three letters received from attorneys. Since these three letters are generally longer and more complex than most other submittals, the FHWA response to these letters is provided separately, in Section 6 of this decision document.

Approach Used to Summarize and Respond to Comments

Most all of the comments received were made by more than one commenter. To avoid repeating the same response as many as several hundred times, the approach used in this section was to group identical or substantially similar comments together and respond to them a single time. For each comment, the names of those who made the comment is provided, enabling the reader to readily find the exact words and context of each commenter.

General comments and corresponding responses are provided first, followed by specific comments germane to particular portions of the EA. Specific comments are presented in the same order as the topics presented in the EA, enabling the reader to make a side-by-side sequential review of the EA and the comments.

A summary of the number of comments received is provided below in Table 4-1. This summary is intended as an overall indicator of interest in various topics.

Table 4-1. Number of submittals by EA topic

EA topic	Number of submittals
General Support	444
General Opposition	111
NEPA Process	70
SECTION 1. Purpose and Need	0
SECTION 2. Alternatives Considered	
Proposed Action	73
Other Alternatives	85
SECTION 3. Impacts and Mitigation	
Transportation Resources	49
Socioeconomics	7
Environmental Justice	2
Right-of-Way	10
Neighborhoods	13
Parks and Recreation	33
Land Use	3
Visual Resources	16
Air Quality	26
Noise	149
Watersheds	1
Floodplains	0
Water Quality	15
Wetlands	2
Wildlife	8
Threatened/Endangered Species	27
Vegetation	1
Noxious Weeds	0
Historic Resources	4
Archaeology	0
Native American Consultation	0
Paleontology	0
U.S. Air Force Academy	0
Hazardous Waste Sites	1
Indirect Effects	1
Summary of Impacts	0
SECTION 4. Cumulative Impacts	24
SECTIONS 5 through 12 (end)	3
Other Comments	3

General Comments

SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Comment:	<p>444 submittals were received expressing support for the Proposed Action, and/or indicating that the Environmental Assessment was a well-written, thorough examination of the issues. Many indicated that improvements are long overdue and should be commenced as soon as possible.</p> <p>Generally, people who expressed support for the Proposed Action did not have many other comments about specific impacts.</p>
Response:	<p>FHWA’s decision on the I-25 Proposed Action is based on the specific issues involved, and not on the number of comments in support of or opposed to an action.</p>
Submitters:	<p>Adair, M.Adams, C.Adsit, D.Aguilar, D.Aitken, V.Andrews, D.Ankeney, J.Auld, M.Aumen, L.Bachman, D.Bacon, B.Bahr, J.Baker, R.Balink, D.Barber, T.Barnes, J.Beck, A.Beckett, T.Beckett, C.Beckman, B.Bell., L.Benjamin, B.Benson., J.Bergman, R.Beusch, T.Biesterfield, J.Biggs, P.Bigley, D.Bjugstad, G.Blackmore, C.Blees, L. Boese, M.Boutz, B.Bowers, A.Bradley, G.Bradley., K.Brandenburg, J.Briarton, E.Bronson, A.Brown, M.Brown, T.Brown, W.Brown, B.Bryant., N.Bunker, G.Burghart, K.Butcher, S.Byrne, A.Byrnes, J.Byrnes, S.Cameron, J.Carlson, B.Carney, K.Carpenter, D.Carter, C.Carwana, K.Case, M.Caton, C.Chernak, T.Christianson, K.Christner, L.Ciccotelli, City of Colorado Springs (City Council resolution), W.Clifford, J.Cline, J.Conover, C.Cooper, R.Cope, W.Corrigan, J.Crank, K.Creech, C.Cuadra, C.Curbow, D.Davidson, R.Davidson, P.Demeter, R.Deming, J.Denney, P.Desilets, J.DeSouto, C.Detert, D.Diedrich, R.Diedrich, T.Dierdorff, M.Dimond, D.Donivan, Downtown Partnership, P.Dunn, C.Durance, D.Edwards, R.Edwards, H.Eichenbaum, G.Eisenbraun, G.Ekholm, M.Elberling, El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (resolution), R. Embery, M.Engle, C.Erwin, S.Evans, D.Ewald, E.Faloon, M.Fanelli, B.Farrar, J.Farrar, V.Farrar , M.Fenton, C.Ficarrotta, R.Fiest, L.Fischer, W.Fischer, M.Fisher, J.Flannery, H.Florence, J.Focht, G.Forbes, K.Ford, Fort Carson Directorate of Public Works (agency comments), L.Fortner, P.Fraizer, S.Fredrick, T.Gallagher, M.Gannon, T.Gardner, B.Garner, D.Gendron, R.Gibson, C.Gile, K.Gile, R.Gilkes, B.Glass, C.Glass, S.Glisan, J.Gloriod, J.Godsey, K.Golden, M.Grage, E.Grant, D.Gray, I.Gray, Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce (resolution), Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee (resolution), G.Greco, M.Gronseth, L.Gruen, J.Hass, T.Haggard, B.Hall, G.Hall, J.Hanson, R.Harmon, J.Harrell, D.Hart, G.Hart, J.Hart, P.Hartman, D.Harwood, B.Hays, W.Healy, W.Heilman, E.Helms, S.Helms, R.Hendershot, L.Hendrickson, J.Henjum, H.Herber, M.Heritage, M.Hess, J.Higgins, L.Hill, D.Hoeckle, L.Hofman, K.Hollohan, S.Hoover, D.Horne, R.Hudnall, B.Huffman, T. Huffman., J.Humphries, K.Hunter, S.James, T.Jamison, C.Jaramillo, T.Jeter, A.Johnson, D.Johnson, M.Johnson, D.Jones, J.Kaiser, K.Kalandros, M.Kazmierski, L.Keefe, D.Keenan, P.Keller, D.Kelly, R.Kelly, T.Kerr, T.Kerwin, R.Key, C.Kirschbaum, F.Klein, B.Kliewer, R.Kliewer, B.Knapp, M.Kochis, J.Koeppel, Karie Kofford, Kurt Kofford, D.Kosley, V.Kovacs, D.Kranz, J.Krsulic, J.Kuper, M.Kyral, F.Lang, M.Larson, G.Lasecki, T.Laugesen, M.Law, D.Leavy, R.Limonzaine, D.Linster, N.Lofye, M.Loomis, R.Lorenz, M.Loreto, W.Louis, C.Lubell, C.Lucy, J.Lundberg, R.Lusey, K.Majerus, M.Malone, C.Marchand, D.Marich, B.Martin, S.Martin, L.Matejczyk, D.Maurer, S.McCarthy, S.McConnell, J.McDevitt, M.McDevitt, J.McDonald, M.McDowell, J.McElroy, T.McGhghy, T.McGinty, I.McKenzie, J.McNelly, B.Menzer, S.Merritt, R.Meyers, J.Mihelich, D.Miles, L.Miller, R.Miller, P.Millet, R.Mishko, H.Mitchell, J.Moore, K.Nauer, B.Nelsetuen, S.Nelson, M.Nemeth, C.Newman, R.Nolette, A.Norris, B.Norton, J.Novak, P.Novak, P.Nuenke, E.Nunez, F.O’Donnell, B.Ogden, D.Olson, M.O’Neill, J.Onstott,</p>

	<p>E.Osborne, R.Ostop, D.Oursler, T.Overholser, C.Page, W.Palermo, M.Palmer, P.Palmer, M.Pannell, C.Pareso, B.Parsons, J.Passaro, C.Patterson, H.Patterson, R.Payne, B.Peirce, M.Perini, B.Perry, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (resolution), Pikes Peak Association of Realtors (resolution), C.Pikkaraine, J.Pinkerton, R.Pinkerton, E.Pinter, R.Pitts, G.Place, C.Pocock, M.Pocock, G.Popovich, R.Popovich., D.Potter, D.Powers, S.Prieve, N.Pulsifer, G.Rackov, S.Rech, T.Rees, G.Reese, D.Reichert, M.Reiland, J.Reinhardt, M.Reyner, K.Reynolds, M.Richards, L.Riphenburg, R.Rogozon, D.Root, R.Ross, R.Rothrock, K.Rudy, E.Ryan, M.Salinas, D.Salisbury, P.Salvador, S.Sanden, C.Santo, T.Savage, S.Saye, L.Schauer, A.Scheer, P.Scheetz, S.Schenecker, R.Schickler, S.Schooler, T.Schooler, J.Schreiber, M.Schulzki, M.Scott, T.Scott, P.Scoville, C.Scruggs, C.Sebald, J.Shaver, A.Simpson, W.Six, J.Skaden, J.Skar, S.Sloat, A.Smith, C.Smith, G.Smith., M.Smith., R.Smith, S.Smith, R.Snow, S.Sommer, R.Sommers, M.Southwick, R.Speer, J.Spittler, P.Sprehe, R.Spriggs, D.Starch, B.Starkey, M.Stephenson, R.Stephenson., D.Stimple, B.Stonerock, T.Storm, J.Strathman, L.Strauch, R.Strauch, J.Strub, T.Struve, D.Stuart, A.Stubblefield, E.Swanger, R.Syme, R.Taylor, T.Taylor, V.Taylor, M.Tebedo, W.Temby, G.Thomas, J.Thomas, V.Thomson, D.Thornton, K.Thornton, L.Tilstra, A.Timmons, M.Torreano, R.Tracy, B.Tuck, S.Unknown, S.Vasas, C.Vauthrin, S.Vela, S.Visosky, J.Vyrnios, P.Vyrnios, K.Waggoner, B.Wagner, L.Wagner, M.Walker, P.Walker, R.Walker, E.Wall, D.Wasson, K.Watson, T.Watson, C.Weaver, S.Weber, J.Weidner, P.Weidner, J.Weiler, A.Wells, P.Wells, N.Werle, B.Wess, N.Whetstone, C.White, D.Williams, L.Williams, W.Williams, S.Windom, M.Winslow, M.Winterbottom, M.Wold, M.Woodley, S.Wrestler, M.Wright, A.Wroe, J.Wysocki, T.Young, N.Zavatti, R.Zentz</p>
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OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

Comment:	<p>111 comments were received expressing clear opposition to the Proposed Action. Most of these commenters identified themselves as residents of the Old North End Neighborhood, located east of I-25 between exits 143 and 144.</p> <p>Generally, people expressing opposition to the Proposed Action also had specific comments regarding impacts and mitigation (e.g., noise), and may have also expressed concern that impacts were significant (NEPA process comment).</p>
Response:	<p>FHWA’s decision on the I-25 Proposed Action is based on the specific issues involved, and not on the number of comments in favor of or opposed to an action.</p>
Submitters:	<p>A.Abercrombie, E.Abercrombie, J.Anderson, C.Asfahl, B.Badgett, N.Bay, R.Beadles, F.Bell, D.Benson, L.Bevington, R.Black, T.Boddington, A.Brock, J.Brock, A.Brosh, K.Brosh, R.Bryant, B.Buetow, C.Buetow, S.Burns, S.Carlson, Colorado College, K.Deignan, M.Deignan, S.Dewey, H.Dickens, A.Dickey, P.Doyle, S.Everett, C.Farrell, D.Farrell, Q.Fox, J.Frankmore, M. Frankmore, K.Fuller, G.Ganz, L. Ganz, D.Garelle, V.Grasso, E.Groves, B.Hamilton, D.Harris, A.Hatch, B.Hau, M.Hayden, N.Henjum, Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs, K.Hommel, R.Huffman, W.Hylton, R.Johnson, K.Kassover, P.Kendall, S.Kircher, M.Lane, J.Lark, R.Loevy, W.Mahncke, J.Mahony, T.Mahony, J.Martin, R.Martin, D.Marvel, J.Matson, W.McCue, C.McGaha, K.Morrissey, T. Morrissey, C.Mundy, K.Nelson, S.Nishida-Harvey, C.Oliver, K.O’Neal, L.Pitman, T.Pollaro, L.Prater, J.Prowell, L.Reisinger, J.Rendek, M.Reynolds, J.Rice-Jones, D.Richert, J.Rucker, D.Ryan, S.Saye, R.Schell, S.Schriner, F.Shelton, Sierra Club, M.Smart, K.Spory, R.Spory., A.Stanulonis, M.Stanulonis, B.Suess, J. Suess, R.Sullivan, D.Swint, E.Taylor, C.Theobald, R.Theobald, C.Townsley, G.Tumbush, J.Unknown, G.Urie, B.Vickery, M.Wasinger, C.Willis, J.Zajicek, K.Zajicek, J.Zales</p>

CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEPA PROCESS

Comment:	An environmental impact statement should be prepared.
Response:	The Proposed Action does not meet the criteria listed in 23 CFR 771.115, which specifies the types of transportation projects for which an EIS is normally prepared. Therefore in accordance with Federal Highway Administration regulations and NEPA requirements, an Environmental Assessment was prepared. The FHWA has determined that sufficient studies have been prepared to assess the Proposed Action’s direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. After a thorough, comprehensive and independent review of the EA, its associated studies and documentation, and all comments received during the 45-day public review period, the FHWA has determined that there are no significant impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action. Therefore an EIS is not required.
Submitters:	(41 people) C.Asfahl, B.Badgett, N.Bay, F.Bell, D.Benson, L.Bevington, K.&A.Brosh, B.&C.Buetow, S.Carlson, S.Dewey, H.Dickens, A.Dukey, V.Grasso, R.Johnson, D.Reichert, M.Emeson, D.&C.Farrell, M.Ferguson, E.Fox, D.Harris, N.Henjum, Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs, K.Hommel, J.Jones-Eddy, T.Kircher, C.Mundy, K.Nelson, S.Nishida-Harvey, K.O’Neal, M.Reynolds, J.Rice-Jones, F.Shelton, Sierra Club, R.Spory, C.&R.Theobald, G.Tumbush, J.Zales

Comment:	The EPA urged that an EIS be undertaken - why wasn’t this advice heeded?
Response:	EPA’s official statement to FHWA said the likely impacts “warrant <i>consideration</i> of preparing an EIS” [emphasis added]. FHWA and CDOT took EPA’s comments under advisement, but after considering the likely project impacts, determined that it was appropriate to proceed with an EA (to be followed by an EIS if significant impacts were identified in the NEPA process). After completion of the EA process, FHWA has determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is supported and preparation of an EIS is not warranted.
Submitters:	C.Asfahl, S.Dewey, H.Dickens, P.Doyle, A.Dukey, D.&C.Farrell, E.Fox, V.Grasso, N.Henjum, K.Hommel, R.Johnson, D.Reichert , J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Inclusion of high-occupancy vehicle lanes as part of the Proposed Action triggers the need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement instead of an EA.
Response:	FHWA determined that the inclusion of high-occupancy vehicles lanes in the Proposed Action does not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. 23 CFR 771.115(a)(4) applies specifically for the case of “[n]ew construction or extension of a separate roadway for buses and high occupancy vehicles not located within an existing highway facility.” The HOV lanes proposed on I-25 do not constitute “a separate roadway,” and they would clearly be located “within an existing highway facility.” [emphasis added]. Therefore, an EIS is not required.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	Past safety projects escaped NEPA scrutiny due to segmentation of overall effort into smaller projects. The projects were segmented to avoid preparing an Environmental Impact Statement.
Response:	FHWA and CDOT strongly disagree with the assertion that past safety projects escaped NEPA scrutiny. CDOT's Corridor Feasibility Study (1991) examined the 30-year-old interstate highway and identified specific safety needs at five interchanges and on the highway mainline between Bijou and Fillmore. Each I-25 safety projects had independent utility and was designed to not preclude future alternatives, including alternative modes and other corridors. The resources committed to the safety improvements were justifiable based on the safety needs and were not investments in other future actions. These safety projects were thoroughly examined in accordance with NEPA requirements, resulting in categorical exclusions approved by the FHWA.
Submitters:	(17 people) C.Asfahl, L.Bevington, B.&C.Buetow, H.Dickens, D.&C.Farrell, E.Fox, N.Henjum, K.Hommel, Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs, C.Mundy, M.Reynolds, J.Rice-Jones, Sierra Club, R.Spory, G.Tumbush

