

# Stakeholder Involvement Plan

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## **Appendix: Meeting Schedule and Logistics (most current revision in front)**

# US 6/Wadsworth Environmental Assessment Stakeholder Involvement Plan

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Goals

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) are conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) to study transportation improvements at the US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard interchange, including improvements along Wadsworth from Third to 14th Avenues in Lakewood. The project goal is to complete an EA resulting in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or to determine that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. The study will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives for improvements, including the No-Action alternative. The EA and supporting documentation and decision will be conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and FHWA NEPA-implementing regulations (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Parts 1500-1508 [40 CFR 1500-1508] and 23 CFR 771, respectively).

### 1.2 US 6/Wadsworth Corridor Overview

The US 6/Wadsworth study area is located in a mixed-use setting along Wadsworth Boulevard, within the City of Lakewood, Colorado. The study area encompasses local government, businesses, neighborhood groups, residents, and through-travelers with different demographic profiles, issues, concerns, and corridor visions. While the basics of the public involvement approach are consistent throughout the study area, the approach will be flexible and tailored to meet the unique needs and character of all stakeholders in the corridor.

Three neighborhood groups are active in the corridor: the Eiber, Two Creeks, and O'Kane Parks Neighborhood Associations. The City of Lakewood has worked with each of these neighborhoods to create neighborhood area plans. The plans describe neighborhood goals for a variety of transportation and planning issues. The City of Lakewood also has developed the Wadsworth Boulevard Strategic Plan, which contains recommendations on traffic operations, land use, appearance, and economic revitalization for the Wadsworth corridor.

Two business associations are active at the northern and southern ends of the corridor: the West Alameda Community Association and the West Colfax Community Association. Businesses line Wadsworth through the length of the project corridor, and most of these businesses are not affiliated with either business association because the association boundaries focus on the east-west corridors of Alameda and Colfax. Because of the regional importance of the interchange area, through-travelers are another key stakeholder group in the corridor.



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The public involvement process will engage corridor groups through approaches best suited to their needs. The public involvement plan is designed to allow for flexibility in order to adjust to the needs of the community as the project progresses.

### 2.0 Purpose of This Plan

Developing a high degree of public trust in the study and decision process is critical to building credibility for the NEPA planning process and acceptance for the preferred alternative. To build this trust, the public involvement team will follow the strategies for communication with and education of stakeholders outlined in this public involvement plan.

The strategies discussed in this plan can be used in a variety of ways, allowing for flexibility and the ability to change or modify strategies with the needs of the project and the community. The public involvement tools and techniques described here will be evaluated throughout the project to continuously improve the outreach to and input from stakeholder groups. The **Appendix** to this plan contains details about outreach activities, such as development of tools and conduct of meetings, performed to support the plan goals. The appendix will be updated bi-weekly as a record of previous and upcoming public involvement activities.

In addition to developing trust between the project team and stakeholders, the public involvement process must manage the expectations of the public and others engaged in the process. Defining what this project can and cannot do in relation to other projects in the corridor is a critical component in managing expectations.

The primary public involvement goals are:

1. Develop a planning process that is compatible with the community and municipal visions for the corridor
2. Build support and agreement for the process
3. Be credible
4. Thoroughly identify issues of community importance
5. Understand the context of the communities served by the project

These goals will be accomplished by educating stakeholders about the NEPA process, defining and explaining the decision-making steps and process, and describing how public input is communicated to decision makers. Project communications will emphasize CDOT's careful consideration of stakeholder input prior to making final decisions on the project recommendations.



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Good community involvement leads to better design solutions. We will integrate environmental analysis, engineering, and community involvement as functions leading to a balanced planning approach. CDOT and FHWA will, in cooperation with the City of Lakewood as a partnering agency and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) as a cooperating agency, work with corridor stakeholders and environmental resource agencies to establish and share common goals and objectives that will be incorporated into a proactive community involvement program.

### 3.0 Key Public Involvement Issues

The public involvement strategies outlined in this plan aim to a) engage a variety of stakeholders in the corridor through a flexible public involvement approach; b) manage stakeholder expectations about the goals of this project in relation to other ongoing projects in the corridor; and c) establish credibility and trust with stakeholders.

