

CHAPTER 4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY CONSULTATION

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

The public involvement program for the C-470 Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) was designed to provide study updates and to encourage public input and participation in the planning and environmental process. The program targeted specific audiences within one mile north and south of C-470. Public involvement was part of an overall communications program that involved community relations, media relations, and agency coordination that continued throughout the study. These efforts included newsletters, direct mailings, open houses, small group meetings, a Web site, press releases, paid advertisements, contact phone numbers, email, and mailing addresses.

All public meetings were documented in meeting notes, which are included in the public record. Documentation included copies of newsletters, meeting notes, attendance sheets from small group meetings, presentation boards, written and verbal comments, attendance sheets from public open house meetings, Web site comment summaries, and newspaper articles featuring the study. These materials are available for review at the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 6 offices at 2000 South Holly, Denver, Colorado and CDOT Headquarters at 4201 East Arkansas Avenue, Denver, Colorado.

4.1.1 Newsletters

A contact database of nearly 22,000 businesses and households was maintained. The database included property owners, elected officials, media representatives, homeowners associations, civic groups, business owners, and people who requested to be included on the mailing list. This list was used to distribute four newsletters that were produced and distributed at milestones throughout the study. Newsletters were published upon completion of each stage in the screening

process in advance of public open house meetings. The newsletters provided study updates, summarized public comments, and invited recipients to upcoming open house meetings.

4.1.2 Web site

The study Web site (www.c470.info), launched in July 2003, was disseminated through study business cards and newsletters distributed at public meetings and through multiple news releases. The site was designed to provide access to study information, study schedule, frequently asked questions, meeting announcements, exhibits from open house meetings, and other related information. Visitors to the Web site can request the C-470 Corridor newsletter, future meeting notifications, and study information. Displays and handouts from each open house were posted to the Web site typically within two weeks after each meeting. From July 2003 to December 2005, the site had more than 100,000 visitors.

4.1.3 Media

To provide timely and accurate press and broadcast media coverage of the C-470 Corridor EA, calendar alerts, press releases, and media advisories were produced throughout the study when decision points were reached in advance of each public open house meeting. The study received media coverage in local news publications, including the *Denver Post*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *Highlands Ranch Herald*, *Voice*, and on local broadcast television. Paid advertisements were also printed in local newspapers to promote public interest and participation in the planning and environmental process.

4.1.4 Small Group Meetings

Small group meetings were held by request to provide a dialogue with the communities along C-470. These included business, civic, and homeowner association groups. Opportunities for small group meetings were encouraged

in study newsletters, on the Web site, and via direct mailings in August 2003 and August 2004. The 44 meetings held from August 2003 to December 2005 were attended by over 1,200 people. All small group meetings were documented in meeting notes, which are included in the public record for this study.

4.1.5 Open Houses

Four sets of public open house meetings, consisting of two to three meetings per set, were held between October 2003 and May 2005. These meetings were held at public venues near C-470 to provide opportunities for the public to learn about the study, ask questions, and provide comments and input. The informal setting of these open house meetings generally included technical information presented on 32-inch by 40-inch boards. This information was supplemented with electronic simulations on laptop computers and projection screens to illustrate specific aspects of the alternatives.

A separate set of meetings in August 2004 was devoted to the screening process for the Santa Fe Drive interchange. Another set included educational presentations on the Express Lanes Feasibility Study, held in May 2004. Two additional open house meetings were held in January and April 2005 in response to community questions regarding the differences between the two action alternatives. The total attendance for the 17 open houses and presentations was 743 people. The schedule of open house meetings is shown in **Table 4-1**.

Public involvement summary reports were prepared after each open house to document the information presented, advertising, media coverage, attendance, and comments received. These reports are included in the public record.

4.1.6 Environmental Justice Outreach Program

To provide meaningful public involvement opportunities for minority and low-income populations, communities containing these populations were identified during the study process. These communities were engaged in

additional small group meetings and presentations. As discussed in **Section 3.2.2**, no minority populations were identified, and the Wolhurst Community was determined to be the only distinct low-income population within the study area. A detailed analysis of minority and low-income populations along C-470, and the evaluation process with respect to the Executive Order on Environmental Justice, are documented in the *Environmental Justice Technical Report* (March 2005) developed for this study.

Before the first public open house meetings, a meeting was held with Wolhurst Community residents at their clubhouse in September 2003 to introduce them to the study and to obtain input. A sign-in sheet was distributed, and the names were added to the study database. While well-defined study alternatives had not yet been developed at the time of this meeting, questions and issues were documented. Residents were given study business cards and provided with comment cards for written concerns.

In August 2004, a focused effort was made to contact Wolhurst Community residents for the Santa Fe Drive interchange open house meetings. Meeting announcements were distributed door to door to the Wolhurst Community residences on August 17, in advance of the two meetings held on August 23 and 26.

In October 2004, during the quantitative level of alternative screening, a second meeting was held at the Wolhurst Community Clubhouse. The purpose of this meeting was to inform residents of the Santa Fe Drive interchange alternatives under consideration, to answer questions, and obtain input. A sign-in sheet was distributed and the names were entered into the study database. A presentation was made and handouts were distributed. Study business cards with contact numbers and Web site information were distributed. Comment cards were distributed to encourage written comments.