Comment:	The road has already been widened without an EA. CDOT has stated that between Bijou and Fillmore, no more pavement will need to be added to accommodate capacity lanes.
Response:	CDOT's <i>Corridor Feasibility Study</i> (1991) examined the 30-year-old interstate highway and identified specific safety needs at five interchanges and between Bijou and Fillmore. When the safety improvements were proposed there was no clear likelihood of the availability of future funding for the subsequent steps. Therefore the safety projects, including the construction of acceleration and deceleration lanes between Bijou and Fillmore to address short weaving distances between interchanges, were built as stand-alone improvements when funds became available. These safety projects, which demonstrated independent utility, logical project termini, and non-significant environmental impacts, did not address capacity issues handled by this project and were thoroughly examined in accordance with NEPA requirements, resulting in categorical exclusions approved by the FHWA.
Submitters:	F.Bell, R.Spory

Comment:	An EIS was done for I-25 improvements in Pueblo and Douglas Counties but why not in Colorado Springs?
Response:	The appropriate type of NEPA documentation is determined for each project on an individual basis. The situations cited are not "identical" in the three locations. In the case of Pueblo, CDOT and FHWA determined that an EIS was appropriate because of anticipated significant impacts regarding historic properties, 4(f) properties, and environmental justice. In the case of Douglas County, the project included improvements to two major highways (I-25 and SH-85), and an EIS was prepared because of and consideration of rail transportation and anticipated significant impacts to wildlife, historic resources, and Section 4(f) resources from proposed roadway improvements. Impacts of similar context and severity were not anticipated (nor found) in the I-25 corridor through Colorado Springs.
Submitters:	J.Rucker, R.Spory

Comment:	The analysis in the EA is deficient and therefore no action can be approved.
Response:	The Federal Highway Administration has determined that sufficient studies have been prepared to assess the proposed action’s direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. After a thorough, comprehensive and independent review of the EA, its associated studies and documentation, and all comments received during the 45-day public review period, the Federal Highway Administration has determined that there are no significant impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	CDOT and FHWA should not let much-needed I-25 improvements be delayed by the objections of a small number of people who live close to the freeway, given that the freeway has been in place for more than 40 years and those who moved in next to it knew it was there.
Response:	In most cases, people who live close to any Proposed Action are those who are likely to be impacted the most, and therefore it is very important that their views be heard. All points of view, pro and con, were carefully considered by CDOT and FHWA in the EA process.
Submitters:	(25 people) D.Bjugstad, C.Bullock, C.Cannon, C.Durance, M.Gaebler, W.Heilman, H.Herber, Karie Kofford, Kurt Kofford, S.Martin, M.McDowell, M.Miller, M.Nemeth, H.Patterson, B.Perry, T.Savage, J.Spittler, R.Taylor, J.Vrynios, K.Waggoner, A.Wells, P.Wells, C.White, M.Winterbottom, A.Wroe

EA Section 1 - Purpose and Need

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

EA Section 2 - Alternatives Considered

PROPOSED ACTION – GENERAL COMMENTS

Comment:	The overall schedule for the Proposed Action is not mentioned.
Response:	The overall schedule depends on funding availability, and requires completion of the NEPA process. The EA notes that the cost for all improvements is expected to be over a half billion dollars, and that approximately \$120 million is expected to be available in the immediate future. The Destination 2025 Regional Transportation Plan reflects completion of the entire Proposed Action prior to 2025. The I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis (EA Appendix 1) recommended a three-phased approach as follows: (1) first, I-25 would be widened to six lanes (three through-lanes in each direction) through central Colorado Springs, where existing congestion is worst today; (2) next, when funding allows, I-25 would be widened to six lanes in northern El Paso County, between Briargate and Monument; and (3) finally, HOV lanes would be added in central Colorado Springs and the freeway would be widened to six lanes southward to South Academy Boulevard.
Submitters:	M.Oliver; M.O’Neill

Comment:	The funding mechanism for the Proposed Action is unclear – will bonding be used? Suggested that the area to be taxed for funding be widened.
Response:	State and Federal highway taxes are expected to be the main sources of funding for the Proposed Action. No tax district is in place for I-25 improvements, and none is proposed.
Submitters:	D.Hoeckle, M.Kyral

PROPOSED ACTION – GENERAL PURPOSE LANES

Comment:	All of I-25 should be widened to 4 to 6 lanes in each direction.
Response:	The Proposed Action that is explained on pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EA would provide acceptable levels of service for traffic flow in the year 2025, as discussed on EA page 3-9. Providing additional lanes beyond those needed would greatly boost the project’s financial cost, beyond reasonably foreseeable available funding, and could potentially result in adverse environmental impacts.
Submitters:	(7 people) D.Carter, G.Eisenbraun, D.Miller, C.Newman, M.Oakes, G.Pinter, D.Root

Comment:	I-25 should be widened to 8 lanes as far north as North Gate (Exit 156).
Response:	Beyond the year 2025, continued regional growth could someday boost traffic demand in northern El Paso County beyond the capacity of the six general-purpose lanes that are proposed between I-25 Exits 151 (Briargate) and 161 (State Highway 105 in Monument). The I-25 Proposed Action does not preclude future alternatives for increasing corridor capacity in Northern El Paso County.
Submitters:	J.Horton

Comment:	A third lane is needed between Monument and Castle Rock.
Response:	The northern terminus of the Proposed Action is the State Highway 105 Interchange in Monument. Thus the highway portion referred to in the comment is out of the scope of this EA.
Submitters:	D.Marich

Comment:	It is doubtful the new ramp configurations at the north side of the proposed project would improve congestion.
Response:	The Proposed Action not only includes widening to a six-lane freeway in northern El Paso County, but also includes interchange improvements at Baptist Road and at North Gate, including a new connection to Powers Boulevard. Future traffic demand was projected based on adopted regional population and employment forecasts through the year 2025. The traffic analysis conducted as part of the I-25 EA (EA Appendix 1) demonstrates that the Proposed Action would provide acceptable levels of service on I-25 and at its interchanges through at least the year 2025.
Submitters:	J.Horton

Comment:	Capacity needs to be added from Garden of the Gods to South Academy Boulevard, and highway planners should think “a little further out than 5 years.”
Response:	The Proposed Action calls for the widening of I-25 for a total of 26 miles. That distance includes the 11-mile section suggested in this comment as well as the next 15 miles to the north. The Proposed Action would provide acceptable traffic flow on I-25 at least through the year 2025.
Submitters:	J.Rendek

Comment:	The EA document did not clearly state which sections of I-25 will be widened to 6 lanes, which will be widened to 8 lanes.
Response:	The extent of the proposed I-25 six-lane segments and eight-lane segments (six general purpose lanes plus HOV lanes) is explained in the EA on page 2-2 and depicted in the full-page figure on page 2-3.
Submitters:	J.Horton

Comment:	Wider highways are difficult to navigate.
Response:	Freeways with more than two through-lanes in each direction exist throughout the world, and are successfully navigated by millions of drivers. The Proposed Action would bring the 40-year old freeway up to modern design standards and would eliminate existing non-conforming configurations (such as the Corporate Drive southbound exit and the left-side southbound off-ramp to Nevada Avenue) that are outside of normal driver expectancy.
Submitters:	O.Cramer

Comment:	A frontage road should be built west of I-25 from Fillmore to Bijou.
Response:	The traffic analysis in the EA (Appendix 1) demonstrates that the Proposed Action would provide acceptable levels of service on I-25 through at least the year 2025, without any need for a westside frontage road. The I-25 Proposed Action was developed in a manner that minimized right-of-way impacts and neighborhood disruption. A frontage road would be likely have adverse impacts.
Submitters:	J.Lundberg

Comment:	The Fontanero Interchange (Exit 144) should be connected to Centennial (west of I-25) and to Constitution Avenue (east of I-25).
Response:	The PPACG <i>Destination 2025</i> Regional Transportation Plan includes an extension of Centennial Avenue to I-25. For air quality conformity modeling purposes, PPACG assumed that this connection would occur sometime between 2007 and 2015. The same plan and conformity analysis do not include a connection eastward to Constitution Avenue. The Proposed Action assumes that Centennial will be connected as indicated in the PPACG plan. The Proposed Action does not include but also does not preclude a future connection to Constitution.
Submitters:	G.Eisenbraun, L.Frank, J.Lundberg

Comment:	Trucks should be confined to certain lanes on I-25.
Response:	This operational policy is not commonly used in Colorado. It is not clear that there would be compelling reasons to implement it in the Colorado Springs area. However, its implementation would become more feasible if the Proposed Action were implemented, providing more than two through-lanes per direction on the freeway. The <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1) examined the addition of truck-only lanes, and found that this alternative would be of limited benefit because truck volumes are relatively low during peak commuter periods.
Submitters:	P.Apostoli, J.Skadden

PROPOSED ACTION – HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANES

Comment:	HOV lanes are not a solution to capacity issues. They are not likely to receive adequate usage, so the proposed HOV lanes should instead be operated as general purpose driving lanes.
Response:	The peak-period HOV lanes that are part of the I-25 Proposed Action represent a major step in encouraging use of alternative modes of transportation (other than single-occupant commuting), which is a stated goal of the PPACG <i>Destination 2025</i> Regional Transportation Plan and the <i>City of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan</i> . HOV lanes have operated elsewhere in the United States with varying degrees of use and public acceptance. In Colorado Springs, they are projected to operate with marginal success in 2025. If the lanes prove to be underutilized, there is a possibility that they could be restriped and resigned as normal general-purpose lanes. This is explained in the EA on page 2-10. The same page acknowledges that some individuals expressed opposition to HOV lanes in I-25 public meetings throughout the course of EA development.
Submitters:	(23 people) P.Apostoli, C.Beckman, J.Bray, R.Conklin, D.Davidson, K.Dolder, C.Erwin, P.Erwin, P.Fraizer, S.Honea, K.Hunter, T.Johnston, D.Kipp, D.Linster, C.Marchand, S.McConnell, J.McNelly, D.Miles, L.Miller, M.Pannell, R.Savage, A.Schulzki, T.Sherman

Comment:	Liked the inclusion of HOV lanes and/or rush-hour only HOV designation.
Response:	See response immediately above.
Submitters:	S.Prieve, J.Prowell, D.Stuart

Comment:	HOV lanes should not be separated from the rest of the freeway.
Response:	In the Proposed Action, there would be no physical separation of the HOV lanes from the adjacent general-purpose lanes, as noted in the EA on page 2-2.
Submitters:	J.McDevitt

Comment:	HOV lanes should extend as far north as Monument.
Response:	The traffic analysis in the EA demonstrates that the proposed six general-purpose lanes between I-25 Exits 151 (Briargate) and 163 (Monument) would provide acceptable levels of service through at least 2025. The Proposed Action calls for HOV lanes south of Briargate and does not preclude their future extension northward.
Submitters:	S.Evans

Comment:	HOV lanes should extend as far north as Baptist Road.
Response:	See response immediately above.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	HOV lanes should be constructed in Phase I.
Response:	As explained in Section 3, page 2-10, phasing HOV lanes to the end of the project is consistent with projected traffic demand, and opening an HOV lane before there is sufficient demand may be counter-productive. Project phasing is based on funding availability and on other factors that will be construed during final design.
Submitters:	D.Evergreen

Comment:	HOV lanes should be reversible to increase capacity.
Response:	Reversible lanes actually reduce capacity on an all-day basis because they must be vacated twice daily to facilitate directional change. Reversible lanes (HOV or otherwise) were considered in the I-25 Mode <i>Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1) but were not recommended due to their capacity limitations.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	Tolls for single occupant vehicles should be collected for use of HOV lanes.
Response:	HOV toll lanes were considered in the I-25 Mode <i>Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1) but were not recommended for inclusion in the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez, J.Strub

Comment:	HOV lanes should be designed such that users can enter/exit without having to merge across lanes of traffic.
Response:	Special entrance and exit ramps to provide high-occupancy vehicles direct access to HOV lanes are not included as part of the I-25 Proposed Action. The Proposed HOV lanes on I-25 would be the first in the Pikes Peak Region, and are projected to operate with marginal success in 2025. If the lanes prove to be used and well accepted by the public, potentially in conjunction with improved public transit service, additional investment in HOV accommodation may be considered at that time.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	HOV lanes should be open to hybrid and electric vehicles.
Response:	Allowing use of HOV lanes by low-polluting vehicles is an operational decision that would be made in the future. As the entire vehicle fleet gradually becomes “cleaner” over time, the actual air quality benefit of offering this incentive is declining over time.
Submitters:	G.Eckholm

PROPOSED ACTION – MAJOR INTERCHANGE RECONSTRUCTION

Comment:	Existing bottlenecks along I-25 need to be removed. Bridges should be widened when the roadway is widened to eliminate bottlenecks.
Response:	The Proposed Action would improve existing I-25 interchanges where existing structures at cross-streets are not wide enough to accommodate additional I-25 lanes. Many of these interchanges are more than 40 years old, and have other design deficiencies that tend to cause traffic congestion. Under the Proposed Action, the freeway would operate at better levels of service (i.e. provide smoother traffic flow) than it does today.
Submitters:	L.Boese, J.Krsulic, J.Unknown

Comment:	All interchanges should be designed as single point urban interchanges, such as the one at Garden of the Gods Road.
Response:	Each type of interchange concept has different characteristics (pros and cons) that determine if they are well suited to local circumstances. Therefore, each interchange configuration is considered on an individual basis, taking into account its setting from both a traffic standpoint and local traffic patterns and access needs, as well as environmental constraints. For the several interchanges that are proposed for reconstruction under the Proposed Action single-point urban interchanges were considered as alternatives, but as the result of thorough evaluation, only one existing interchanges would become a single-point urban interchange, and that is at Fillmore Street (Exit 145). The design concept for Fillmore differs from the one at Garden of the Gods. Fillmore Street is and will remain a crossing over I-25, whereas Garden of the Gods crosses under I-25. These interchanges will have a similar pattern of traffic flow but will differ greatly in appearance.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	The design for the Garden of the Gods interchange (i.e. single-point urban interchange) should not be used at other interchanges.
Response:	See response immediately above.
Submitters:	H.Florence

Comment:	An “inside out” cloverleaf interchange would eliminate all left turns, not require any red lights, and require less space than traditional cloverleaf interchanges.
Response:	A large number of alternative configurations was considered for each of the I-25 interchanges that would be reconstructed under the I-25 Proposed Action. In general, minimization of right-of-way impacts was a key objective in optimizing each interchange concept. The drawing that accompanied this citizen comment depicts an interchange that is effectively a giant roundabout. While this configuration could have advantages for traffic movement (but not driver expectancy), it would have enormous right-of-way impacts on adjacent properties. The concept may have potential for application in a wide-open, undeveloped area, but would not work well in I-25’s setting of mature, surrounding land development.
Submitters:	T.Johnston

Comment:	Access to the Baptist Road interchange should be limited.
Response:	A number of Alternative configurations for Baptist Road interchange reconstruction were considered. The configuration included in the Proposed Action is shown on page 7 of the <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , contained in EA Appendix 1. Heavy traffic is expected at the interchange, which required access to existing adjacent businesses to be relocated away from I-25.
Submitters:	J.Blake

Comment:	The Powers/Northgate interchange should be reconstructed for efficiency.
Response:	The I-25 Proposed Action includes reconstruction of the I-25/North Gate interchange (Exit 156), combined with connection of Powers Boulevard to I-25 via freeway-to-freeway ramps. This configuration is depicted in the EA on page 6 of the <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , contained in EA Appendix 1.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	The proposed Northgate interchange is too close to housing to accommodate Powers Boulevard traffic.
Response:	The proposed Powers Boulevard connection to I-25 would be located to the south of North Gate Road, and not bring Powers traffic onto North Gate itself. The interchange configuration is shown in the EA on page 6 of the <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , contained in EA Appendix 1.
Submitters:	H.Mitchell