The primary goals of the public involvement process will be to:

- Engage and inform stakeholders, special interest groups, relevant agencies, and interested individuals and parties
- Assess public values and preferences, and integrate those into project planning, decision making, and documentation
- Comply with NEPA requirements
- Maintain project identity
- Manage public and agency expectations, particularly in regard to other past and ongoing projects

We anticipate that the public and agencies will likely focus on the following key project issues:

- Avoid business and residential displacements to the greatest extent possible
- Improve business access and circulation
- Minimize neighborhood cut-through traffic
- Improve neighborhood access
- Minimize noise
- Eliminate frequent flooding
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities

### 4.0 Linking Public Involvement to the Decision-Making Process

Fundamental to any project is the design and execution of the decision-making process, and its interdependency with the public process. Decision making is not accomplished through public referendum, nor does the NEPA process require a public consensus. The ideas, perspectives, and needs of the public, however, are a critical element for project success. Implementation of this public involvement plan will provide clearly defined milestones and a means to bring public input to decision makers. The plan also provides avenues for reporting back to stakeholders what the decision makers heard from the public and how that input influenced decision making.

#### 4.1 The Decisions

The project schedule for public input and technical decisions will be planned around key decision-making milestones – Scoping, Development of the Purpose and Need, Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives, Detailed Screening of Alternatives, and Selection of the Preferred Alternative.

#### 4.2 The Decision Makers

CDOT and FHWA are responsible for decisions. CDOT and FHWA will work with the City of Lakewood, a partner agency, and RTD, a cooperating agency, to develop alternatives that meet transportation needs and account for community and environmental impacts. The public involvement program will provide the decision makers with input, perspectives, and recommendations from agencies, technical staff, and the public.

#### 4.3 Committees

Two working committees will be formed to assist in project decision making: the Project Leadership Team (PLT) and the Technical Leadership Team (TLT). The roles and responsibilities of these teams are described below.

##### Project Leadership Team

###### *Roles and Responsibilities*

The PLT guides the EA process and makes decisions and recommendations about the US 6 and Wadsworth project development. The PLT will guide and direct the public involvement process and activities.

###### *Membership*

The PLT consists of CDOT, FHWA, and Consultant team task leaders and project managers. The Consultant project manager will facilitate the PLT.



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PLT members are:

- Seyed Kalantar, CDOT Region 6
- Randall Furst, CDOT Region 6
- Kirk Webb, CDOT Region 6
- David Singer, CDOT, Region 6
- Vanessa Henderson, CDOT HQ (Environmental Programs Branch)
- Marcee Allen, FHWA
- Tim Eversoll, CH2M HILL
- Mandy Whorton, CH2M HILL
- Zeke Lynch, CH2M HILL
- Aaron Swafford, CH2M HILL
- Colleen Kirby Roberts, CH2M HILL
- Kathy Kelley, CH2M HILL

### *Meeting Topics/Format*

Meetings will focus on the overall project progress, schedule, and work plan; discussion of specific technical issues; and review of action items and decisions. These meetings will be held at the CDOT Golden Residency office at 425 Corporate Circle in Golden. An agenda for the meetings will be sent to all PLT members on the Monday prior to the meeting.

### *Schedule*

The PLT will meet biweekly for the duration of the project.

### Technical Leadership Team

#### *Roles and Responsibilities*

The TLT will provide input into the study process, alert the project team to decisions that require council or commission action, and assist with the consultation process. The TLT will review and comment on key project deliverables prior to their implementation or presentation to the public, including scoping information, project purpose and need, and environmental analysis methodology.

The roles and responsibilities of the TLT include:

- Guide technical decisions involving data gathering, criteria, and analysis within respective areas of expertise
- Participate in scoping and coordination meetings, field reviews, and public involvement activities, as needed
- Provide input on issues of concern in a meaningful and timely manner
- Provide technical support and insight with respect to agency issues and regulations
- Coordinate and communicate project status, issues, and recommendations with respective agency staff and/or elected officials
- Assist in developing and screening alternatives



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### *Membership*

The TLT is comprised of the PLT and staff from RTD and the City of Lakewood. The CDOT project manager will lead the TLT, and the Consultant project manager will facilitate TLT meetings. The permanent members of the TLT include the PLT members listed above, the City of Lakewood, and RTD. Other staff from Lakewood, RTD, or other agencies will be invited to the TLT when their expertise is required.

### *Meeting Topics/Format*

Meeting topics will focus on coordination of technical information and review of the status and progress of project technical materials and conceptual designs.

Documents provided for review will identify what input is needed, what impacts the input will have on the project and the schedule, and the timeframe requested for response. The input and meeting notes from the TLT will be provided to the PLT.