A focused effort was made to initiate a third meeting with Wolhurst Community residents

**Table 4-1
Public Open House Schedule**

Date/Time	Location	Attendance
October 7, 2003 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Lone Tree Golf Club House 9808 Sunningdale Boulevard, Lone Tree	45
October 8, 2003 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Ken Caryl Ranch House 7676 S. Continental Divide Road, Littleton	62
October 9, 2003 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	South Metro Chamber of Commerce 6840 S. University Boulevard, Centennial	40
February 23, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Ken Caryl Ranch House 7676 S. Continental Divide Road, Littleton	67
February 24, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Lone Tree Golf Club House 9808 Sunningdale Boulevard, Lone Tree	47
February 26, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Littleton Community Center 1950 W. Littleton Boulevard, Littleton	44
May 11, 2004 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.	Highlands Ranch Metro Districts Office 62 Plaza Drive, Highlands Ranch	24
May 12, 2004 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.	South Metro Chamber of Commerce 6840 S. University Boulevard, Centennial	15
May 13, 2004 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.	Jefferson County Courts and Administration Building 100 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden	9
June 29, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Ken Caryl Ranch House 7676 S. Continental Divide Road, Littleton	69
June 30, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Highlands Ranch Metro Districts Office 62 Plaza Drive, Highlands Ranch	78
August 23, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Highlands Ranch Metro Districts Office 62 Plaza Drive, Highlands Ranch	33
August 26, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Inn at Hudson Gardens 6115 S. Santa Fe Drive, Littleton	31
December 13, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Ken Caryl Ranch House 7676 S. Continental Divide Road, Littleton	34
December 15, 2004 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Highlands Ranch Metro Districts Office 62 Plaza Drive, Highlands Ranch	72
January 25, 2005 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Eastridge Community Center 9568 S. University Boulevard, Highlands Ranch	32
April 19, 2005 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.	Newton Middle School 4001 E. Arapahoe Road, Centennial	41
Total		743

in December 2004 in advance of the December open houses. The purpose of these meetings would have been to review alternatives recommended for detailed evaluation in the EA. The community declined this meeting offer. Transportation was then offered to the December 13 and 15 open house meetings. Only three residents requested transportation service and attended the December 13 meeting.

In January 2005, the Wolhurst Community requested a presentation at the February homeowner’s association meeting. Prior to this meeting, the Community organized a “CDOT Committee” to address residents’ concerns arising from highway projects affecting Wolhurst Community residents. This committee submitted specific questions about the potential effects resulting from the interchange concept under consideration for both action alternatives. A presentation was made on February 15, 2005 at the Wolhurst Clubhouse to address the Community’s questions. Residents were then given an opportunity to ask additional questions.

Meeting notes and all correspondence with the Wolhurst Community were documented.

4.1.7 Public Input

Since the study began in June 2003, the solicitation of public input has been ongoing. Comments have been collected through the variety of venues previously described. Specific comments were addressed by conducting additional technical analyses and/or providing more detailed information to stakeholders on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, specific project commitments are made in this EA. Major issues include:

- Pavement conditions on C-470
- Preservation and maintenance of the C-470 trail
- Grade-separated crossings for the C-470 trail at intersecting arterial streets

- Existing and future highway noise, and the need for noise walls
- Operations of a tolled facility (express lanes)
- Out-of-direction travel through neighborhoods resulting from access to express lanes at Colorado Boulevard
- Funding availability for constructing alternatives
- Schedule for study completion and constructing improvements
- Immediate need for capacity improvements
- Right-of-way issues
- Traffic diversion effects during construction
- Effects to arterial street traffic
- Transit alternatives
- Preservation of space for future light rail transit on C-470
- Protection of the natural environment around the South Platte River

4.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

Coordination was conducted with federal, state, and local agencies by phone, written correspondence, email, and at formal meetings to ensure agency input was considered in the shaping of the study. Records of this correspondence can be found in Appendix B. Agency working groups were developed early in the study to facilitate open communication with local jurisdictions and policy makers so that the screening process and environmental analysis were responsive to the concerns of agencies and local stakeholders. A regular meeting schedule was established for these working

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groups, which included a Project Management Team, Technical Working Group, and Executive Working Group. Coordination with federal and state resource agencies was also conducted to provide study updates and to solicit direction and approval on the screening process and specific resources including wetlands, threatened and endangered species, parkland, and historic resources. The levels of agency coordination are described in the following sections.

4.2.1 Project Management Team

The Project Management Team consisted of study personnel from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), CDOT, and the consultant team. Monthly meetings were scheduled to coordinate resources and facilitate decision making. This group was responsible for the day-to-day decisions through the screening process and environmental analysis. Meeting minutes and action items were prepared for each meeting.

4.2.2 Technical Working Group

The Technical Working Group met monthly throughout the study from May 2003 to November 2004. The group consisted of study personnel from FHWA; CDOT; the consultant team; staff from Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson counties; and staff from Littleton, Centennial, Greenwood Village, Highlands Ranch, Lakewood, and Lone Tree. This group reviewed study progress and ensured consistency with local transportation plans. Meeting minutes and action items were prepared for each meeting.

4.2.3 Executive Working Group

In addition to the regular members of the Project Management Team, this policy-level group consisted of elected officials from Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson counties; the cities of Littleton, Lone Tree, Highlands Ranch,

Golden, Morrison, Lakewood, Centennial, Greenwood Village; and representatives from the Regional Transportation District, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Transit Administration, Shea Homes, and the South Metro Chamber of Commerce. Members of the CDOT Transportation Commission also attended. Meetings were held quarterly, with five meetings held during the study to provide policy and decision makers an opportunity to ask questions and receive updated study information.

4.2.4 Resource Agency Meetings

Coordination activities with federal and state resource agencies included phone calls, emails, letters, and meetings to provide study information to these agencies, and to gain necessary acceptance through the planning and environmental process. The agencies consulted are shown here:

- Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- South Suburban Parks and Recreation District
- Colorado State Parks
- Chatfield State Park
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Natural Resource Conservation Service