



## How can I learn more about the U.S. 50 East Project?

### Contact Us

Phone: 1-866-GO50NOW or (866) 465-0669  
 Address: U.S. 50 Corridor East Project  
 5755 Mark Dabbling Blvd., Ste. 220  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80919  
 E-mail: [us50info@wilsonco.com](mailto:us50info@wilsonco.com)  
 Web site: [www.us50east.com](http://www.us50east.com)

### U.S. 50 Web site, [www.us50east.com](http://www.us50east.com)

This site includes information about the project, including a glossary of terms, frequently asked questions, summaries of previous meetings, and more.

### Speakers Bureau

Members of the project team are available to speak at your meeting or event, or even to a small group. You can request a speaker via phone, e-mail, U.S. mail, or the U.S. 50 Corridor East Web site.

# Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement Progress Report

Fall 2008



In the summer of 2007, we held public meetings in each community to share with you the improvements being considered for U.S. 50 (i.e., whether the four-lane divided highway will be located north or south of town) and their potential impacts. Since these meetings we've taken your comments into consideration as we prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project. The development of the DEIS is a complex and relatively long process. This newsletter is intended to provide you with an update of project activities, a brief explanation of what a DEIS is, what we've been doing to prepare it, and when you are going to get to see it.

### What is a DEIS and when will I be able to review it?

The National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to prepare environmental impact statements (EIS) for major actions that affect the quality of the human and natural environment. The draft EIS (DEIS) is a document that discloses all anticipated highway improvements and the impacts associated with them. The project team has been spending our time preparing this complex document for this 150-mile-long corridor.

### The DEIS will include:

- the project's purpose and need,
- the alternatives proposed,
- the impacts associated with those alternatives, and
- the proposed mitigation strategies for those impacts.

There are also various technical resource reports being prepared for the DEIS document that focus on specific resources such as historic, farmland, economics, etc. Once complete, the DEIS is made available for at least 45 days for public and agency review and comment. Following the release of the DEIS, one-day public hearings will be held in each of the county seats.



U.S. 50 Corridor East  
 5755 Mark Dabbling Blvd.  
 Suite 220  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80919-2200

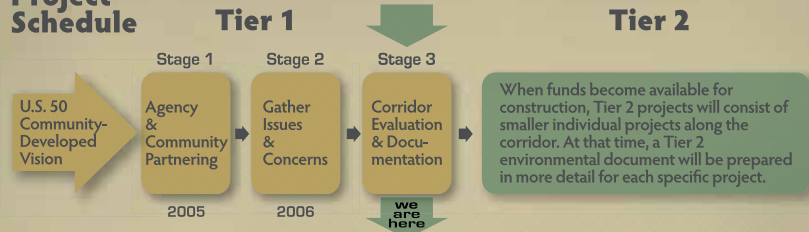
Partnering for Progress

Contact Us  
 E-mail: [us50info@wilsonco.com](mailto:us50info@wilsonco.com)  
 Web site: [www.us50east.com](http://www.us50east.com)  
 Toll free: 1-866-GO50NOW  
 (866-465-0669)



PPSRT STD  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 COLORADO SPRINGS CO  
 PERMIT NO 434

## Project Schedule



### How can I participate?

Sometime in early 2009, we will announce the availability of the DEIS document, schedule public hearings, and officially record your comments. Comments will be accepted during the hearings, through the Web site, or via U.S. mail during the 45-day formal review period. The DEIS will be made available for your review prior to the public hearings at the Pueblo, Otero, Bent, and Prowers county seats. Watch for the notice of availability in your local papers. In addition, reminders will be sent to those on the project mailing list. For more information, please check the Web site, [www.us50east.com](http://www.us50east.com), send us an e-mail, or give us a call.

we are here

#### Alternatives Development:

Planning of alternatives

#### Environmental Impacts Analysis:

Assessment of potential impacts associated with each alternative, including social, economic, and natural environmental impacts

#### Alternatives Screening:

Application of specific criteria to determine alternatives to be studied in greater detail in the Environmental Impact Statement

#### Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):

Preparation and release of the DEIS, which discloses all anticipated impacts associated with each alternative

#### Public Comment Period:

Agencies and the public comment on the DEIS

#### Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS):

The FEIS responds to public and agency comments on the DEIS

#### Record of Decision (ROD):

A concise decision document for an environmental impact statement that states the decision, other alternatives considered, and mitigation strategies adopted for the selected alternative or choice.

### What is the difference between a public hearing and the meetings we've held in the past?

We've held public meetings along the corridor during the EIS process. The basic difference between those meetings and the upcoming public hearing is in the formal commenting procedure. The comments you submit can either be submitted in writing during the 45-day review period or be voiced at one of the four public hearings. All comments will be officially documented.

### "Partnering for Progress"

During the development of the U.S. 50 Tier 1 EIS, the project team has worked with various federal, state, and local agencies to identify resources and share information. When we prepare the DEIS, we will incorporate the information we have obtained from these efforts.

## Technical Resources

As mentioned previously, there are many resources to consider when preparing the DEIS document. The project team is preparing 21 technical documents for various resources required for the DEIS document. Two major resources for this corridor include farmland and historic resources. Below is a summary of some of the work and findings for these resources.



### Prime and Unique Farmland

During the public and agency meetings held last July and August, the team was asked to provide more detail about the uses of the agricultural land to better understand the true economic implication of taking farmland for the various alternatives. To this end we secured the help of an agricultural economist from Colorado State University, who has been researching agricultural activities in the Lower Arkansas Valley with the Natural Resources Conservation Service for over 20 years.

The agricultural economist used historic data to group agricultural land into four categories by their highest and best use, including:

- vegetable production (including melons, onions, fruit, sod, and other non-grain crops)
- alfalfa/corn (including alfalfa, corn, and other grain crops)
- ranching/grazing (including all other non-urbanized land where ranching or grazing activities could occur)
- agricultural infrastructure (including feedlots and other agricultural infrastructure)

All of the agricultural land in the U.S. 50 project area was placed into one of these four categories. This data will be used to evaluate the potential impact of U.S. 50 alternatives on farmland resources. The team focused on the historic highest and best use of the land at a community level (i.e., not a field-by-field level).

### Historic Resources

Evidence of the Lower Arkansas Valley's rich and vibrant history can be seen throughout the corridor. From the blend of cultures over time to the history of agriculture in the area, historic resources abound. The project team identified potentially historic resources within the U.S. 50 project area (where alternatives are being considered), and we showed that information to you during public meetings in August 2007.

In addition to identifying specific resources, the team is also developing a Historic Context Overview. This document will explain how and why these types of resources were significant to the

development of the Lower Arkansas Valley, and in some cases, to the history of Colorado or to the United States.

The Historic Context Overview, developed in consultation with many of your neighbors, historic resource agencies, and with information from local, regional and national historic documents, will be available to the communities soon. The Historic Context Overview is not part of the DEIS document, so it will not be part of the comment process. Rather, it is intended to be a resource for local and regional historic preservation and heritage tourism efforts. It will also be used to assess potential impacts of future U.S. 50 improvement.