The TLT will meet at CDOT's Golden Residency office at 425 Corporate Circle in Golden. The agenda for these meetings will be sent to all members on the Monday prior to the meeting.

### *Schedule*

The TLT will meet, on average, every 6 weeks for the duration of the project.

## 5.0 Agency Coordination

Agency coordination will be accomplished through three large meetings and individual one-on-one meetings. The Consultant team will plan and coordinate agency meetings, while the PLT will guide and approve the agenda, schedule, and content for the meetings.

### 5.1 Invited Agencies

The following federal, state, regional, and local agencies will be invited to the agency meetings:

- CDOT
- City of Lakewood
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado State Historic Preservation Office
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Transit Administration
- FHWA
- Jefferson County
- Regional Air Quality Council
- RTD
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance



- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

For some agencies, the project team will need to coordinate with multiple departments, divisions, or offices. It is anticipated that individual meetings, or meetings in combination with the TLT meetings, will be conducted to gain input from and provide information to these interested groups. The above list, therefore, is not inclusive of all potentially interested agencies but does represent those agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise to comment on the project and suggest additional contacts within or outside of the listed agencies.

## 5.2 Agency Scoping Meeting

The first agency coordination meeting will be the Agency Scoping Meeting. The following topics will be covered at the meeting: a) the NEPA process; b) known issues and concerns of the agencies, public, and local officials; c) how the project elements for this EA will unfold; d) potential impacts of the possible alternatives that may be considered, including the No-Action alternative; e) environmental impact analysis methodologies; and f) the mitigation process and the possible mitigation options and requirements associated with the potential impacts of the alternatives. A comprehensive Scoping Packet, including a draft purpose and need for the project, will be distributed to agency participants in advance of the meeting. In addition, a draft of the Environmental Methodology Report (EMR) will be sent to agencies for review prior to the meeting. Informal coordination with agencies will occur, as necessary, to support the development of the Scoping Packet and EMR. Comments will be solicited specifically for the EMR and draft purpose and need.

Materials prepared for and presented at the Agency Scoping Meeting will continue to support these smaller meetings and will be updated as Project Briefing materials as additional data are gathered and the study progresses.

## 5.3 Tribal Coordination

Coordination with interested Tribal Governments will be conducted separately. Tribal representatives will be sent information and invited to tour the project site with the project team.

## 5.4 Future Agency Meetings

Two additional agency meetings will be held to present project status before public meetings on alternatives and the Draft EA review. Review at these key milestones will help shape the public message and ensure that agency concerns are addressed before information is presented in a public forum.



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### 5.5 Schedule

The Agency Scoping Meeting is planned to occur in late summer 2007 before the public scoping meeting. The second meetings will be scheduled to coincide with the development of alternatives and the Draft EA document, respectively.

## 6.0 Public Involvement Activities

The public involvement activities summarized in this plan are organized into public outreach tools and public input strategies. The primary focus of the tools is to share information with the public. The primary focus of the input strategies is to gather input from the community.

### 6.1 Public Outreach Tools

The appendix to this plan contains up-to-date information about the past and future activities supporting the development of public outreach tools.

#### Stakeholder Database

The public involvement team will gather contact information for stakeholders in the study area through coordination with the PLT and TLT. The public involvement team will use direct-mail and email-marketing methods to recruit initial names into the database. Subsequently, stakeholders who attend meetings or with whom the team interacts will be added to the database. Stakeholders will also be able to self-register for the database on the project Web site.

Information collected from stakeholders will include:

- Name (personal and/or business)
- Contact information;
- Preferred method of contact; and
- Interaction history (i.e., mailings sent, phone calls made/received, meetings, etc.)

Privacy information will appear on all solicitations, and the public involvement team will ensure that the addresses or other personal information included in the database are not distributed or shared without consent.

#### Issues Tracking

A comment tracking database will be created and will contain all comments submitted to the project team (formal and summary comments from meeting reports). Every comment will be classified into all issues that are relevant. The issue codes will be used to analyze public opinion. Meeting notes and Web site comments will be coded for consistent entry into the comment database. The Consultant public involvement manager will provide



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updates to the PLT and TLT on public comment at those meetings to ensure that decision makers understand public concerns. The public involvement team will track action items to ensure that it is responsive and provides the public with timely information.

CH2M HILL will prepare formal and informal written documents, and organize community meetings to respond to issues and comments. Documentation and response techniques include developing interview and meeting summaries, writing project updates, conducting community briefings, and preparing individualized responses to comments.

