

The “Over The River” (OTR) Proposal – *Frequently Asked Questions*

What is Over The River?

Over The River (OTR) is a proposed temporary work of art by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude and OTR Corporation (collectively referred to as “applicant”). The proposal involves the construction, two-week display, and removal of approximately 5.9 miles of fabric panels suspended above the Arkansas River in eight select areas along a 42-mile stretch (that runs along US 50) between the towns of Salida and Cañon City.

What type of review process was completed for the project?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project to identify whether, where, when and under what terms this project could occur. CDOT was a cooperating agency in developing the EIS, which analyzed the project’s potential impacts to the area. One issue analyzed was traffic through the corridor. The BLM adopted mitigation measures for traffic based on CDOT’s input. For instance, CDOT highway construction rules stipulate that at least one lane of traffic on US 50 must remain open at all times during the project period and that lane closures are limited to one every 10 miles. Additionally, lane closures are not permitted on weekends or holidays, and not between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The EIS requires OTR to develop an Event Management Plan (EMP), which will include an Incident Management Plan (IMP), for traveler safety. These plans will guide the construction, installation, exhibition and removal of the project as well as traffic and incident management.

What is CDOT’s role in the event process?

Because the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is charged with building and maintaining the state highway system, CDOT’s role in OTR is to ensure the safety and mobility of the traveling public through this corridor before, during and after the OTR event. CDOT has no authority to allow or deny a permit for the event itself. Rather, CDOT will ensure that the EMP and IMP requirements—as they relate to the state highway and right of way—are being met. The EMP addresses traffic flow through the US 50 corridor. The IMP covers specific safety measures, like the staging of emergency responders to ensure timely response during periods of peak traffic volumes; additional communications systems; uniformed traffic control; a unified command center; and more. With the strict requirements of the IMP, any incident will be handled expeditiously with heightened service coverage and on-site emergency response staging areas.

What are the Special Use Permits being issued by CSP and CDOT?

CSP Special Use Permit: CSP is the agency charged with issuing Special Use Permits for events on or impacting state highways (major cycling rides, visits from presidents and popes, the Democratic National Convention, etc.). Once CSP issues a permit for an event, CDOT and CSP work together to ensure the event is carried out in the safest possible manner as it relates to travel and safety (including emergency response) on the adjacent highway. For OTR, these agencies will ensure requirements laid

out in the EMP and IMP are met before the CSP issues a Special Use Permit for the event's two-week viewing phase.

CDOT Special Use Permit: Because OTR is an extended project (not just a brief event), CDOT is in the process of issuing a Special Use Permit for work in the state highway right of way (installation and removal of the fabric panels) to ensure that the OTR team is mitigating any impacts to safety and travel on the highway. This would be the case for any work along a state highway that is being conducted by an outside agency (utility company, phone service company, etc.). As of July 27, 2012, CDOT has not received a Special Use Permit application from OTR. When this occurs, and upon meeting the terms and conditions specified in the Special Use Permit, CDOT will issue a permit.

How can CDOT ensure safety and good traffic flow on US 50 during the event?

Prior to the CSP issuing a Special Use Permit for the event (again, CDOT's Special Use Permit covers activities during construction and removal phases) CDOT—and all agencies involved in the OTR project—will have completed their review of the EMP and IMP described above. To this end, traffic engineers have developed traffic modeling—as is done with many major highway projects and/or large events near highways. The modeling simulates major and minor incidents during the period of increased traffic on this narrow, two-lane corridor. The modeling will help identify where emergency responders will be staged, what communications tools are needed and where, where traffic control stations are needed and more.

Who is paying for this?

The OTR team—not CDOT—will pay for any added highway features and all mitigation, including event-related highway improvements, event signing, CSP troopers' time, traffic modeling, traffic control, any additional communications systems, inspection costs, real-time monitoring for the Event Management Plan and more.

What is the proposed OTR project schedule?

The OTR's proposed plans initially involved construction beginning in January 2013, a two-week viewing period in August of 2015, and removal of the fabric panels in September 2015, with restoration work ending in the summer of 2016. However, in August 2012 the OTR team announced the following: "Christo announced a temporary postponement of the project until he has greater certainty that pending litigation (an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and two lawsuits in state and federal district court) will not affect the schedule for the work. Christo remains fully committed to the OTR Project, but due to the temporary postponement, it is not certain what year the OTR Project can be exhibited."

How can I find out more about the project?

All the details of Over the River, including a Frequently Asked Questions sheet and a place to submit questions/comments, can be found on the project's web site at: <http://www.overtheriverinfo.com>. In addition, if you would like further information on the Environmental Impact Statement completed by the Bureau of Land Management, please go here: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/rgfo/planning/otr.html>. To reach a CDOT representative, contact Nancy Shanks at (970) 385-1428 or nancy.shanks@dot.state.co.us.