Comment:	Why wasn't the Northgate/Powers extensions connected to Interquest Parkway?
Response:	Connecting Powers Boulevard to I-25 using Interquest Parkway to I-25 Exit 153 was an alternative that was considered in prior studies that determined the planned Powers alignment. This issue was not within the scope of the I-25 EA.
Submitters:	K.Dolder

Comment:	A new interchange should be built at the end of Briargate Boulevard near Gart's Sports.
Response:	The existing Briargate Interchange was completed in 1987 and has several decades of useful life remaining. The Briargate bridge over I-25 is wide enough to accommodate the Proposed Action, and traffic levels of service at this interchange in 2025 are projected to be acceptable. Finally, all land adjacent to I-25 between Exits 150 and 156 is Air Force Academy property, involving impacts to an historic resource. In summary, there is no compelling reason for expenditure of public funds to reconstruct the Briargate interchange.
Submitters:	C.Marchand

Comment:	Expressed concerns about the need for more capacity between the I-25 southbound on-ramp from Woodmen Drive to Nevada Avenue.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, additional through-lanes would be added to I-25 at this location. Additionally, the I-25 left-lane off-ramp southbound to Nevada Avenue would be replaced by a more conventional right-lane off-ramp carrying traffic to a completely revamped interchange complex serving Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard.
Submitters:	S.Gaalema, J.McDevitt, T.Laugesen, T.& G.Sherman

Comment:	The new Nevada interchange should be designed such that Nevada can connect to Vincent.
Response:	The I-25 Proposed Action addresses interchange improvements and circulation associated with the interstate. A connection from Nevada Avenue to Vincent Drive is not included as part of the Proposed Action, but would instead be a matter for consideration by the City of Colorado Springs.
Submitters:	D.Olson

Comment:	No provision made for a connector between Vincent Street and Dublin Boulevard.
Response:	The I-25 Proposed Action addresses interchange improvements and circulation associated with the interstate. An extension of Vincent Drive to Dublin Boulevard is not included as part of the Proposed Action, but is planned by the City of Colorado Springs.
Submitters:	T.Savage

Comment:	Westbound Fillmore at I-25 has severe backups that need to be addressed.
Response:	The I-25 Proposed Action includes reconstruction of the Fillmore Interchange. Traffic projections for 2025 indicate that this configuration would operate at acceptable levels of service, reflecting considerable improvement over existing conditions. The planned configuration for the Fillmore interchange is depicted in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on page 4.
Submitters:	P.Smith

Comment:	The Bijou Street bridge needs to be rebuilt.
Response:	The Bijou Street bridge would be reconstructed as part of the Proposed Action. The planned configuration for the Bijou interchange is depicted in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on page 2.
Submitters:	R.Bernheim

Comment:	The interchange at I-25 and US 24 should be designed as a clover-leaf.
Response:	Various configurations involving flyover ramps were among the alternatives considered for this interchange. The configuration in the Proposed Action does not include flyovers, but is designed to accommodate the possible future addition of a flyover taking northbound I-25 traffic to westbound US 24. Traffic analysis in the EA indicates that this configuration would provide acceptable levels of service at least through the year 2025. The planned configuration for the Cimarron (US 24) interchange is depicted in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on page 3.
Submitters:	T.Jamison

PROPOSED ACTION – MINOR I-25 MODIFICATIONS

Comment:	Corporate Drive should connect to the new I-25 Nevada/Rockrimmon interchange.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes the suggested connection. A diagram of the planned Nevada/Rockrimmon interchange is provided in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on page 5.
Submitters:	S.Hittle

Comment:	Build the Corporate Drive extension when reconstructing Nevada/Rockrimmon to avoid prolonged access disruption for local businesses.
Response:	In accordance with an agreement reached between CDOT and the City of Colorado Springs in May 2004, a Corporate Drive extension will be included as part of the construction of the North Nevada/Rockrimmon interchange complex. A formal resolution affirming this decision was adopted by the Colorado Springs City Council on May 25, 2004.
Submitters:	Palmer Village

Comment:	The Commerce Center Drive (Corporate Drive) on-ramp should be eliminated or a barrier should be constructed to prevent vehicles from immediately exiting onto Nevada.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes elimination of the Corporate Drive exit, and also eliminates the left-lane I-25 southbound off-ramp to Nevada Avenue. Therefore the unsafe movement mentioned in the comment will no longer be made.
Submitters:	J.McDevitt

Comment:	Rusina Road at the Garden of the Gods interchange poses a large safety hazard.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes minor geometric improvements at this interchange, addressing this widely recognized safety problem. This is mentioned in the EA on page 2-5.
Submitters:	C.&R.Bratten, W.McKenna

PROPOSED ACTION – CONGESTION MANAGEMENT/TSM

Comment:	Metered on-ramps should be built.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes on-ramps designed to accommodate future installation of ramp metering, as noted in the EA on page 2-5.
Submitters:	G.Ekholm, M.Kyral, J.Lowery, J.McDonald

Comment:	Transportation system management (TSM) should be implemented.
Response:	The term “transportation system management” can include a wide variety of measures. As noted in the EA on pages 2-5 and 2-6, the I-25 Proposed Action includes continued implementation of freeway incident management technology, including freeway surveillance cameras, variable message signs, and accommodation for future implementation of ramp metering. It also includes high-occupancy vehicle lanes, which are sometimes considered to be a TSM strategy.
Submitters:	J.Hull

Comment:	Intelligent transportation system elements should be implemented.
Response:	See response to TSM comment, immediately above.
Submitters:	J.Lowery

Comment:	Intelligent transportation system signage should be included.
Response:	See response to TSM comment above.
Submitters:	E.Pinter

PROPOSED ACTION – TRANSIT AND PARK-AND-RIDE ACCOMMODATION

Comment:	A corridor for light rail should be preserved.
Response:	As is noted in the EA on page 3-25, the existing I-25 right-of-way through much of the Colorado Springs urbanized area is 300 feet wide. The I-25 Proposed Action accommodates potential future transit service through provision of peak-period high-occupancy-vehicle lanes. Although the Proposed Action does not preclude future transit options, the nearby freight rail corridor may be a more logical alignment for any fixed-guideway transit options, including light rail (see EA Appendix 1, <i>Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i>).
Submitters:	T.Conroy

PROPOSED ACTION – BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATION

Comment:	Wider shoulders should be incorporated to accommodate bicycle traffic.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, wider outside shoulders meeting national design standards would be provided. However, for safety reasons, bicycling on the I-25 shoulder is prohibited and will continue to be prohibited in areas where reasonable alternative bicycle routes are available. The proximity of the region’s primary north-south trail system (New Santa Fe Trail, Pikes Peak Greenway and Fountain Creek Regional Trail) makes bicycling on I-25 an unnecessary risk.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	Space for bicycle traffic at interchanges should be included.
Response:	The Proposed Action provides for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at numerous locations, as noted in the EA on page 2-34.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

OTHER ALTERNATIVES EXAMINED – GENERAL COMMENTS

Comment:	Alternate solutions/alternate travel modes should be considered.
Response:	Eighteen capacity alternatives were examined in the <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> , included as EA Appendix 1. The alternatives that were evaluated are summarized in Section 2 of the EA, Alternatives Considered.
Submitters:	R.Black, D.Ulmer

OTHER ALTERNATIVES EXAMINED – ALTERNATE ROUTES

Comment:	A bypass or beltway should be built east of/around the city.
Response:	Three alternate routes were considered in the <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1). These were: (1) upgrading Powers Boulevard to a freeway; (2) upgrading Marksheffel Road or constructing the planned Banning-Lewis Parkway as a freeway; and (3) construction of a high-speed Front Range Toll Road approximately 20 miles east of the I-25 corridor. In the analysis, it was determined that these alternatives would not draw enough traffic off of Interstate 25 to meet the purpose and need of relieving projected future congestion. This outcome is summarized in the EA on pages 2-8 and 2-9. However, each of the alternate route concepts may be appropriate to meet other purposes and needs relating to projected rapid growth in eastern Colorado Springs. The new growth areas will need their own north-south major routes, rather than sending trips on east-west arterials to access I-25.
Submitters:	(44 people) D.Bachoroski, R.Beadles, M.Boutz, K.Brandenburg, K.&A.Brosh, R.Bryant, B.&C.Buetow, L.Clewe, K.Crabtree, C.Erwin, P.Erwin, K.Fishburn, A.Flinn, P.Fraizer, J.&M.Frankmore, S.Hollenbeck, S.Holmes, S.Honea, R.Key, R.Lynch, C.Marchand, W.McCue, C.McGaha, D.Miller, H.Mitchell, M.Perini, G.Pinter, L.Pitman, L.Prater, D.Root, T.Seran, R.Spory, J.Strub, E.Tilley, B.Vickery&M.Winebrenner, F.Whitacre, E.Wilcox, R.Wilcox, C.Willis, S.Windom

Comment:	An alternate route should have been considered
Response:	See response to comment immediately above.
Submitters:	(10 people) C.Asfahl, B.Badgett, H.Dickens, N.Henjum, K.Hommel, D.&C.Farrell, Q.Fox, R.Huffman, C.Mundy

Comment:	A toll road should be constructed
Response:	See response to comment above.
Submitters:	B.Hubbard, B.Hau & D.Marvel, J.Strub

Comment:	A truck route bypass should be constructed.
Response:	See response to comment above.
Submitters:	M.Kline

Comment:	A highway should be built to serve the Banning-Lewis Ranch development.
Response:	The region's <i>Destination 2025</i> Long Range Transportation Plan includes a planned Banning-Lewis Parkway to serve the city's future growth area of more than 20,000 acres on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs. The I-25 Proposed Action neither includes nor precludes such a facility.
Submitters:	B.Baer

Comment:	An east-west freeway is needed, and/or /US 24 widened.
Response:	In January 2002, the City of Colorado Springs completed its <i>East West Mobility Study</i> , an extensive examination of east-west transportation issues and opportunities facing the community. That study did not recommend an east-west freeway, and no east-west freeway is included in the PPACG <i>Destination 2025</i> Regional Transportation Plan. An east-west freeway would not meet the purpose and need of relieving existing and projected future congestion on Interstate 25.
Submitters:	(10 people) R.Alliman, K.Brandenburg, C.Erwin, S.Honea, H.Mitchell, T.Pollaro, R.Ross, R.Spriggs, S.Unknown, R.Walker

OTHER ALTERNATIVES EXAMINED – TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

Comment:	Light rail or other rapid transit should be constructed.
Response:	Light rail, commuter rail and other rapid transit technologies were evaluated in the <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1). It was determined that these alternatives would not attract sufficient ridership to meet the purpose and need of relieving existing and future traffic congestion on I-25. However, rapid transit concepts may be appropriate for meeting other transportation purposes and needs in the region. This is discussed on page 2-9 of the EA.
Submitters:	(20 people) B.Benson, S.Carlson, T.Christian, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, D.Duranso, V.Grasso, B.Hau & D.Marvel, J.Hull, R.Johnson, G.Lewis, K.Montemayor, C. Mundy, C.Newman, L.Prater, D.Reichert, D.Ryan, F.Whitacre, G.Whiteside

Comment:	Mass transit/passenger rail service to Denver and other Front Range destinations should be provided.
Response:	The <i>State Passenger Rail Study</i> completed in the late 1990's indicated that passenger rail service between Colorado Springs and Denver had the potential to carry about 900,000 passengers annually in the year 2015, which equates to fewer than 5,000 passengers per day, and fewer than 5,000 vehicle trips per day. This number is not large in comparison with the projected future I-25 maximum traffic demand of 171,000 vehicles per day. Subsequently, the CDOT <i>South Front Range Corridor Assessment Study</i> in 1998 concluded that the appropriate way to improve mobility for inter-regional trips along the Front Range would be to focus on the congestion within metropolitan areas, rather than providing more capacity between the metro areas. This is noted on page 1-1 of the EA.
Submitters:	(22 people) B.Benson, S.Carlson, T.Christian, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, D.Duranso, D.&C.Farell, V.Grasso, B.Hau & D.Marvel, J.Hull, R.Johnson, G.Lewis, K.Montemayor, C.Newman, L.Prater, D.Reichert, J.Rice-Jones, D.Ryan, F.Whitacre, G.Whiteside

OTHER ALTERNATIVES EXAMINED – I-25 CAPACITY ALTERNATIVES

Comment:	I-25 should be widened to 3 lanes only and rest of money invested in light rail/rapid transit.
Response:	I-25 alternatives providing six lanes (three lanes in each direction) were evaluated in the <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> (EA Appendix 1), and it was determined that they would not provide sufficient capacity to meet projected travel demand for the 20-year planning horizon. [The Proposed Action does build 3 lanes in parts of the corridor.] This is summarized on page 2-9 of the EA. Light rail or rapid transit serving the I-25 corridor would not remove enough trips from I-25 to enable the freeway to function at an acceptable level of service.
Submitters:	M.Gaebler

Comment:	Six lanes of traffic and lower speed limits is adequate for alleviating congestion
Response:	See response to comment immediately above.
Submitters:	M.Smart

Comment:	Dedicated truck lanes should be constructed.
Response:	Dedicated truck-only lanes were a capacity alternative considered in the <i>I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> , included in EA Appendix 1, as summarized in EA Section 2. It was determined in the MFAA that this alternative would not be as effective in relieving traffic congestion as adding general-purpose or high-occupancy vehicle lanes.
Submitters:	B.Hubbard

EA Section 3 - Impacts and Mitigation

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AND ISSUES - GENERAL COMMENTS

Comment:	Current and future traffic projections are underestimated.
Response:	Traffic estimates for the year 2000 were based on actual counts from an automated traffic recorder embedded in the I-25 roadway. Projections for 2025 were based on planning and modeling assumptions from PPACG, the designated transportation planning agency for the Pikes Peak Region. A letter from PPACG affirming the reasonableness of this approach is contained in Section 12 of the EA. The trend in I-25 traffic growth has been very steady for the past four decades, as graphed on page 5 of EA Appendix 1, <i>Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> .
Submitters:	R.Balink

Comment:	The EA relied on congestion data that did not take into account the traffic impacts of recent I-25 safety projects.
Response:	<p>Existing congestion levels discussed in the EA clearly document that I-25 has routine, pervasive traffic congestion throughout the corridor during weekday peak periods. For example, the EA on page 3-7 states that “16 miles of I-25 from central Colorado Springs to northern El Paso County were congested, based on year 2000 traffic volumes.” Under the No-Action Alternative, congested levels of service would occur on all 26 miles between South Academy Boulevard and State Highway 105 in Monument. The recent I-25 safety projects did not correct existing traffic congestion, nor were they intended to do so. The freeway will become increasingly congested in the future without the Proposed Action, as documented in the EA at page 3-8.</p> <p>The problems that were addressed by the I-25 safety projects were primarily associated with inadequate ramp lengths and short acceleration/deceleration lanes. These deficiencies resulted in traffic stacking onto the shoulders and into through-traffic lanes, and in congested merge points on the freeway, contributing to numerous accidents and lengthened peak-hour congestion. Improving those conditions has had an ancillary benefit of reducing peak hour delays by enabling motorists to use the existing capacity more efficiently. However it has not eliminated the need for capacity improvements in those areas.</p>
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	What is the capacity of one additional lane and what is the future expected traffic volume?
Response:	Lane capacity is explained on pages 20-21 of EA Appendix 1, <i>Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> . With two through-lanes each direction today, the freeway carries close to 110,000 vehicles on an average weekday. Doubling the number of lanes will nearly double capacity. The average weekday projected for the busiest segment of I-25 in the year 2025 is slightly over 170,000 vehicles per day.
Submitters:	C.McGaha

Comment:	The south side of Colorado Springs will be the most congested in the future.
Response:	Segment-by-segment I-25 traffic volumes for 2025 are shown in Figure 3-1 on page 3-6 of the EA. Volumes south of Circle Drive Interchange (I-25 Exit 138) are the lowest found in the 35-mile portion of I-25 that was studied. By 2025, I-25 average weekday traffic between South Academy (Exit 135) and Circle may exceed 90,000 vehicles per day, and thus widening to three lanes each direction is included as part of the Proposed Action. South of Exit 135, projected traffic demand should be met adequately by the existing two lanes each direction.
Submitters:	C.Newman

