



## January 2008 Newsletter

Join us at the next US 6/Wadsworth public open house to discuss project alternatives: Tuesday, February 12, 2008, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., with informational presentations at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. The meeting will take place at the Lakewood Cultural Center, Community Room, 470 South Allison Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado. A children's activity area will be available (unsupervised).

### What is the US 6/Wadsworth Environmental Assessment?

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are evaluating improvements to the interchange of US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard and to Wadsworth Boulevard from approximately 4th Avenue to 14th Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado (referred to as the project area). Nearly 190,000 cars pass through the project area daily, making improvements a priority to CDOT, FHWA, the City of Lakewood, and area residents, businesses, and commuters. Constructed in the early 1960's, the interchange was adequate for its time; however, its tight cloverleaf design does not meet current and future traffic needs. In addition, safety concerns at the interchange include tight curves, short ramps, and weaving conflicts that contribute to congestion. Along Wadsworth Boulevard, traffic challenges include congestion, high transit use, limited sidewalks, and numerous driveways that sometimes create hazardous situations for cars, trucks, buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians. It is anticipated that these problems will worsen as traffic grows over the next 30 years.

The study is an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will identify potential alternatives to address the transportation needs of the roadways and analyze the social, environmental, and transportation effects of potential improvements. The EA will document the project purpose and need for improvements, identify the preferred alternative for improvements, present the environmental and social benefits and costs of the preferred alternative, and commit to mitigation that could avoid or minimize negative impacts to the project area. A "No-Action" alternative - which would not provide any transportation improvements - will also be analyzed.

### What is the Purpose and Need for the Project?

The purpose of the US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard project is to improve traffic flow and safety, accommodate high traffic volumes, and increase multi-modal travel options and connections at the US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard interchange and along Wadsworth Boulevard between 4th Avenue and 14th Avenue.

The existing design and configuration of the interchange and roadway within the project limits have not kept pace with traffic and multi-modal travel demands. Therefore, improvements are needed to increase capacity, and improve safety and connectivity of all transportation modes. These needs fall into four categories: safety, roadway geometrics, capacity, and modal connectivity.

- **Safety.** Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle safety need to be improved at the interchange and along Wadsworth Boulevard.
- **Roadway geometrics.** There are many locations in the study area where the roadways or structures (such as bridges) do not meet current design standards and need to be improved.
- **Capacity.** The volume of traffic in the study area exceeds the capacity of the existing infrastructure, making capacity improvements necessary to relieve congestion and delays.
- **Modal connectivity.** Modal connectivity improvements for automobiles, trucks, bicyclists, pedestrians, and buses are needed on Wadsworth Boulevard within the study area.

# What Has the Project Team Done?

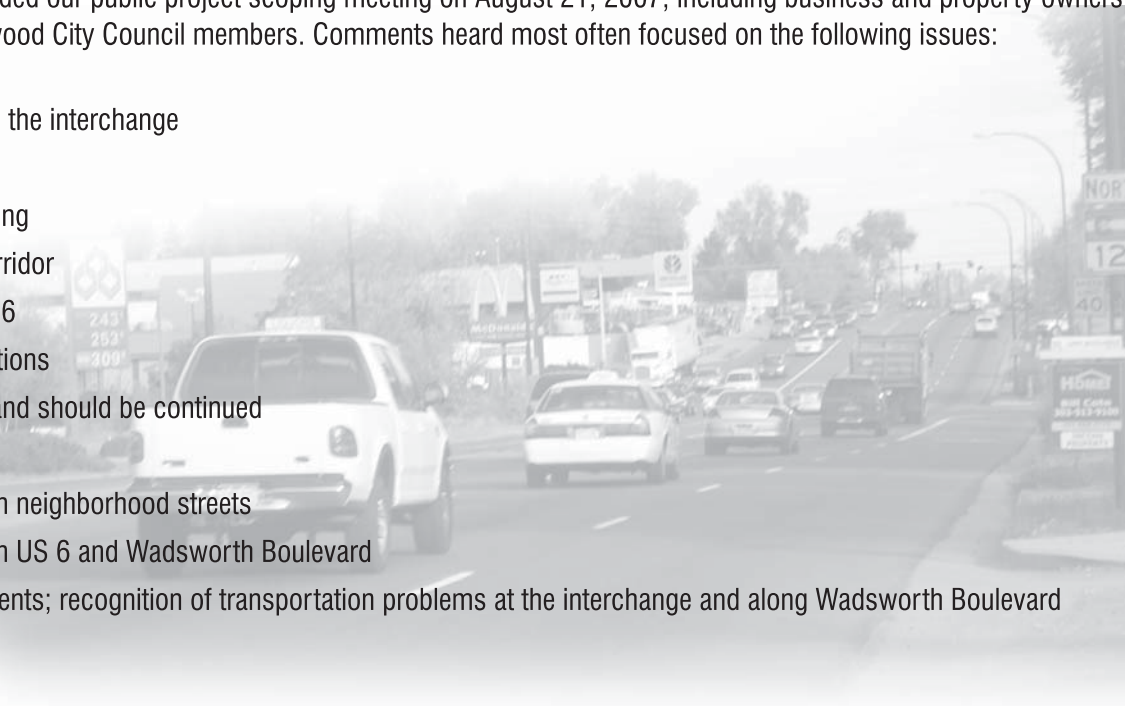
The project team consists of CDOT, FHWA, and a consultant team led by engineering firm CH2M HILL. The team has completed the scoping phase of the EA, during which time we talked with local, State, and Federal Agencies and members of the public to determine the important issues and the scope (or breadth) of the study. During the scoping phase we conducted the following activities:

- Established a charter among FHWA, CDOT, City of Lakewood, and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to define and clarify the roles of the public agencies in the study.
- Gathered data regarding existing conditions, coordinated with public agencies, and solicited public input to determine the environmental resources that could be affected by transportation improvements in the study area. The EA will consider in detail effects to the following resources: roadway design, traffic operations, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, noise levels, drainage conditions, business operations, right-of-way and ownership, environmental resources such as wildlife, air quality, water quality, historic resources, and hazardous materials.
- Defined the project purpose and identified the transportation needs in the study area, with input from agencies and the public.
- Solicited public and agency comments through local meetings and events, including:
  - Agency and public scoping meetings
  - City of Lakewood and RTD staff meetings
  - Lakewood City Council briefing
  - Neighborhood and business association meetings
  - Community events
  - Individual meetings with property and business owners, area schools, and emergency service providers
- Distributed thousands of project fact sheets to local schools, businesses, community organizations, and residences
- Created and kept the project website up to date ([www.US6Wadsworth.com](http://www.US6Wadsworth.com))
- Established an accelerated schedule for the completion of the EA and final decision (currently scheduled for December 2008)

# What Have We Heard?

Through outreach efforts to seek public and agency input on the project, we have received comments from agency representatives, local business owners, and the public. More than 25 representatives of local, State, and Federal Agencies participated in an agency scoping meeting on August 16, 2007. In addition to the hundreds of people that attended other small group meetings or outreach events, more than 70 people attended our public project scoping meeting on August 21, 2007, including business and property owners, City of Lakewood staff, and Lakewood City Council members. Comments heard most often focused on the following issues:

- Accidents, particularly around the interchange
- Bicycle and pedestrian needs
- Construction timing and phasing
- Interaction with RTD West Corridor
- Noise at residences along US 6
- Property acquisition or relocations
- Public outreach is important and should be continued
- Recreational use of gulches
- Speed and volume of traffic on neighborhood streets
- Speed and volume of traffic on US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard
- Support for project improvements; recognition of transportation problems at the interchange and along Wadsworth Boulevard



# How Will We Identify Improvements?

The scoping period ended on August 31, 2007. The project team is now beginning to develop design alternatives for the project area. The first step in this process is to establish criteria that can be used to evaluate potential alternatives. There are two levels of screening involved with the development of project alternatives. Level 1 (Fatal Flaw) screening helps the project team to identify fatal flaws and screen out alternatives that are not reasonable or feasible. Level 2 screening criteria will evaluate and compare the remaining alternatives against one another to determine the best option (also known as the preferred alternative).

At the next public meeting on Tuesday, February 12, 2008 the project team will discuss the alternatives development and evaluation process and present the results of our Level 1 (Fatal Flaw) screening. We will also solicit public feedback on both the screening criteria and the screening process to assess the following:

- ...did we consider the important issues?**
- ...did we consider a reasonable range of alternatives?**
- ...did we carry forward the appropriate alternatives?**
- ...did we miss anything?**

The Level 1 screening criteria are shown below. The Level 2 evaluation will be a quantitative comparison of the alternatives, for example, cost in dollars, intersection congestion levels, and the number of properties affected. Alternative elements will be measured and attributes of each alternative will be rated as “good,” “fair,” or “poor.” For more detailed information on the screening criteria, please visit the Alternatives page of the project website at [www.US6Wadsworth.com](http://www.US6Wadsworth.com).