### Scoping Packet

A Scoping Packet will be prepared and distributed to CDOT and Agency Scoping Meeting participants. The packet will include relevant information on the EA process, general project overview, known issues and concerns, draft purpose and need, and conceptual project options. The Agency scoping packet will also contain the Draft EMR.

### Project Newsletters

Project newsletters will be published prior to each large public meeting. The newsletters will provide updates on the EA and will provide community context to the study. Newsletters will be published electronically on the project Web site, mailed to those stakeholders requesting it, and distributed at key community distribution points (for example, community centers, schools, civic organizations, shopping centers, libraries, homeowners association [HOA] meetings). Newsletters will include a Spanish-language insert.

### Media Relations

Outreach to the media is a proactive element in maintaining a positive image for the project, informing stakeholders about the EA, and encouraging their participation. CH2M HILL will work with CDOT Media Relations staff to develop an appropriate media strategy for the project and prepare supporting materials, such as media kits and press releases.

CH2M HILL will work with local organizations and media to prepare and promote feature articles for publication in local newspapers and business publications.

### Web Site

A project Web site will be established to provide information and gather written comments from the public. The Consultant team will provide content information, including schedules, contact information, graphics, project information, and other requested data. CDOT will be responsible for the technical development and maintenance of the Web site.

The project Web site address is <<http://www.US6Wadsworth.com/>>. The Web site will be a primary tool for public outreach. It will be updated regularly, and the address will be publicized widely in project public outreach materials. The public involvement team will look for opportunities to include the project Web site address on other community and



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municipal Web sites. The Web site will be integrated with the stakeholder database and the project's comment tracking system.

### Advertisements and Press Releases

The public involvement team will develop newspaper advertisements and press releases announcing each public workshop, open house, or meeting. Each ad will be published in two newspapers: the Rocky Mountain News and/or Denver Post, and the Lakewood Sentinel. Press releases will be prepared by the Consultant team and distributed to the press by CDOT.

Initial ads and press releases will focus on introducing the project and encouraging stakeholder involvement. Later ads and press releases will focus on aspects of the project that will capture public interest.

For the final open house, when the final strategy is presented, the press will receive press kits with graphics and background information on the process and the final strategy.

### Mobile Displays

Two stand-alone informational displays will be placed in prominent locations in the corridor. Lakewood City Hall and the Wal-Mart at Colfax and Wadsworth will be the likely locations for the displays, pending permission. The displays will include project graphics and announcements, and will be updated at key decision-making milestones in the project. Mobile signs with the project Web site and logos will be produced, and the public involvement team will look for appropriate places, such as school or park fences, to display signs.

## 6.2 Public Input Strategies

The appendix to this plan contains a listing of all previous and planned public outreach meetings and activities to gather public input.

### Team Partnering and Chartering

To ensure the effective functioning of the TLT, a chartering session will be held to formally define and articulate project goals and expectations, success factors, roles and responsibilities, and key decision points in the process. The charter also will establish an issue resolution process. A charter document will be produced and endorsed by the chartering team participants. The charter will guide and define the decision process throughout the EA development. The success of the TLT chartering will be measured periodically to ensure that all participants remain committed and satisfied with the project progress.



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### Small Group Listening Sessions

Small group listening sessions will be one of the primary means of sharing information and gathering public input through the course of the project. The public involvement team will engage both organized groups and unaffiliated stakeholders with common interests (such as business owners) through small group sessions.

At a minimum, the following groups will be contacted: the Eiber, Two Creeks, and O'Kane Park Neighborhood Associations, the Alameda Gateway and West Colfax Community Associations (which focus primarily on business interests), corridor business owners, and corridor schools. The public involvement team will attend regularly scheduled group meetings to present project information and listen to comments, and will also conduct individual interviews with unaffiliated stakeholders such as business owners and schools.

Early goals of these listening sessions will be: a) explaining how the project team and stakeholder groups will interact; and b) understanding stakeholder expectations of the project and the public process. As the project progresses and the project team develops relationships with corridor stakeholders, listening sessions will likely be replaced by project briefings or participation in community events or meetings.

### Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held at three key decision-making milestones in the project: Scoping, Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives, and Review of the Draft EA (public hearing). Additional public meetings may be held to review preliminary evaluation of alternatives and selection of the preferred alternative, if the project team feels the meetings will be beneficial.

The public scoping meeting and the public hearing will be open houses. Other public meetings may take the form of open houses or may be broken into smaller listening sessions with specific groups. The public involvement tools and techniques will be evaluated throughout the project to determine the most effective means of soliciting public input for these meetings.