Comment:	New growth around Exit 132 should be considered.
Response:	The traffic analysis for the I-25 EA was based upon adopted regional growth forecasts through the year 2025 from PPACG, the designated regional planning agency. The PPACG forecasts do include the growth in the vicinity of I-25 Exit 132, the State Highway 16 Interchange.
Submitters:	J.Skadden

Comment:	The current I-25 is more than the four lanes CDOT claims it to be: “In the description of the current I-25, it’s referred to as a four-lane highway. Anyone who looked at an aerial photo would count six lanes, and I think that calling continuous acceleration and deceleration lanes, not counting them as lanes, is an example of bad faith.”
Response:	Most of I-25 through El Paso County has just four through-lanes (two in each direction). Segments in the vicinity of recent safety projects also have auxiliary lanes for acceleration and deceleration. In the 3-mile segment between Bijou and Fillmore Interchanges, these lanes are continuous, for safety reasons. These are indeed lanes that can be counted on an aerial photo, but they are not considered to be <i>through</i> -lanes because they end at the Bijou and Fillmore interchanges.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Local trips should use local roads and not the interstate.
Response:	Figure 1-4 on page 1-3 of the EA shows that in fact the vast majority of traffic on I-25 in central Colorado Springs consists of vehicles that are making local trips. This is due at least in part to a lack of alternative, continuous north-south roadways in the City of Colorado Springs. Connecting Powers Boulevard to I-25 as is accommodated by the Proposed Action would provide one new alternative route, but will not fundamentally change the use of I-25 for “local” trips.
Submitters:	J.Bray

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AND ISSUES - GENERAL SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

Comment:	Merge lanes at interchanges should be long enough to provide for safe merging.
Response:	Providing adequate merge length on ramps and continuous acceleration/deceleration lanes where appropriate, was an important consideration taken into account in developing the interchange reconstruction concepts that are incorporated in the Proposed Action. Diagrams of the proposed interchange configurations are included in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on pages 2 through 7.
Submitters:	P.Apostoli

Comment:	Longer exit ramps should be provided.
Response:	See response immediately above.
Submitters:	P.Apostoli

Comment:	The current speed limit of 75 mph is unsafe; should set lower limits and install more frequent speed limit signage.
Response:	Speed limits are set based on roadway design and local conditions, and are periodically reassessed. Frequency of signage is based on national engineering standards. Interstate highways are designed to accommodate higher speeds than most other types of roadways. The 75 mph limit only applies to the non-urban sections of I-25. It is 55 mph and 65 mph within the urban area.
Submitters:	K.Coblar

Comment:	The design speed being set at 70 mph was too high for a posted speed limit.
Response:	See response immediately above.
Submitters:	J.Prowell

Comment:	Speed limits should be increased.
Response:	See response above.
Submitters:	L.Boese, J.Hejsek, S.Unknown

Comment:	Posted speeds should be enforced.
Response:	Enforcement of posted speeds is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado State Patrol, not the Colorado Department of Transportation, and speeds are enforced within the capability of the Patrol.
Submitters:	F.Bell, M.Richards

Comment:	Technology should be used to enforce speed limits.
Response:	I-25 today has freeway surveillance cameras that are monitored in the City of Colorado Springs Traffic Operations Center, and the Proposed Action would maintain or expand the current surveillance coverage. The extent to which such information may be used for speed enforcement is a matter to be decided by the appropriate public safety services.
Submitters:	K.Dolder

Comment:	More cars and higher speeds would lead to more accidents and deaths. Does any of this highway improvement money expand ambulance and hospital services?
Response:	Medical services are provided by the local community, and CDOT does not have jurisdiction to provide or expand ambulance and hospital services. CDOT has coordinated closely with the City and the County during development of the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	M.Smart

Comment:	The EA doesn't include information about traffic safety considerations.
Response:	Safety issues on I-25 have been extensively studied by CDOT over the past decade, resulting in the identification and implementation of safety improvements at the I-25 interchanges at Circle Drive, Nevada/Tejon, and Woodmen Road, as well as the Bijou to Fillmore mainline segment, as discussed in the EA on pages 1-6 and 1-7. Studies that examined I-25 safety issues are listed in EA Appendix 1, <i>Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i> , on page 6, and safety issues are discussed on pages 25 to 27. However, the I-25 Proposed Action is not a response to safety problems. Instead the purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to relieve existing traffic congestion on I-25.
Submitters:	R.Lorenz

Comment:	The new on-ramp at the weigh station in Monument is a safety hazard.
Response:	Any concentrated entrance of heavy trucks into high-speed interstate traffic presents safety challenges, and the weigh station at Monument is at the base of a steep hill up to I-25's highest elevation in the State of Colorado. For safety reasons, a northbound climbing lane and a southbound deceleration lane exist for truck use at this location. No additional provisions for the weigh station are incorporated in the I-25 Proposed Action.
Submitters:	S.MacDonald

Comment:	Impact barriers should be added to bridge ends.
Response:	This type of safety feature is routinely considered in the final design process, which has not yet begun. The EA provides only conceptual design in enough detail to assess likely environmental impacts.
Submitters:	E.Pinter

Comment:	Warning systems should be set up to prevent wrong way entrances onto the freeway.
Response:	This type of safety feature would be considered in final design.
Submitters:	E.Pinter

Comment:	Traffic delays and traffic safety during construction should be considered.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes strategies for minimizing traffic disruption and for ensuring safety in construction zones. This is discussed in the EA on page 3-11.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	A courtesy patrol should be used during and after construction.
Response:	Accommodations will be made during construction for handling traffic with a variety of methods, possibly including courtesy patrols. Specific traffic plans will be included in the final design. Section 3, page 3-3, addresses transportation issues and traffic mitigation during construction.
Submitters:	J.Blake

Comment:	A guardrail should be added along the median of I-25 for the entire length of the project to improve safety.
Response:	Much of the widening in the Proposed Action would be into the open median, and it would be necessary to install a median barrier for safety. Guardrail is installed judiciously, based on careful consideration of the benefits it can offer balanced against its own inherent danger as a crash hazard. As part of the Proposed Action, appropriate safety features will be installed where warranted.
Submitters:	M.Oakes

Comment:	A visual barrier between north and south bound lanes should be constructed to prevent rubbernecking.
Response:	This type of safety feature is routinely considered in the final design process, which has not yet begun. The EA provides only conceptual design in enough detail to assess likely environmental impacts.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

Comment:	Exit ramps should be multi-laned.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, some of the reconstructed exit and entrance ramps will utilize multiple lanes in order to safely accommodate projected traffic demands. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account potential impacts on upstream and downstream traffic.
Submitters:	E.Pinter

Comment:	Better and more frequent signage is needed.
Response:	Large-scale re-signing of the I-25 corridor would be necessary under the Proposed Action. Frequency of signage is based on national engineering standards. Sign structures themselves introduce safety hazards, and excessive signing results in visual clutter.
Submitters:	K.Coblar

Comment:	Signalization along the I-25 corridor needs improving.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, traffic signals at the various I-25 interchanges being reconstructed would all be updated to provide appropriate service for the evolving traffic movements.
Submitters:	P.Frank, R.Sanchez

Comment:	Interchanges should be designed such that ample room exists for maneuvering into turn lanes on intersecting roads.
Response:	National design standards have been used to ensure safe turn movements in the concept designs that have been prepared for all interchanges affected by the Proposed Action. These designs typically do not providing extra space beyond what is needed for safe operation because this would result in excessive right-of-way impacts to adjacent landowners.
Submitters:	H.Florence

Comment:	A street system paralleling the interstate should be considered.
Response:	Since the I-25 corridor is 40 years old and surrounded by mature development, as well as being adjacent to Monument Creek, a railroad and a historic park, an I-25 frontage road system would potentially have major adverse impacts on the human and natural environment. Creating a system of parallel roadways outside the I-25 corridor would have comparable impacts, and would be a matter for consideration by appropriate local government entities.
Submitters:	T.Johnston

Comment:	Concrete should be used in construction for a longer lifecycle.
Response:	The pavement selection process is based on safety and durability analysis, as well as lifecycle costs, taking into account the frequency of future maintenance and the resulting disruption of traffic. Based on these factors, concrete was the pavement type selected for the recent I-25 safety improvements.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AND ISSUES - SAFETY SUGGESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

Comment:	A barrier wall should be constructed between I-25 and Struthers road to prevent head on collisions.
Response:	This type of safety feature is routinely considered in the final design process, which has not yet begun. The EA provides only conceptual design in enough detail to assess likely environmental impacts.
Submitters:	J.Blake

Comment:	Better lighting at the Rockrimmon interchange should be incorporated into the project.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, lighting at the Rockrimmon interchange would be redesigned to be compatible with the new interchange configuration shown in EA Appendix 1, <i>Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum</i> , on page 5. Sufficient lighting would be provided to assure safe traffic movements at that location, but Colorado’s “Dark Skies” law requires that lighting be kept to a minimum in order to avoid light pollution of the night sky.
Submitters:	S.McConnell

Comment:	Re-striping on the southbound I-25 off-ramp to Bijou Street is suggested for more efficient use of the existing pavement.
Response:	Specific striping associated with proposed improvements at the Bijou interchange will be considered in final design. The Proposed Action would modify the existing ramp configuration.
Submitters:	C.Marchand

Comment:	Roads leading into downtown should be straightened out.
Response:	The Proposed Action would not make noticeable changes to the horizontal alignments and curvature of connecting city streets, such as Bijou and Kiowa, largely due to potential impacts on historic resources. Such changes would not be necessary to the purpose of relieving existing and future traffic congestion on I-25.
Submitters:	R.Bernheim

Comment:	Would like more information regarding proposed lighting in the area of Bijou Street, Colorado Avenue, and Cimarron/US24.
Response:	<p>The three cross-streets mentioned here are near the Colorado Springs downtown area, where there is relatively heavy bicycle and pedestrian use adjacent to I-25 and where aesthetic/visual effects of highway lighting to surrounding land uses such as the planned Confluence Park are important considerations.</p> <p>The EA provides only conceptual design in enough detail to assess likely environmental impacts, and therefore does not include lighting specifications. However, CDOT’s January 2001 Design Guidelines for the I-25 Corridor include useful information on this issue. CDOT’s Colorado Springs office can be contacted at 719-634-2323 to obtain further details.</p> <p>Sufficient lighting would be provided to assure safe traffic movements at these locations, but Colorado’s “Dark Skies” law requires that lighting be kept to a minimum in order to avoid light pollution of the night sky.</p>
Submitters:	P.Dunn

Comment:	As part of the I-25 improvements, right-turn lanes should be added to Nevada and Tejon streets to alleviate turning congestion.
Response:	The Nevada/Tejon interchange complex at I-25 was recently reconstructed to a new safer configuration. The possibility of right-turn lanes was considered in that design process, but was not found to be necessary. For the same reason, the Proposed Action also does not include this suggested change.
Submitters:	C.Pareso

Comment:	The I-25 northbound off-ramp to South Academy Boulevard is too short.
Response:	No modifications to the South Academy Boulevard interchange (I-25 Exit 135) are included in the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	M.Elberling

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AND ISSUES - CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Comment:	Construction detours are not mentioned; detours and daily closures should be communicated to public.
Response:	Construction detours during construction will be addressed during final design of the project. Accommodations will be made during construction for handling traffic with a variety of methods; detours and closures will be communicated to the public through a variety of media outlets. Pages 3-10 and 3-11 of the EA discusses traffic during construction.
Submitters:	M.Perini

Comment:	Expressed concern about the duration of the project, and the construction impacts of noise and dust resulting from reconstruction of the I-25 bridge over Colorado Avenue.
Response:	Constructing improvements to an interstate highway is a complex and time-consuming undertaking. CDOT will utilize strategies to expedite construction activities, such as design-build contracting, performance requirements, or financial incentives for the construction contractor. Construction schedules have not yet been developed for elements of the Proposed Action and will depend on many factors including the size of and design method used with respective construction packages. Detailed scheduling of construction projects has not been determined.
Submitters:	R.Lee

Comment:	The Woodmen interchange project at I-25 is going too slowly, and has not been managed well. Hopefully, the Proposed Action would be handled more efficiently.
Response:	The Woodmen Interchange improvements are scheduled for completion during summer 2004. Several unusual events, including the bankruptcy of the prime contractor, did occur on the project that added to its completion time. CDOT will endeavor to avoid these types of problems in the future.
Submitters:	(12 people) J.Auld, K.Brandenburg, W.Brown, D.Carter, R. Davidson, D.Leavy, C.Lucy, M.Malone, C.Page, S.Schenecker, A.Timmons, S.Vasas, N.Zavatti

SOCIOECONOMICS

Comment:	Impacts on property values not adequately addressed.
Response:	FHWA and CDOT recognize that real estate values result from a complex and dynamic interaction of property and market factors and conditions. Proximity to I-25 is reflected in current real estate market conditions and is likely to continue to do so in the future. Physical changes to neighborhoods and commercial areas that could affect property values are addressed in Section 3 of the EA, Community Resources and Issues.
Submitters:	C.Mundy, C.Oliver, J.Rice-Jones, G.Tumbush

Comment:	The economic impact of attracting new businesses not addressed.
Response:	Attraction of new businesses to a community depends on many factors, including transportation infrastructure, tax structure, quality of life, financial incentives, and employee base. I-25 will remain an important regional transportation corridor. The EA states that the I-25 Proposed Action would help maintain access to the region's major businesses and employment centers. Section 3, page 3-15 of the EA provides more information regarding the impacts to socioeconomic factors.
Submitters:	C.Blees

Comment:	Socioeconomic impacts of the Proposed Action should be evaluated at the corridor level, not in comparison to the city as a whole.
Response:	The discussion of impacts to the sales tax base in the EA at page 3-17 states that the Proposed Action "would create only temporary disruption to 11 of the nearly 13,400 privately owned business in Colorado Springs." Since sales tax revenues go into the City's General Fund regardless of where they are collected within the City, it is entirely proper to address the issue in this manner. The comparison is intended to show the context and intensity of potential impacts.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	The economic impact of people's lost time spent in traffic not addressed. It could amount to \$34 million annually.
Response:	<p>The EA did not attempt to quantify the cost savings due to reduced travel time because the variables used are often subjective. However, similar results have been reported for the Colorado Springs area in the <i>2003 Urban Mobility Report</i> by the Texas Transportation Institute.</p> <p>I-25 congestion is currently experienced on an estimated 16 miles of I-25 during peak periods of one hour in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Under the No-Action Alternative, congestion would spread to more miles of I-25 and more hours of the day by 2025, but under the Proposed Action would improve to better levels of service than are experienced today. Clearly, a substantial time and cost savings would accrue from implementing the Proposed Action.</p>
Submitters:	C.Blees

Comment:	Construction should be staged to minimize impacts to businesses at Bijou Street.
Response:	During construction, CDOT will make every reasonable effort to minimize impacts to businesses affected by construction zones. Access to local businesses will be maintained with a variety of methods, including alternate routes and signage. Specific traffic plans for this aspect of construction projects will be included during final design. Page 3-3 of the EA addresses transportation issues and traffic mitigation during construction.
Submitters:	B.Groom

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Comment:	Environmental justice analysis should be conducted.
Response:	An environmental justice analysis was conducted and is documented in the EA at page 3-19. Additional details are included in EA Appendix 2.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	How many minority businesses were impacted by past safety projects?
Response:	The NEPA analysis for the past safety improvements included compliance with environmental justice requirements pursuant to Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994. The impacts from the Proposed Action would involve one residence and one commercial property that are minority-owned. Additionally two tenants of commercial properties that would be acquired are minority-owned businesses. These acquisitions do not represent disproportionate adverse impacts to the minority and low-income community.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