## Draft Level 1 Screening Criteria

Criteria	Description
Safety/Design	Is the alternative feasible from an engineering perspective? Can this alternative accommodate safer bicycle and pedestrian travel? Does the alternative improve weaving/merge conditions?*
Mobility/Traffic Operations	Does the alternative decrease access conflicts?*** Can the alternative meet current and future traffic needs? Does the alternative address the interaction of the Wadsworth Boulevard interchange and the Carr/Garrison Street entrance/exit ramps?
Local Impacts	Does the alternative provide a means to access residences and businesses along the corridor?
Environmental impacts	Can environmental impacts be reasonably mitigated? Primary environmental impacts considered during Level 1 Screening include right-of-way, noise, water quality, and Section 4(f) (historic and recreational resources).
Cost Feasibility	Can the alternative be constructed within 150 percent of estimated costs? Estimated costs include the capital construction, and right-of-way acquisition.
Implementation	Is the alternative compatible with established local plans and visions? Is the alternative compatible with RTD West Corridor light rail plans?

\*Note: Weaving/merge areas are where traffic must cross paths within a limited distance to enter or exit the highway and merge with through traffic.

\*\*Note: Access conflicts include closely spaced intersections and numerous driveways.

# What Are the Next Steps?

The project team plans to identify a preferred alternative in the spring of 2008 and distribute the EA for public review in summer 2008. After considering the analysis and public comments on the EA, CDOT and FHWA plan to make a final decision regarding the preferred alternative at the end of 2008. The schedule of key milestones is illustrated in the chart below.

## Schedule of Key Milestones



The project team will complete the following steps in order to reach a decision on the project:

- Develop initial alternatives for design solutions (December 2007 to January 2008)
- Screen and evaluate the alternatives and solicit public feedback (February 2008 to April 2008)
- Select a preferred alternative, analyze its impacts, and identify mitigation measures in an EA (April 2008 to August 2008)
- Hold a Public Hearing on the EA and take public comments (August 2008)
- Make and document a final decision that may identify a construction project to address the issues in the study area (December 2008)

Please join us at our next public meeting on February 12, 2008 to provide input on the alternatives screening process. Specifically, we would like your feedback on the screening criteria presented in this newsletter - do you feel we considered the right issues in our screening criteria? At the meeting, we will also ask for input on the range of alternatives considered, and the screening results.

## How Can You Stay Connected?

Current project information is provided on the project website: [www.US6Wadsworth.com](http://www.US6Wadsworth.com). The project team has attended a number of neighborhood and business group meetings in the area. If you are interested in having a presentation at your group meeting, please call **Colleen Kirby Roberts – CH2M HILL Public Involvement Coordinator at 303-573-5385, extension 205**. We are happy to meet with your group, provide current information on the study, and answer any questions. You may also contact any of the following team members to discuss the study.

**Colleen Kirby Roberts – CH2M HILL Public Involvement Coordinator 303-573-5385, extension 205**

**Seyed Kalantar, PE – CDOT Project Manager 720-497-6955**

**Kirk Webb – CDOT Environmental Manager 303-757-9826**

**Tim Eversoll, PE – CH2M HILL Project Manager 720-286-5137**

**Mandy Whorton – CH2M HILL Environmental Manager 720-286-5239**

**Mindy Crane – CDOT Public/Media Relations Manager 303-757-9469**

## Project Numbers and Facts

- Nearly 190,000 vehicles travel through the project area daily.
- Traffic on Wadsworth Boulevard is projected to increase by 25 to 50 percent over the next 30 years.
- Traffic on US 6 at the Wadsworth Boulevard interchange is projected to increase by 25 to 50 percent over the next 30 years.

**Join us at the next US 6/Wadsworth public open house to discuss project alternatives:**

Tuesday, February 12, 2008, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Informational presentations at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

**Lakewood Cultural Center**

Community Room  
470 South Allison Parkway  
Lakewood, Colorado

Children's area available (unsupervised)

Please visit [www.US6Wadsworth.com](http://www.US6Wadsworth.com) for more information

**Acompañenos en la reunión pública de US 6/Wadsworth  
Para discutir las alternativas del proyecto:**

Martes, 12 de Febrero de 2008, 4:00 a 8:00 p.m.  
Presentaciones informativas sobre el proyecto serán  
proporcionadas a las 5:00 y a las 7:00 p.m.

**Centro Cultural de Lakewood**

Cuartos de la Comunidad  
470 South Allison Parkway  
Lakewood, Colorado

Área para el cuidado de los niños estará disponible (sin supervisión)  
Por favor visite [www.US6Wadsworth.com](http://www.US6Wadsworth.com) para más información.

