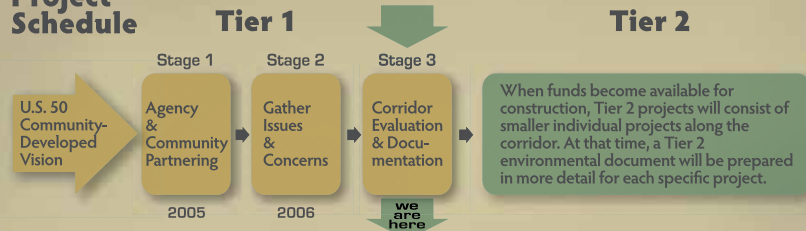


Project Schedule



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, 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.