RIGHT OF WAY

Comment:	Impressed with the low number of relocations required.
Response:	In the development of the Proposed Action, CDOT did seek to minimize right-of-way impacts, as discussed in the EA at page 3-28. For example, after a design for the I-25/Fillmore interchange had been determined, CDOT revisited the issue and was able to develop a revised alternative that reduced the number of residential acquisitions that would be needed. A public meeting was held to discuss the revised alternative with local residents, and with their support it was incorporated into the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	J.Bray

Comment:	The impacts of the Proposed Action to residences and businesses should not be considered in isolation, but should take into account impacts of the past safety projects.
Response:	Residences and businesses were acquired previously for the I-25 safety projects, and these impacts were examined through the NEPA process that resulted in approval of those projects. The cumulative effects of the acquisitions needed for the I-25 capacity improvement (five homes and 16 small businesses) have been examined in the context of the neighborhood as well as the community. The affected neighborhoods are stable and cohesive now following construction of the safety improvements and are likely to remain that way following construction of the Proposed Action. The proposed acquisitions would not result in loss of neighborhood cohesion, amenities, or services or erode pupil numbers at neighborhood schools. These issues are discussed in Section 3 of the EA. Adequate replacement housing and sites for business relocation are available.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	Are relocations needed for expansion?
Response:	As is noted on page 3-25 of the EA, it is anticipated that the Proposed Action would result in the relocation of five households (homes on Chestnut Street immediately south of Fillmore), and 16 businesses. A listing of the general type and location of the businesses to be relocated is provided on page 3-23 of the EA.
Submitters:	K.Dailey

Comment:	Enough right of way should be acquired to provide for future expansion/mass transit.
Response:	As is noted in the EA on page 3-25, the existing I-25 right-of-way through much of the Colorado Springs urbanized area is 300 feet wide. The I-25 Proposed Action accommodates potential future transit service through provision of peak-period high-occupancy-vehicle lanes. Although the Proposed Action does not preclude future transit options, the nearby freight rail corridor may be a more logical alignment for any fixed-guideway transit options (see EA Appendix 1, <i>Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis</i>).
Submitters:	J.Byrnes, T.Conroy, R.Sanchez

Comment:	Property owners should be paid fair market value plus 10% for acquisitions.
Response:	Page 3-28 of the EA states that all property owners will be compensated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. The Act requires payment of fair market value and provides for other assistance and benefits.
Submitters:	S.Windom

Comment:	Why did CDOT accede to the demands of Denver residents who banded together to protest CDOT taking portions of their backyards along I-25?
Response:	The Denver issues are not relevant to this decision. CDOT has not been notified of any protests regarding potential right-of-way acquisition for the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	J.Rucker

Comment:	The owner of Drive In Liquors Store opposes acquisition of his business.
Response:	Acquisition of the Drive In Liquors Store can not be avoided because of its location and proximity to I-25, which is depicted in the photograph on EA page 3-29. The owner has been aware of the proposed acquisition for several years through frequent contact with him by CDOT.
Submitters:	M.Emeson

Comment:	How would the VA clinic be affected by the Proposed Action?
Response:	The geometrics for I-25 and the Bijou interchange were developed to avoid the need to purchase and relocate the V.A. Clinic, due in part to the clinic's role in the social services support network that exists in the near west side. To avoid acquisition, a retaining wall would be necessary along the western edge of I-25, replacing the freeway embankment view currently visible from the clinic's east side. CDOT will need to obtain right-of-way easements from the property owner for the retaining wall and for relocation of underground utilities, and the property owner will be compensated appropriately. This is referenced in EA Appendix 2, on pages 4-5 of the <i>Right-of-Way Impacts Technical Memorandum</i> : "Partial acquisitions along I-25 will be needed from...an office building complex..." Noise and vibration studies were conducted for the clinic, and it was determined that these impacts would not affect the use of the clinic.
Submitters:	M.Anderson

NEIGHBORHOODS

Comment:	Neighborhood impacts need to be considered.
Response:	CDOT recognizes the City’s desire to protect, enhance, preserve, and maintain the character of the city’s neighborhoods as noted in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. As discussed in the EA on page 3-33, potential effects on neighborhood cohesion, local travel patterns, physical character, safety, and neighborhood services were considered.
Submitters:	(12 people) N.Bay, S.Carlson, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, V.Grasso, M.Hayden, R.Johnson, D.Reichert, M.Reynolds, S.Rodemer, G.Tumbush, B.Vail-Jones

Comment:	Neighborhoods are divided by widened I-25.
Response:	The neighborhood analysis conducted for the project determined that the Proposed Action would not result in any newly divided or isolated neighborhoods, nor would any existing community service boundaries, such as school, police, or fire districts, be bisected because of the project. See page 3-33 of the EA for a discussion of neighborhoods and potential impacts.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	The widening of roadways is a documented cause of neighborhood decay. “Roadways” is a very broad term.
Response:	Widening an arterial roadway through a neighborhood would have vastly different effects than widening a freeway within its existing right-of-way. Interstate 25 has been part of the existing condition of the area for decades. The Proposed Action would not change the natural or man-made barriers to east-west travel in the corridor nor increase the impact of the existing barriers. Section 3, page 3-33, provides a discussion of neighborhoods and potential impacts.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

PARKS AND RECREATION

Comment:	The Proposed Action would adversely impact parks/Monument Valley Park and/or the Greenway Trail.
Response:	<p>The Proposed Action would not require the acquisition of land from any park, including Monument Valley Park. The Proposed Action includes noise barriers to protect the portions of the park that may be affected by noise. To address visual impacts to the historic Bijou Street Entrance Gate into Monument Valley Park, CDOT will coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Office to assure that an appropriate design and materials are used in the construction of a nearby wall. Details of impacts to the park and mitigation measures for the park can be found in the EA in Section 3 beginning on page 3-37.</p> <p>The Pikes Peak Greenway, in the vicinity of the Colorado Avenue bridge, would be slightly realigned between I-25 and Monument Creek. The Proposed Action would result in increased noise affecting sidewalks, bike lanes, and portions of the trail system within 500 feet of the freeway. However, this increase in noise would be barely perceptible to most users. Details of impacts and mitigation for the Pikes Peak Greenway are discussed in the EA in Section 3, page 3-44 and 3-45.</p>
Submitters:	(17 people) B.Badgett, S.Carlson, M.Deignan, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, D.&C.Farrell, J.Finley, Friends of Monument Valley Park, V.Grasso, R.Johnson, C.Mundy, J.Prowell, D.Reichert, M.Reynolds, S.Schriner, M.Stanulonis

Comment:	There was insufficient exploration of ways to avoid impacting Monument Valley Park. CDOT should identify mitigation other than noise walls.
Response:	<p>In developing the concept design and mitigation for the Proposed Action, the first step was to avoid impacts wherever possible. The second step was to minimize impacts in cases where complete avoidance was not feasible. The third step involved development of mitigation measures to address unavoidable impacts. Through this process, the proposed mitigation for Monument Valley Park was determined.</p> <p>An 890-foot-long earthen berm is proposed as a noise barrier east of I-25, north of Bijou Street to protect the baseball field and trail. At other locations, noise walls of varying height and length were found to be the most effective in noise reduction by noise specialists on the CDOT team, so no other mitigation measures were proposed. The noise mitigation strategies discussed in the EA on page 3-45 were developed in consultation with the City's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services staff and the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.</p>
Submitters:	(7 people) B.Badgett, D.&C.Farrell, C.Mundy, J.Prowell, M.Reynolds, J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Impacts to parks should receive more analysis.
Response:	Impacts and mitigation strategies for the parks in the study area were discussed with the City's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services staff and the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The results of the analysis of impacts to parks are detailed in the EA on page 3-37 through 3-45.
Submitters:	N.Bay

Comment:	The existing railroad tunnel crossing under I-25 south of Colorado Avenue should remain open for bicycle/pedestrian use.
Response:	In consultation with the City's Park and Recreation Department, CDOT determined that a trail crossing for Confluence Park should be provided along Fountain Creek instead of keeping the existing trail underpass. A sidewalk at Colorado Avenue will also provide a second crossing for pedestrians.
Submitters:	E.Bean

Comment:	Would new park entrances be wheelchair accessible?
Response:	No new park entrances are proposed, but the existing Bijou Street entrance to Monument Valley Park would be modified. One of the five at-grade sidewalk approaches to that entrance would be modified to include stairs, but the other four approaches all in close proximity would remain wheelchair-accessible.
Submitters:	R.Conklin

Comment:	Monument Valley Park and the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail are special. They should be protected.
Response:	The Proposed Action will not result in a loss of park land or any trail. In the case of Monument Valley Park, noise and visual mitigation measures were included in the Proposed Action. For the Greenway Trail, impacts would be minor, the trail would continue to serve an important recreation purpose, and no mitigation measures were either reasonable or feasible. The Parks and Recreation section of the EA beginning on page 3-37 provides a discussion of impacts and mitigation for Monument Valley Park, Greenway Trail, and other park resources in the project area.
Submitters:	(7 people) J.&A.Brock, W.Hylton, K.Morrissey, C.Mundy, M.Stanulonis, C.Townsley

Comment:	The City/Parks Board rejected noise mitigation in Monument Valley Park. Specifically, no noise mitigation is planned in Monument Valley Park north of Uintah. What will CDOT do to protect park users?
Response:	The Parks Board agreed to mitigation for several areas of Monument Park south of Uintah Street, and considered mitigation options for north of Uintah Street. Section 3, page 3-45 of the EA describes the proposed mitigation. Section 12 provides minutes of the December 2002 Park Board meeting in which proposed noise mitigation was discussed and voted on by the Board. North of Uintah, noise in excess of 66 dBA would occur only in a small narrow portion of the park containing only a trail. Noise mitigation options for this location were considered and were discussed with the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Access on Recreation Way was an important issue here as well. Ultimately, there was not support for the potential mitigation options, and therefore none was included in the Proposed Action. Noise levels are not expected to substantially impair use of the trail.
Submitters:	P.Doyle, Friends of Monument Valley Park, R.Spory

Comment:	Potential changes in levels and patterns of use in Monument Valley Park due to widening I-25 should be evaluated.
Response:	CDOT has conducted extensive consultation with the City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Service Department and the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to understand and mitigate impacts to Monument Valley Park resources and its users. The Proposed Action would not substantially impair park uses.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Will the historic Works Progress Administration floodwall in Monument Valley Park be affected?
Response:	The Proposed Action will not impact the WPA wall within Monument Valley Park. One segment of the WPA wall (approximately 1 percent of the total wall system) would be affected in an area outside of the park, as detailed in Section 3, page 3-118 of the EA. I
Submitters:	M.O'Neill

Comment:	Changes to Bijou Street and park entrance should be avoided.
Response:	No change in use will occur regarding the Bijou Street Entrance Gate to Monument Valley Park. Due to an elevation increase on Bijou Street, stairs will be added at two pedestrian approaches. All existing pedestrian approaches will remain usable and the park entrance will remain wheelchair-accessible. CDOT has committed to protection of the entrance gate structure during construction to protect the resource from potential vibration damage. These mitigation measures are described in Section 3, page 3-123 of the EA.
Submitters:	J.Prowell, J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	The New Santa Fe Trail at the North Gate Interchange should be moved to the west to restore natural experience.
Response:	The New Santa Fe Trail is located on U.S. Air Force Academy property. Relocating the trail to the west would move it closer to sensitive security areas. Relocation would result in other potentially adverse effects since the Air Force Academy is an historic property, and due to wildlife issues including habitat of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. The Air Force Academy has periodically closed this trail several times since the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. During interagency consultation involving CDOT, FHWA and the Academy, the Air Force did not indicate an interest in relocating this trail to the west.
Submitters:	L.Reisinger, Trails and Open Space Coalition

Comment:	A bike trail across I-25 should be added at Woodmen or Pine Creek to enhance east-west mobility and connect to Santa Fe Trail.
Response:	The City of Colorado Springs <i>Parks, Recreation & Trails 2000-2010 Master Plan</i> calls for the existing Cottonwood Creek Trail (existing from Union Boulevard to Austin Bluffs Parkway) to be extended to connect with the Pikes Peak Greenway. This issue is being addressed through Woodmen Road improvements, and not as part of the I-25 Proposed Action.
Submitters:	L.Reisinger

Comment:	Removing the Bijou Interchange would allow reconnecting south portion of Monument Valley Park.
Response:	The Bijou Interchange provides vital access to downtown Colorado Springs, as well as to the Near Westside residential area. While removing the interchange would reconnect north and south portions of the Park, it would substantially impair access to and across I-25. Various alternatives for Bijou and Cimarron interchanges or combinations were considered in the concept development process, but elimination of the Bijou Interchange was not selected for inclusion in the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	The proposed mitigation for Monument Valley Park is not sufficient.
Response:	CDOT has conducted extensive environmental analyses and consulted with the City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Service Department and the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to understand and mitigate impacts to Monument Valley Park resources and its users. Section 12 of the EA includes correspondence with the Park Department.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Trails and trailheads should be incorporated where appropriate, and more bike paths should be developed.
Response:	Trail systems, trailheads, and bike paths are planned by the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County, and other local governments. Local trail planners were consulted during the development of the Proposed Action to ensure that existing trail connections would be maintained or enhanced and that planned new trails would be accommodated. This is discussed in the EA on page 3-44.
Submitters:	R.Sanchez, M.Smart

Comment:	The EA mischaracterizes Monument Valley Park by inadequately describing its amenities, thus downplaying the importance of the park.
Response:	The importance of the Monument Valley Park has been recognized since the early stages of planning the Proposed Action. Impacts to the park were assessed and have been documented in the EA. The description of Monument Valley Park and its amenities can be found in the EA at pages 3-37 through 3-39 and page 115, as well as in Appendix 6.
Submitters:	R.Spory

Comment:	Trail closures and detours should be minimized, especially the Midland Trail connection to Pikes Peak Greenway and Confluence Park.
Response:	CDOT has committed to minimizing and/or mitigating trail closures and detours during construction as noted in Section 3, pages 3-44 through 3-45, and 3-167 of the EA. The Proposed Action would provide a permanent I-25 crossing for the Midland Trail along Fountain Creek to replace the temporary crossing that is currently in use, as indicated in the EA on page 3-44.
Submitters:	Trails and Open Space Coalition

Comment:	The proposed Smith Creek Trail connection across I-25 to the new Santa Fe Trailhead should be retained.
Response:	The Proposed Action includes an I-25 crossing for the planned Smith Creek Trail along North Gate Boulevard (see EA at page 3-44). This crossing would be located on U.S. Air Force Academy property, and would connect the trail to the existing New Santa Fe Trail that is also on Air Force Academy property. The EA provides for this connection if the Academy will allow it.
Submitters:	Trails and Open Space Coalition

LAND USE

Comment:	The Proposed Action would decrease the value of nearby property, subsequently changing land use patterns.
Response:	Over time, land use patterns can change in metropolitan areas due to a variety of market forces that are influenced by local land use plans. The existing land use characteristics of the study area are presented on page 3-47 of the EA. After assessing the impacts of the Proposed Action on land use, the conclusion was made that land use changes as a result of the Proposed Action would be unlikely.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Development patterns and rates for neighborhoods surrounding I-25 should be considered.
Response:	Region-wide growth, including growth along I-25, was accounted for in traffic projections using the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments regional traffic model, based on adopted population and land use projections through 2025.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Existing and projected land uses near I-25 should be disclosed.
Response:	Pages 3-48 and 3-49 of the EA are figures depicting existing and future (2020) land uses as specified in the City of Colorado Springs <i>2001 Comprehensive Plan</i> . The Proposed Action is consistent with that plan, and therefore is not expected to result in any changes to land uses within the project area.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Induced changes in land use should be addressed.
Response:	Over time, land use patterns can change in metropolitan areas due to a variety of market forces that are influenced by local land use plans. The existing land use characteristics of the study area are presented on page 3-47 of the EA. After assessing the impacts of the Proposed Action on land use, the conclusion was made that land use changes as a result of the Proposed Action would be unlikely.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Incentives to city and county governments for planned development communities should be considered.
Response:	Regional and local land use planning is conducted by cities and counties, and is not under the jurisdiction of the CDOT.
Submitters:	L.Reisinger