#### *Public Meeting No. 1: Scoping*

The public scoping meeting will accomplish the following goals:

- Introduce the project to the public
- Explain the NEPA process and schedule
- Present the project purpose and need
- Identify known issues or concerns
- Provide opportunity for public outreach and input



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### *Tentative - Public Meeting No. 2: Review of Screening of Conceptual Alternatives*

This meeting will occur if the project team feels that the project will benefit from public review of the alternatives screening. This meeting will present the screening criteria used to screen the conceptual alternatives; explain how the screening criteria relate to the project purpose and need; solicit input on the screening process; and identify any outstanding related issues and concerns from the public. Conceptual project alternatives may be presented at this meeting. It is possible that meetings 2 and 3 could be combined and/or the format of these meetings as open houses could change.

### *Public Meeting No. 3: Review of the Alternatives Proposed for Detailed Evaluation in the EA*

The project team will present the alternatives that will be evaluated in the EA and will solicit public input on the alternatives. The public will be asked for its opinions on the benefits and impacts of the alternatives, any proposed improvements to the alternative concepts, and input on mitigation. It is possible that meetings 2 and 3 could be combined and/or the format of these meetings as open houses could change.

### *Tentative - Public Meeting No. 4: Review of the Proposed Preferred Alternative*

This meeting will occur if the project team feels that the project will benefit from public review of the preferred alternative. This meeting will explain the preferred alternative to the public and request its input on benefits and impacts, possible improvements, and mitigation. The project team will also ask what is needed to help build greater public support for the preferred alternative.

### *Public Meeting No. 5: Public Hearing*

The public hearing will review the Draft EA and will solicit formal comments on the EA. The project team will explain the remaining steps to be taken that will result in a decision document for the project.

## Community Events and Meetings

Community events, such as Summer Concerts at the Lakewood Heritage Center, and regularly scheduled community meetings, such as HOA meetings, provide an opportunity to share information about the project and build relationships with stakeholders. The public involvement team will also look for opportunities to partner with other agencies, such as RTD, to present consolidated information about development projects proposed or underway in the corridor.

The public involvement team will identify local community events and will set up a booth or station to distribute project information (through fact sheets, posters, brochures, or other materials) and talk to residents about the project. Community events may substitute for open houses or listening sessions depending on the progress and effectiveness of the public involvement strategies.



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### Project Briefings

The public involvement team will provide updates to interested neighborhood and business organizations, agencies, and local government, including the City of Lakewood City Council, at key decision-making milestones in the project. The project team will develop a briefing booklet, based on and building from the Scoping Packet, that will support these briefings. It is anticipated that both the Consultant and CDOT will conduct project briefings regularly through the EA development.

### Strategies to Implement Environmental Justice

The project team will use standard methods to characterize the demographics of the corridor residents and businesses. Methods would include a review of U.S. Census Bureau data, coordination with City of Lakewood and Jefferson County housing and economic development organizations, coordination with HUD, and field review.

An initial review of U.S. Census Bureau data suggests that the project area may contain a larger-than-average minority (Hispanic) population, as compared with Jefferson County. The minority population is, however, lower than the average of the Denver metropolitan area. The U.S. Census Bureau data indicate that there are no low-income census tracts in the corridor. Smaller populations of low-income residents may be present in the corridor. The public involvement team will refine understanding of the corridor demographics and adjust strategies accordingly. It appears that the corridor neighborhoods and residents are adept at the public involvement process through participation in the West Corridor and other projects, and there are few economic or social barriers to participation. At a minimum, a Spanish-language interpreter will be provided at public meetings, open houses, and workshops to give opportunities for non-English speaking populations to participate in the study. Newsletters will contain a Spanish-language insert.

## 7.0 Approvals

Various CDOT and FHWA staff will need to review and approve outreach activities and meeting materials. The PLT will review all public involvement materials prior to their distribution to the public. Some materials also will require approvals from the CDOT Public Relations office, CDOT Environmental Programs Branch staff, CDOT Region 6 staff, or the Technical Leadership Team. The PLT will determine when these reviews are required, and the CDOT Project Manager will coordinate reviews with groups outside the PLT.

CDOT's Public Relations office will specifically review and approve all newsletters, media outreach activities, ads, press releases, and mobile displays. All media inquiries and outreach will be managed by the CDOT Public Relations office with assistance from the Public Involvement Coordinator as required.