VISUAL RESOURCES

Comment:	Noise walls will impair views/impair views into Monument Valley Park.
Response:	Under the Proposed Action, noise mitigation would be provided only where necessary to protect homes and noise-sensitive use areas of the park. Residents to be protected by noise walls will have an opportunity to decide if they want a wall and to provide additional input. The visual effects on Monument Valley Park are discussed on page 3-42 of the EA.
Submitters:	(9 people) C.Asfahl, O.Cramer, H.Dickens, N.Henjum, K.Hommel, R.Huffman, J.Ormsby, J.Prowell, J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	The corridor landscaping plan prepared by EDAW has been ignored.
Response:	The information in the I-25 EA document does not preclude or change any of the landscape concepts presented in the EDAW I-25 Corridor Study. The mitigation, as outlined in the EA on pages 3-54 and 3-55, calls for re-vegetation and landscaping that buffers highway improvements while providing entryway features as suggested in the EDAW study.
Submitters:	F.Bell

Comment:	Aesthetic treatments are desired/ matching stone materials on retaining walls and other features at the Bijou entrance to Monument Valley Park are preferred.
Response:	On page 3-54, the EA outlines the committed mitigation for impacts affecting the Bijou Street entrance to Monument Valley Park. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, proposed improvements will be designed to be visually appealing in design, reflect community values, and are treated with colors and textures that blend with the historic character of the site.
Submitters:	J.Finley, S.McConnell, J.Prowell, A.Simpson

Comment:	Noise walls make corridor visually unattractive to motorists.
Response:	Noise walls are not planned for the entire length of the corridor. They have been planned in only seven locations where they are needed. In several locations, noise walls will not be constructed to allow views to important community features like Confluence Park See Section 3, pages 3-51 through 3-55 for more details on noise and noise walls.
Submitters:	Friends of Monument Valley Park

Comment:	The existing noise walls along I-25 are not attractive.
Response:	The proposed noise walls will be designed with an architectural treatment on both sides to make them more attractive. The interstate sides of the wall should have a bolder, simpler statement due to the speed at which these walls will be viewed by the traveler. The residential side of the walls should have a finer level of detail, since the viewer is likely to be relatively static. Input from nearby residents was considered in the design process for the existing noise walls.
Submitters:	C.Lubell

Comment:	Confluence Park deserves special aesthetic treatments.
Response:	Visual access from the highway at Confluence Park will be maintained. Slopes and natural vegetation in the I-25 right-of-way, adjacent to the park, will be reestablished.
Submitters:	S.McConnell

Comment:	Overpasses should be made more attractive.
Response:	As described on page 3-54 of the EA, bridges will be designed to be visually appealing, reflect community values, and will be treated with colors and textures that blend with the surroundings.
Submitters:	J.Nance

Comment:	The highway will be more visually intrusive.
Response:	I-25 will become more visually apparent due to implementation of the project. On pages 3-54 and 3-55, the EA outlines an extensive list of mitigation strategies to address this issue including landscaping, re-vegetation, bridge and noise wall treatments, and architectural treatments.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

AIR QUALITY

Comment:	Air pollution is a major impact in neighborhoods and parks, and/or air quality will deteriorate or has deteriorated.
Response:	Monitoring of air pollutant concentrations in the Pikes Peak Region over the years has shown dramatic air quality improvement for carbon monoxide, the pollutant that is most directly correlated with motor vehicle use. The air quality conformity analysis performed for the <i>Destination 2025</i> Regional Transportation Plan indicates that the region will meet federal air quality conformity requirements through the year 2025. The <i>Destination 2025</i> Plan takes into account the mobile source emissions from the entire regional transportation system, including the I-25 Proposed Action.
Submitters:	(12 people) R.Beadles, S.Carlson, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, V.Grasso, R.Johnson, W.Mahncke, W.McCue, D.Reichert, J.Rice-Jones, R.Spory, R.Sullivan

Comment:	Air quality needs to be evaluated more closely, and/or air toxins should be discussed.
Response:	Urban air toxics are discussed in the EA at page 3-61. As noted there, EPA issued regulations in 2001 that will result in reduced emission rates for urban air toxics between 2007 and 2020. These efforts are expected to result in net emission reductions, meaning that reductions will be experienced even as vehicle miles of travel increase. Meanwhile, as noted on page 3-61, the EPA has not yet determined how best to evaluate the impact of future roads and intersections on ambient concentrations of urban air toxics. This is an issue of interest at the national level that cannot be resolved in the context of the I-25 Proposed Action.
Submitters:	(13 people) N.Bay, R.Beadles, R.Black, J.&A.Brock, T.Kirchner, J.Lark, N.Lofye, C.Mundy, S.Nishida-Harvey, L.Prater, M.Reynolds, Sierra Club

Comment:	Indirect impacts and cumulative impacts to air quality should be considered.
Response:	Federal air quality conformity requirements ensure that Federally-approved transportation improvement projects will not cause or contribute to a violation of the national ambient air quality standards.
Submitters:	C.Mundy, R.Spory

Comment:	The Proposed Action will enhance air quality by improving mobility.
Response:	The results of the air quality conformity analysis prepared for the I-25 Environmental Assessment indicate that the Proposed Action would not cause or contribute to a violation of the carbon monoxide standard.
Submitters:	K.Ford

Comment:	According to the Transportation Research Board, there is evidence that noise walls increase air pollution along highways, especially in cases where there are noise walls on both sides of a highway.
Response:	Noise walls do not increase emissions of pollutants, but may under certain circumstances represent a barrier to air movement, potentially trapping pollutants in the highway corridor rather than allowing them to disperse into adjacent neighborhoods and parks. EPA health-based standards for air pollutants typically are based on exposure to pollutant concentrations over a period of time, such as a one-hour or eight-hour average. By improving traffic flow on I-25, the Proposed Action will reduce the probability that a motorist would find herself stuck in a traffic jam on I-25 for extended periods of time.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Many physicians have recommended air quality standards be more restrictive at higher altitudes.
Response:	National ambient air quality standards are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Federal Highway Administration and the Colorado Department of Transportation ensure that transportation projects within their jurisdiction comply with applicable air quality requirements.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Traffic lights should be synchronized throughout Colorado Springs to reduce pollution and travel time.
Response:	CDOT and FHWA support efforts to reduce air pollution and improve travel times. Signalizing intersections in the city is managed primarily by the local governments.
Submitters:	E.Jansen

NOISE

Comment:	Noise is a problem now in the Old North End Neighborhood and was worsened by the recent I-25 safety projects.
Response:	Noise levels in the Old North End Neighborhood were studied extensively. Measurements of existing levels were performed in 2001, and are generally in the 50s (dBA) during the daytime. Noise levels are predicted to be in the high 50s (dBA) for Year 2025 Build Conditions. None of the measured or predicted levels exceed CDOT's 66 dBA Noise Abatement Criterion for Category B receptors. Also, the cumulative impact of the Safety Improvements and Capacity Improvements was predicted, and found to not exceed CDOT's 10 dBA increase criterion.
Submitters:	(52 people) J.Anderson, R.Beadles, D.Benson, B.&C.Buetow, C.Cannon, O.Cramer, M.Deignan, K.Deignan, J.Engeln, P.Engeln, C.Fallis, D.Farrell, D.&C.Farrell, Friends of Monument Valley Park, K.Fuller, W.Garrison, M.&D.Guthrie, R.Hibbard, D.Holmes, W.Hylton, J.Jones-Eddy, K.Kassover, P.Kendall, D.Kipp, T.Kircher, W.Mahlink, J.Martin, R.Martin, J.Matson, K.Morrissey, K.Nelson, L.Noll, C.Oliver, M.Oliver, K.O'Neal, M.Reynolds, J.Rice-Jones, R.Schell, J.Schulz, J.&M.Smith, R.Spory, A.Stanulonis, R.Sullivan, D.Swint, B.Vickery, M.Wasinger, M.Whitacre, R.Wrubel

Comment:	Earth berms should be used to mitigate noise to the Old North End/Monument Valley Park.
Response:	<p>South of Uintah Street, noise walls are being proposed to protect the Demonstration Gardens and duck pond areas of Monument Valley Park. There is not enough available land between I-25 and the Park in this area to construct earthen berms (a 15-foot tall berm would require a 90-foot wide swath of land to allow for 3:1 slopes on either side of the berm). North of Uintah Street, only a small part of a trail is considered impacted by noise under CDOT guidelines, but mitigation is not being considered as noise levels are not expected to substantially impair use of that section of trail.</p> <p>Noise levels in the Old North End Neighborhood were studied extensively. Measurements of existing levels were performed in 2001, and are generally in the 50s (dBA) during the daytime. Noise levels are predicted to be in the high 50s (dBA) for Year 2025 Build Conditions. None of the measured or predicted levels exceed CDOT's 66 dBA Noise Abatement Criterion for Category B receptors. Also, the cumulative impact of the Safety Improvements and Capacity Improvements was predicted, and found to not exceed CDOT's 10 dBA increase criterion. Therefore, berms or other noise walls are not proposed for the Old North End Neighborhood.</p>
Submitters:	(16 people) J.Anderson, F.Bell, C.Cannon, O.Cramer, J.Henjum, S.Kircher, P.Mulligan, C.Mundy, K.Nelson, M.Oliver, J.Rice-Jones, D.Salisbury, R.Sanchez, A.Stanulonis, R.Tallman, R.Wrubel

Comment:	Alternative paving types/rubberized asphalt should be used as a noise mitigation measure/tined concrete unacceptably noisy.
Response:	The Arizona and California departments of transportation are currently implementing pilot programs intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of quiet pavement strategies and evaluate any change in their noise mitigation properties over time. At present, knowledge on changes with time is extremely limited, the pilot programs will collect data and information for at least a five to ten year period, and FHWA will then determine if policy changes are warranted. Until then, it is FHWA policy that alternative pavement types are not considered noise mitigation measures.
Submitters:	(71 people) J.Anderson, C.Asfahl, N.Bay, F.Bell, D.Benson, L.Bevington, K.&A.Brosh, R.Bryant, B.&C.Buetow, S.Carlson, Colorado College, O.Cramer, S.Dewey, H.Dickens, A.Dukey, V.Grasso, N.Henjum, K.Hommel, R.Johnson, M.Deignan, K.Deignan, Downtown Partnership, S.Everett, C.Fallis, D.&C.Farrell, M.Ferguson, J.Finley, E.Fox, Friends of Monument Valley Park, K.Fuller, W.Garrison, D.Harris, D.Holmes, R.Huffman, J.Jones-Eddy, K.Kassover, D.Kipp, R.Kohl, M.Lane, G.&C.Lewis, J.&T.Mahony, J.Matson, K.Montemayor, K.Morrissey, C.Mundy, K.Nelson, S.Nishida-Harvey, C.Oliver, M.Oliver, L.Pitman, J.Prowell, M.Reynolds, D.Reichert, S.Rodemer, F.Shelton, R.Spory, A.Stanulonis, M.Stanulonis, D.Swint, R.Tallman, E.Taylor, C.&R.Theobald, E.Tilley, M.Wasinger, M.Whitacre

Comment:	The current plan for proposed expansion provides little to no noise mitigation efforts. Noise mitigation efforts must be provided.
Response:	Noise levels were analyzed at all of the residential and commercial receptors located adjacent to I-25 within the project limits. A mitigation analysis was conducted at each area where noise impact was predicted. As a result, a total of approximately 13,000 linear feet of noise walls are being recommended for inclusion in the project.
Submitters:	(45 people) B.Badgett, F.Bell, L.Bevington, J.&A.Brock, W.Budington, Colorado College, K.Deignan, M.Deignan, J.Engeln, P.Engeln, D.Farrell, M.Ferguson, J.Finley, Friends of Monument Valley Park, K.Fuller, P.Horwitch, R.Huffman, B.Vail-Jones, K.Kassover, D.Kipp, V.Kipp, R.Loey, J.Martin, J.Matson, B/Nelsestuen, K.Nelson, L.Noll, K.O’Neal, J.Prowell, J.Rice-Jones, S.Rodemer, S.Saye, R.Schell, J.Skar, J.Smith, S.Sorenson, R.Spory, J.&B.Suess, E.Taylor, C.Townsley, S.Vela, K.Waggoner, M.Whitacre, S.Wood-Ellis

Comment:	The Proposed Action would increase noise.
Response:	The Proposed Action would increase the capacity of the highway, and would result in an increase in noise levels. The average increase in noise levels between 1990 (pre-Safety Improvements) and 2025 (“design-year”) was predicted to be 5 decibels. The greatest predicted increase was 7 decibels. At no location along the corridor are increases predicted to exceed 10 decibels (CDOT’s impact criterion for noise level increases).
Submitters:	(25 people) R.Black, J.Bray, J.&A.Brock, K.Dailey, S.Everett, D.&C.Farrell, W.Garrison, W.Hylton, J.Jones-Eddy, V.Kipp, J.Larkin, G.&C.Lewis, B.Hau&D.Marvel, C.Oliver, K.O’Neal, S.Saye, R.Schell, M.Stanulonis, D.Swint, R.Wrubel, J.Zales

Comment:	The noise model used in the project has serious inconsistencies/assumptions flawed/did not reflect local conditions.
Response:	A great deal of effort went into comparing the output of the STAMINA noise model with measured levels. Noise levels were measured at 75 locations. During the measurements, the number of vehicles passing in each direction on I-25 was tabulated, and traffic speeds were measured. Along with accurate representations of the site topography, this data was used to predict noise levels at the measurement locations. On average, STAMINA predicted noise levels within 1 dB of the measured levels.
Submitters:	(7 people) F.Bell, L.Bevington, K.Deignan, J.Finley, T.Kircher, S.Rodemer, K.Spory

Comment:	Surface treatments should be added to noise walls to make them sound absorptive.
Response:	There are durability concerns with the use of these materials and more research is needed before CDOT can begin to routinely consider absorbing materials on a routine basis.
Submitters:	F.Bell, Friends of Monument Valley Park

Comment:	Vegetation should be added to help mitigate noise impacts.
Response:	At least 25 feet, and preferably 50 to 100 feet, of dense, thick vegetation is required to provide a noticeable noise reduction. In most areas of the corridor this amount of land is not readily available between the highway and affected residences. Another challenge to this mitigation solution is the fact that the vegetation would require constant watering, resulting in a long-term commitment of a large amount of water for maintenance.
Submitters:	(8 people) F.Bell, M.Boutz, C.Cannon, K.Kalandros, B.Hau&D.Marvel, R.Sanchez, E.Wilcox

Comment:	The vertical alignment of the highway was raised by I-25 safety projects, thereby creating more noise impacts to surrounding parks and neighborhoods.
Response:	The mainline safety project from Bijou to Fillmore changed the vertical profile of I-25 slightly, raising it in some places and lowering it in others. Noise walls and berms are proposed to mitigate impacts to Monument Valley Park. The resulting noise levels in the Old North End Neighborhood today do not exceed CDOT's noise abatement criteria and are projected to remain well below the 66dBA criterion through the year 2025. The net result of past and proposed I-25 improvements as well as past and projected I-25 traffic growth is a total decibel increase that is well below CDOT's abatement criterion of 10 dBA for a project-level noise increase.
Submitters:	F.Bell, C.Cannon, M.Oliver

Comment:	A noise contour map should be generated to indicate projected noise levels and how far they are expected to occur from the interstate.
Response:	The location of the 66 and 71 dBA noise level contours was predicted for Year 2025 Build Conditions. These levels correspond to CDOT's Noise Abatement Criteria for residential and commercial receptors, respectively. Figures showing the location of the contours are included in the <i>Noise Impacts Technical Memorandum</i> , which is provided in EA Appendix 3.
Submitters:	F.Bell

Comment:	No noise mitigation was offered after the city declined to consider berms in Monument Valley Park.
Response:	CDOT and the City of Colorado Springs held a number of meetings regarding noise mitigation for Monument Valley Park. The proposed mitigation plan is amenable to both parties, and meets Federal and State standards.
Submitters:	L.Bevington, R.Spory

Comment:	Expressed concerned about the construction of noise barriers and the reflection of sound/increase in noise pollution they can cause.
Response:	Noise does reflect off of walls, and it can increase noise levels on the opposite side of the highway by 1 to 2 dB. Of the noise walls proposed for this project, the following have residential receptors located on the other side of I-25: Monument Valley Park Ponds and Garden, Holiday Village, and Pulpit Rock. The design of these walls will take reflections into account.
Submitters:	C.Bullock, Friends of Monument Valley Park, J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	CDOT and the City of Colorado Springs should work together on noise mitigation for Confluence Park.
Response:	The City has placed a priority on the park being visible from I-25. Noise barriers that would block views into this park are not desired by the City. This is described on page 3-42 of the EA.
Submitters:	K.Blakely

Comment:	Noise impacts and mitigations were not included in the EA for the Pine Cliff area.
Response:	The noise analysis conducted for the I-25 project included all residential and commercial receptors located along the corridor, including the Pine Cliff area. Noise impacts are not projected to occur in Pine Cliff due to its distance from I-25.
Submitters:	C.&R.Bratten

Comment:	Taxpayers should not have to bear the brunt of mitigating for noise when those affected bought their homes knowing the freeway was a noise producer.
Response:	CDOT's Noise Abatement Guidelines state that mitigation is reasonable if at least 75 percent of the homes in a given area predate the proposed project by at least 15 years. All six neighborhoods for which mitigation is proposed on this project meet this criterion. Most were built well before 1990.
Submitters:	C.Bullock, M.Gaebler

Comment:	Noise barriers/walls should be constructed to mitigate noise impacts to the Old North End/Monument Valley Park.
Response:	<p>Noise levels in the Old North End Neighborhood were studied extensively. Measurements of existing levels were performed in 2001, and are generally in the 50s (dBA) during the daytime. Noise levels are predicted to be in the high 50s (dBA) for Year 2025 Build Conditions. None of the measured or predicted levels exceed CDOT's 66 dBA Noise Abatement Criterion for Category B receptors. Also, the cumulative impact of the Safety Improvements and Capacity Improvements was predicted, and found to not exceed CDOT's 10 dBA increase criterion. Thus, no mitigation is proposed for this area.</p> <p>Noise walls are being proposed to protect the ball field, Demonstration Gardens, and duck pond areas of Monument Valley Park. CDOT and the City of Colorado Springs held a number of meetings regarding noise mitigation for Monument Valley Park. The resulting proposed mitigation plan is amenable to both parties, and meets Federal and State standards. This plan is shown in Figure 3-11 on page 3-43 of the EA.</p>
Submitters:	(29 people) C.Cannon, Downtown Partnership, C.Fallis, M.Gaebler, M.&D.Guthrie, J.Henjum, R.Hibbard, D.Holmes, T.Jeter, P.Kendall, S.Kircher, R.Martin, J.McDonald, P.Mulligan, K.Nelson, C.Newman, P.Novak, J.Prowell, K.Reynolds, M.Reynolds, D.Salisbury, R.Schell, J.Schulz, J.&M.Smith, D.Stuart, F.Whitacre, R.Wrubel

Comment:	The EA did not address noise concerns and mitigation north of the Pine Creek Bridge/Exit 151 area.
Response:	The noise analysis conducted for the I-25 project included all residential and commercial receptors located along the Corridor, including the area near the Pine Creek Bridge. As part of the Woodmen Road safety project, a noise barrier was constructed to protect Pine Creek Estates north of the bridge. The barrier is described on page 3-70 of the EA and shown as C-1 on Figure 3-15 on that same page.
Submitters:	G.Cesarone, R.Sobottka

Comment:	Noise east of I-25 on Baptist road (up to 2.5 miles) is an issue and should be mitigated.
Response:	Noise levels were analyzed along I-25 through the Baptist Road area in accordance with CDOT Noise Guidelines, and no impacts were found. Noise from Baptist Road is being considered by El Paso County, which is currently studying the widening of the Baptist Road Corridor east of I-25.
Submitters:	K.Christner

Comment:	The residence halls at Colorado College will be negatively impacted by noise.
Response:	Based on measurements and projections made at nearby locations, the residence halls at CC are not impacted by I-25 noise according to CDOT Noise Guidelines. Existing noise levels are less than 56 dBA, and are projected to increase by 6 dBA (for a design-year level of less than 62 dBA).
Submitters:	Colorado College

Comment:	The use of noise standards shouldn't/don't apply to this project and mitigation should be extended to areas that don't meet this standard/flawed assumptions made in developing noise standards make them irrelevant in Colorado Springs.
Response:	CDOT's noise policy is applied consistently statewide, and is consistent with Federal policy and that of other states. The Noise Abatement Criteria are a balance between desired noise levels, economics, and engineering feasibility.
Submitters:	O.Cramer, D.Finkleman, J.Prowell, S.Rodemer, J.Unknown

Comment:	Curved noise walls should be added to prevent noise from reflecting over the top.
Response:	Experiments have been conducted by others regarding placing curves and other shapes atop noise walls in an effort to increase the noise reducing properties of the wall. Some top treatments have been found to increase the noise reduction provided by a wall by up to 2.5 decibels [Reference: FHWA Noise Barrier Design Handbook, Feb. 2002, page 34]. On this project, it is more cost-effective to simply increase the height of the wall to improve its performance. The heights of all of the proposed walls were determined in a manner consistent with CDOT policy.
Submitters:	D.Finkleman

Comment:	Mesh noise barriers with spacing less than the wavelength of sound should be considered as a noise mitigation method.
Response:	CDOT is unaware of commercially proven wire mesh sound absorbers for highway use. A German company, dB _A Components, manufactures a wire mesh system, but the mesh is mainly a protective facing. The sound absorption is done with mineral wool or another similar product that is placed behind the mesh. It is important to remember that the design of noise walls, including their sound absorption capabilities, must take into account not only acoustics, but also maintenance, aesthetics, and cost.
Submitters:	D.Finkleman

Comment:	Noise assessments conducted in the Rockrimmon area were not sufficient.
Response:	The Rockrimmon area was analyzed along with other residential and commercial areas in the project area. Impacts were predicted at the Pulpit Rock Neighborhood, and a wall is proposed for that neighborhood. Noise impacts were also investigated for some of the office buildings in the area, as the highway is proposed to come relatively close to these. Impact is not expected inside these buildings.
Submitters:	D.Finkleman

Comment:	Noise barriers should be required throughout the entire corridor.
Response:	Noise levels were analyzed at all of the residential and commercial receptors located adjacent to I-25 within the project limits. A mitigation analysis was conducted at each area where noise impact was predicted. As a result, a total of approximately 13,000 linear feet of noise walls are being recommended for inclusion in the project. In addition, it is not prudent to simply build noise walls along an entire project, due to the cost, aesthetic, and other ramifications of constructing noise walls.
Submitters:	R.Harmon, D.Lobeck, K.Nauer

Comment:	Noise impacts for areas more than 500 feet away from I-25 were not addressed in EA.
Response:	The impact of noise from I-25 was analyzed at all residential and commercial areas located within approximately 1,000 feet of the highway. The furthest distance that impacts were found is 550 feet. Regardless, beyond approximately 500 feet, noise from the highway starts to become mixed with that of local traffic and other sources, and mitigation in the form of barriers provides little benefit.
Submitters:	R.Huffman, A.Stanulonis

Comment:	The ground sloping down at Ellston Street would create conflicts for constructing a noise barrier there.
Response:	The terrain and other conflicts will require that the final design of the wall be given careful consideration in this area. The southern endpoint of the wall could be north of the Ellston Street bridge, or could extend south of the bridge. The design should ensure at least 5 dB of reduction at the southernmost residence.
Submitters:	K.Kidd

Comment:	The EA did not address noise impacts/mitigation for the I-25 and Highway 105 interchange.
Response:	The noise impacts of this project were addressed in a separate NEPA action for the interchange improvement that is currently under construction.
Submitters:	R.Kohl

Comment:	The construction of a berm on Air Force Academy land is important to keep the new noise wall functional.
Response:	The mitigation analysis conducted for the Pine Creek Estates neighborhood confirms that the recently constructed noise wall provides a substantial noise reduction at many of the residences in the area, and that the proposed berm on Air Force Academy property would provide additional reduction. The construction of the berm is outside of CDOT's control.
Submitters:	S.Lepine

Comment:	The number of people/households near I-25 that will be impacted by noise should be disclosed.
Response:	The location of each impacted residence is shown in Figures 6-1 through 6-10 in the <i>Noise Impacts Technical Memorandum</i> (included in EA Appendix 3).
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Noise abatement for use during and after construction should be documented.
Response:	The mitigation proposed for after construction, i.e. permanent noise mitigation, is listed in Table 3-17 in the EA. Construction noise and its mitigation is discussed in the EA at page 3-70 and will be subject to CDOT guidelines and applicable local ordinances.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	The location and number of residences and businesses where noise had exceeded mandated thresholds should be noted.
Response:	The location of each impacted residence is shown in Figures 6-1 through 6-10 in the <i>Noise Impacts Technical Memorandum</i> (included in EA Appendix 3). The exact number of impacted businesses was not presented in tabular format. However, information on impacted business and associated mitigation recommendations is provided in the Technical Memorandum.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Effects of roadway noise on motorists should be considered.
Response:	Noise levels inside vehicles are the responsibility of manufacturers, not state highway agencies.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Facilities that will not be protected by noise abatement measures and impacts to those occupants must be documented.
Response:	The table on pages 3-68 in the EA lists the residential areas where noise mitigation was analyzed. Figures 6-1 through 6-8 in the <i>Noise Impacts Technical Memorandum</i> (included in EA Appendix 3) show the location of each residence at each area studied. Of the 12 areas studied, noise mitigation was NOT recommended at the following six: Stratton Meadows, Glen Ave., San Miguel, Mesa Springs, Park Terrace, and Garden Terrace. No noise mitigation is being provided at these locations for the reasons documented in the EA.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	The impacts of noise on park use (specifically decline in use) should be documented.
Response:	The City of Colorado Springs Parks Department staff informed CDOT that they receive very few noise-related complaints from park users., and as traffic has increased on I-25 and throughout the City, the use of City parks shows no apparent signs of decline.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	The noise study performed for the 1989-1991 EA is drastically different than CDOT's current noise study/findings.
Response:	The results of the circa-1990 noise study and the one conducted for the EA were compared in some detail. No significant differences in the results were observed. Differences in measured and predicted noise levels were explained by differences in locations analyzed and model input data, respectively. Most importantly, the mitigation conclusions reached by each analysis were almost identical.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Denver's highways are lined with noise walls on both sides of the highways and questioned why Colorado Springs hadn't received equal treatment.
Response:	Noise impacts on CDOT projects are assessed consistently from city to city and project to project. The number of noise walls in Denver is a function of the number of residences and associated traffic volumes in close proximity to I-25.
Submitters:	J.Rucker

Comment:	It did not make sense to provide no noise mitigation for the stretch of highway with the highest projected traffic volumes.
Response:	Noise mitigation is not recommended on the basis of where traffic volumes are the highest; it is being recommended where CDOT's noise abatement thresholds are exceeded, and where mitigation measures are deemed to be feasible and reasonable. Noise levels were analyzed at all of the residential and commercial receptors located adjacent to I-25 within the project limits. A mitigation analysis was conducted at each area where noise impact was predicted. As a result, a total of approximately 13,000 linear feet of noise walls are being recommended for inclusion in the project.
Submitters:	S.Sorenson

Comment:	Using 1990 as a base year for noise studies was helpful and fair to the community.
Response:	This approach, more stringent than is required and normally undertaken, was used in response to questions from residents of the Old North End Neighborhood. The approach was used on a corridor-wide basis and is useful for understanding cumulative noise effects from past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects.
Submitters:	D.Stuart

Comment:	Existing noise barriers don't completely block noise from the west side of I-25
Response:	Noise barriers are not designed or able to block all traffic noise, but instead provide a substantial noise reduction of 5 to 10 decibels for homes up to 300 feet from the highway. An extensive study conducted to measure the noise reduction being provided by the wall along the west side of I-25 between Bijou and Fillmore Streets determined that the existing wall is providing this reduction, as it was designed and predicted to do.
Submitters:	E.Wilcox

Comment:	Speed limits should be lowered to 40 mph adjacent to the Old North End area to reduce noise impacts.
Response:	It would not be feasible to reduce speeds to 40 mph on I-25. A 10-mph reduction would result in approximately 1 dBA of noise reduction.
Submitters:	K.Nelson; J.Wuorenmaa

Comment:	Do laws exist to regulate engine brakes on some trucks?
Response:	Laws regulating the use of engine brakes, also known as "jake" brakes, have been implemented by some local governments and were addressed by the City of Colorado Springs 2001 Intermodal Transportation Plan, Truck Route Plan.
Submitters:	S.Lepine

WATERSHEDS

Comment:	Why was riprap placed in Fountain Creek in conjunction with previous projects?
Response:	That project was addressed under a separate NEPA document.
Submitters:	F.Bell

FLOODPLAINS

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

WATER QUALITY

Comment:	Impacts to water quality/added water pollution are significant.
Response:	<p>Pages 3-85 through 3-89 of the EA and the technical report on water quality presented in Appendix 4 of the EA discuss water quality impact evaluation. The evaluation concluded that, with the implementation of mitigation measures committed to by CDOT on page 3-89 of the EA, the project would not degrade water quality in the project area and may actually result in improved water quality by providing mitigation for the original highway that was built prior to the passage of the Clean Water Act. As also noted on page 3-88 in the EA, the No Action alternative would likely result in unmitigated adverse impacts to water quality.</p> <p>Pages 3-91, 3-93, and Section 7 of the EA present wetland findings for the project. Wetlands are important to water quality because they can act as storage areas for storm and flood waters and serve natural water filtration and purification functions. Avoidance and minimization of wetlands were addressed during conceptual design. Direct, unavoidable impacts to wetlands from the proposed action would be mitigated through a one-to-one replacement of wetlands, as described on page 3-92.</p> <p>In addition to evaluation of the specific water bodies and wetlands potentially impacted within the project, the EA includes a broad discussion of watersheds on pages 3-75 through 3-78. As noted on page 3-78, CDOT has committed to continued coordination with other Federal, State, and local agencies within the corridor to explore other potential water quality improvements in the watershed.</p>
Submitters:	(10 people) N. Bay, J. & A. Brock, S. Carlson, S. Dewey, A. Dukey, V. Grasso, R. Johnson, S. Nishida-Harvey, D. Reichert, M. Reynolds

Comment:	Impacts of added runoff into Monument Valley Park, Monument Creek, and Fountain Creek is a significant impact/have not been evaluated.
Response:	As part of the water quality evaluation, impacts on Monument Creek in the vicinity of the park were evaluated. The EA concludes on page 3-88 that, without mitigation, Monument Creek would be negatively impacted. However, implementation of committed mitigation measures described on page 3-89 and described in more detail in Appendix 4 of the EA, would minimize or prevent impacts from sediment and pollutants entering into Monument Creek, Fountain Creek, and adjacent wetlands.
Submitters:	Friends of Monument Valley Park, J. Rice-Jones, Sierra Club

Comment:	How was the impervious surface area of past safety projects taken into account – as part of existing conditions or as part of the Proposed Action?
Response:	The increase in impervious surface area that resulted from the safety projects was evaluated as the existing condition for I-25. The existing water quality conditions reported in the EA therefore already account for the runoff attributable to the safety projects. With respect to cumulative effects, it should be noted that the Proposed Action must incorporate Best Management Practices for water quality as is now required under CDOT's federally mandated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit from the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (discussed in the EA at page 3-85). These mitigation requirements did not apply when the I-25 safety projects were implemented. These BMP's will treat runoff from the entire highway, including past actions and the Proposed Action alike, thereby resulting in improved water quality discharged to receiving waters.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	Water quality impacted by runoff from the interstate and future construction should be monitored and recorded.
Response:	Water quality in the project area is recorded, monitored, and publicly available. The US Geological Survey (USGS) has 10 water quality monitoring stations in the project area. They regularly collect and evaluate the data. These stations are described in Table 2 of Appendix 4 to the EA. USGS data are available for downloading from the internet.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Indirect water quality impacts should be addressed.
Response:	Indirect effects from this project to water quality are discussed in the Watershed section of the EA on pages 3-75 through 3-78. The watershed approach was developed to specifically address indirect effects and provide appropriate context for the evaluation of water quality issues in the region. Cumulative effects (including indirect cumulative effects) to water quality are presented on pages 4-7 through 4-10 of the EA.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Water quality analysis should be based on evaluation of impervious surface area of the existing highway in comparison to the impervious surface area for the Proposed Action.
Response:	The EA did in fact evaluate the water quality impacts that would affect Monument Creek as a result of increased roadway runoff in the I-25 corridor (EA at 3-87). An FHWA approved roadway runoff model was used to determine if pollutants from I-25 runoff would contribute to reduced water quality. The final result of the water quality modeling process was the finding that there would not be an increased probability of future water quality problems due to the Proposed Action compared to existing conditions today, due to the mandatory implementation of Best Management Practices required in CDOT's federally mandated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit from the Colorado Department of Health and Environment. Unfortunately, this outcome was not articulated in the EA, and the reader was left with the opposite impression. In response to questions raised on this issue by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, FHWA has prepared a clarification to the EA. That clarification is found in Section 7 of this FONSI.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

Comment:	Significance of water quality impacts should not be determined by comparison of the Proposed Action to regional impacts.
Response:	<p>Water quality impacts of the Proposed Action were based on the thorough evaluation using an established FHWA water quality model, and not on a comparison of impervious surface calculated for the Proposed Action compared to the region as a whole. The final result of the water quality modeling process was the finding that there would not be an increased probability of future adverse water quality impacts due to the Proposed Action, compared to existing conditions today. FHWA therefore determined that the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on water quality. Unfortunately, this outcome was not articulated in the EA, and the reader was left with the opposite impression. In response to questions raised on this issue by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, FHWA has prepared a clarification to the EA. That clarification is found in Section 7 of this FONSI.</p> <p>Comparison of impervious surface areas was presented in the Cumulative Impacts section of the EA (at page 4-9) to provide a context for understanding the impacts of the Proposed Action in relation to the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions.</p>
Submitters:	Sierra Club

WETLANDS

Comment:	Wetland impacts are more significant than reported.
Response:	The potential impacts to wetlands and Waters of the U.S. were determined through wetland delineations conducted by professional biologists in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the federal entity that has jurisdiction over wetlands and waters of the United States. The delineations of “jurisdictional” wetlands, and mitigation measures committed to by FHWA and CDOT, were reviewed and approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, CDOT regulations pertaining to wetlands require identification of and mitigation for potential impacts to wetlands too small to be in the jurisdiction of the Corps. These “nonjurisdictional” wetlands have been identified, and impacts will be mitigated according to the state agency’s requirements. With implementation of mitigations the Proposed Action will result in no net loss of wetlands. A discussion of wetlands can be found in Section 3, pages 3-91 and 3-92. Section 7 includes the wetland finding for the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	S.Nishida-Harvey

Comment:	Wetlands near Tejon Street and the Roswell neighborhood should be protected.
Response:	These two wetlands would not be impacted by the Proposed Action. Section 7 of the EA provides details of the wetland analysis.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

WILDLIFE

Comment:	Impacts to wildlife need to be addressed.
Response:	The “Wildlife” and “Threatened/Endangered Species” chapters of Section 3 and the Biological Opinion in Section 8, contain analyses of potential impacts to wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. These analyses of potential impacts to wildlife were conducted through scientific analysis and coordination with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Submitters:	N.Bay, C.Mundy, S.Nishida-Harvey

Comment:	Supports proposed/requests wildlife crossings.
Response:	As noted in Section 3, page 3-98, FHWA and CDOT have committed to designing and installing hydraulic structures that will serve as wildlife underpasses of the interstate to improve east-west wildlife mobility throughout the corridor.
Submitters:	O.Cramer, L.Reisinger

Comment:	Wildlife movement will be disrupted.
Response:	The EA identifies increased disruption of animal movements as one impact from the Proposed Action. As noted in Section 3, page 3-98, to reduce this impact FHWA and CDOT have committed to designing and constructing hydraulic structures that will enhance animal corridors, and incorporating features such as soft, natural floors and vegetation where feasible. The impact analyses and mitigation recommendations were made in coordination with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Submitters:	E.Groves, J.Nance, J.Rice-Jones

THREATENED/ENDANGERED SPECIES

Comment:	Impacts to endangered species should be addressed.
Response:	Impact and mitigation for endangered species can be found in Section 3, page 3-101 through 3-104 and Section 8 of the EA, Biological Opinion. By scientific analysis and through coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—which has jurisdiction over federally threatened and endangered species—impacts to federal or state listed species have been evaluated and documented in the EA. FHWA and CDOT determined that the Proposed Action would have an adverse effect on the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse through the permanent and temporary impact of 61.9 acres of occupied habitat. It was to address these impacts that a Biological Opinion was prepared and an Incidental Take Statement was granted. The Reasonable and Prudent Measures and Terms and Conditions included as part of the Biological Opinion are requirements that FHWA and CDOT must adhere to in order to minimize the effects of the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	N.Bay, M.Reynolds, J.Zales

Comment:	Impacts to Preble’s mouse should not be considered, Preble’s mouse does not need protection, and/or the Preble’s mouse should be delisted.
Response:	The Preble’s meadow jumping mouse was listed as threatened in 1998 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has jurisdiction over federally threatened and endangered species, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Federal agencies are prohibited from taking or facilitating actions that would jeopardize a listed species or modify or destroy its designated critical habitat. Section 7 of the Act requires federal agencies to undertake programs for the conservation of endangered or threatened species in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Actions to delist the mouse are the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, not FHWA or CDOT.
Submitters:	(24 people) D.Barber, T.Biesterfield, M.Gaebler, G.Hall, D.Horne, C.Krushensky, M.Kyral, C.Lucy, L.Miller, C.Newman, E.Nunez, H.Patterson, B.Perry, G.Pinter, M.Pocock, D.Powers, R.Sanchez, T.Savage, C.Scruggs, C.Se bald, A.Smith, M.Tebedo, E.Wall, N.Whetstone

VEGETATION

Comment:	Trees removed should be mitigated at 2:1 ratio with native species.
Response:	Construction of the Proposed Action would occur largely within the existing I-25 right-of-way, which reduces potential impacts to vegetation. Native species of trees, shrubs and other plants will be used in project landscaping. There is no required ratio for tree replacement. Replacement would vary from location to location, depending on safety issues, availability of water and other site-specific factors. Mitigation that FHWA and CDOT have committed to, as documented in the EA, includes “re-vegetating impacted areas to replicate or enhance native vegetative communities” and “plant native trees where feasible in proximity to locations where trees are removed.” Section 3, pages 3-105 and 3-106 provide more detail on trees and vegetation in the project area.
Submitters:	C.Vauthrin

NOXIOUS WEEDS

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Comment:	The EA fails to adequately consider cumulative impacts to Monument Valley Park.
Response:	Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions. Past and proposed current actions that have affected or will affect Monument Valley Park are addressed in detail in Section 3, page 3-115 and 3-116 of the EA. Present and future effects of the Proposed Action will be mitigated in accordance with the mitigation outlined in Section 3, page 3-123 of the EA. No other proposed projects have been identified that will affect the park in the future.
Submitters:	Friends of Monument Valley Park, Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs

Comment:	Unequal coordination occurred with stakeholders: the Air Force Academy received more and Monument Valley Park received less.
Response:	As indicated in Section 5 of the EA, extensive public involvement activities that involved many stakeholders occurred over the planning period for this project. In addition to public meetings, newsletters, a web site, advertisements and flyers and media contacts, CDOT worked closely with numerous agencies. CDOT coordinated with the U.S. Air Force Academy, the City of Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Department, the Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, among others. Close coordination with the Air Force Academy was required because seven miles of I-25 is situated on Air Force Academy property. The seven miles are undeveloped and required an assessment of natural, historical, visual, and security issues.
Submitters:	P.Doyle

Comment:	Impacts to the Works Progress Administration floodwall along Monument Creek would result in the loss of more than 5% of a historic resource. This would be significant.
Response:	The EA indicates that 5,910 square feet of the WPA wall along Monument Creek would be directly affected by the Proposed Action. This amount of area represents approximately one percent of the continuous WPA floodwall system (EA at 3-118). The affected portion of the wall is not unique in design, materials, workmanship or function, compared to other sections of the wall, and the loss of one percent of the wall system would not affect the qualities that make the rest of the wall system eligible for the National Register. Therefore, the magnitude of the impact in relationship to the whole has been determined by FHWA to be not significant, as defined by NEPA.
Submitters:	Sierra Club

ARCHAEOLOGY

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

PALEONTOLOGY

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY ISSUES

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA. Comments received from the U.S. Air Force Academy are provided in Section 4, Response to Agency Comments.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

Comment:	The EA does not address hazardous materials transported on I-25.
Response:	<p>The EA includes a discussion of hazardous material shipment in Appendix 1 on page 23, noting that I-25 carries an estimated 40 truckloads of hazardous material daily, which is less than one percent of the freeway’s truck traffic (and therefore far less than one percent of total traffic). It is also noted that I-25 is a designated route for transporting radioactive materials, carrying several truckloads per week. Much larger quantities of hazardous materials are carried daily by rail freight, on tracks that in many cases are closer to neighborhoods, parks, trails, and offices.</p> <p>FHWA and CDOT recognize that accidental highway spills may occur, but since spill locations cannot be predicted there is no practical way to assure that such spills always can be contained. Federal, state and local governments have hazardous materials response teams trained to contain spills and to assure proper cleanup.</p>
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

INDIRECT EFFECTS

Comment:	Indirect effects should be addressed.
Response:	Indirect effects of the No-Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are addressed in Section 3, pages 3-159 through 3-163 of the EA.
Submitters:	C.Mundy

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

No comments were received specifically addressing this section of the EA.

EA Section 4 - Cumulative Impacts

Comment:	Cumulative impacts were disregarded or need to be studied more comprehensively.
Response:	Cumulative impacts are addressed in Section 4 of the EA, pages 4-1 through 4-21. Additional information about regional environmental context and trends are included in EA Appendix 9, <i>Sustaining Nature and Community in the Pikes Peak Region: A Sourcebook for Analyzing Regional Cumulative Effects</i> .
Submitters:	(20 people) C.Asfahl, B.Badgett, N.Bay, F.Bell, S.Carlson, S.Dewey, A.Dukey, H.Dickens, V.Grasso, N.Henjum, Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs, K.Hommel, R.Huffman, R.Johnson, C.Mundy, D.Reichert, M.Reynolds, R.Spory, G.Tumbush, M.Wasinger

Comment:	Noise impacts from previous highway improvements were not accounted for.
Response:	Cumulative noise impacts in Monument Valley Park are addressed in the comparison of 1990 and 2025 noise levels, documented in EA Appendix 3 at page 18.
Submitters:	L.Bevington, D.&C.Farrell, R.Spory

Comment:	Future growth facilitated by increased highway capacity should be considered.
Response:	Future development in the corridor is already accounted for in the City of Colorado Springs <i>2001 Comprehensive Plan</i> and PPACG's <i>Destination 2025</i> regional transportation plan. The additional capacity provided by the Proposed Action is unlikely to result in population and employment growth beyond what is included in these adopted plans.
Submitters:	G.Tumbush

Comment:	The Proposed Action's cumulative impacts are significant and warrant an EIS.
Response:	The Federal Highway Administration has determined that sufficient studies have been prepared to assess the proposed action's direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. After a thorough, comprehensive and independent review of the EA, its associated studies and documentation, and all comments received during the 45-day public review period, FHWA has determined that there are no significant impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action.
Submitters:	G.Tumbush

Comment:	Cumulative impacts to Monument Valley Park from work already completed in the way of visual and noise impacts were not mentioned.
Response:	With regard to visual effects, page 3-54 of the EA states that "[t]he existing noise wall between Bijou and Fillmore has created a monochromatic backdrop to the traffic on I-25, making the movement of traffic more visually apparent." Cumulative noise impacts in Monument Valley Park are addressed in the comparison of 1990 and 2025 noise levels, documented in EA Appendix 3 at page 18.
Submitters:	Friends of Monument Valley Park

EA Sections 5 through 12

Comment:	Comment pertains to Section 5, Comments and Coordination: Scheduling the Public Hearing on Earth Day was callous.
Response:	The Public Hearing was scheduled after the EA was publicly available, in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.6. That the event occurred on Earth Day was coincidental. The hearing was scheduled for nearly the full day, affording the public flexibility to attend without missing other Earth Day-related activities. The Public Hearing was only one of several means interested parties had to comment on the project; other venues included a project website and email address, a dedicated telephone hotline, and mail-in comments.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Comment pertains to Section 5, Comments and Coordination: The 45-day public comment period was inadequate.
Response:	In accordance with 23 CFR 771.119(e) the public comment period for an EA is 30 days, unless FHWA finds good cause to extend it. 23 CFR 771.135(i) requires that a minimum of 45 days be provided for agency review by officials having jurisdiction over the section 4(f) property, and by the Department of the Interior. For the I-25 EA, FHWA chose to establish a 45-day public comment period, to coincide with the agency review period for the draft 4(f) evaluation. Several organizations and an individual requested that FHWA extend the 45-day comment period for the I-25 EA. FHWA carefully reviewed and considered the reasons for the requested extension, and determined that they did not provide “good cause” for an extension. For further details, see Appendix D in this FONSI
Submitters:	C.Mundy

Comment:	Comment pertains to Section 5, Comments and Coordination: The hearing should not have been an open house format.
Response:	Public hearings have been conducted in an open house format for many years by the FHWA and CDOT to provide interested parties the most flexibility in participating and commenting on project activities. The method of conducting public hearings, an optional event for an EA, is not prescribed in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, Council on Environmental Quality guidance or FHWA or CDOT policy. In the preamble to its regulations implementing NEPA requirements (23 CFR 771), FHWA specifically notes, “Public involvement, as discussed in this regulation, may mean not only public hearings, but a series of less formal informational meetings which begin after the planning phase and help affected persons and local governments learn about agency actions and identify potential difficulties at the earliest possible time.”
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones

Comment:	Regarding Section 6, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation: Prefers concept #3 for the proposed Northgate/Powers Boulevard Interchange.
Response:	Concept #3 was determined to not be prudent and feasible because of its longer footprint that causes increased visual concerns, and the collector/distributor system provided questionable driver expectancy. Complete evaluation of alternatives for this interchange is provided in Section 6 of the EA.
Submitters:	W.Ennis

EA Appendices

No comments were received regarding this section of the EA.

Other Comments

Comment:	There appear to be conflicts of interest on the part of the consultant team that prepared the I-25 Environmental Assessment.
Response:	The consultants were selected in accordance with State and Federal requirements. CDOT has monitored the performance of all consultant activities, and it appears that there is no conflict of interest.
Submitters:	J.Rice-Jones, R.Spory

Comment:	The effects of the Proposed Action on response by local military agencies to terrorist activities should have been addressed.
Response:	A discussion of the importance of I-25 to the region's military bases appears in the EA on page 1-4, where it is noted that I-25 "is part of the military's Strategic Highway Network, the roadway system designated for use by armed forces in case of a military emergency." Reducing congestion on I-25 would improve the military's ability to respond to terrorist activities.
Submitters:	R.Tracy