

US 160 Grandview *INTERCHANGE*

Newsletter, Volume 1, May 2009

US 160 Interchange in Grandview

Planning for Highway Improvements: the Process

Purpose and Need: In 1996, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) began the planning and environmental process required to study, plan and implement improvements to the US 160 corridor between Durango and Bayfield. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluated alternatives, and identified a preferred alternative based on the purpose and need for improvements while balancing social and natural environmental factors. The EIS identified the need for three new interchanges through Grandview to meet future traffic volumes (in 20 years) and to maintain safety and mobility along the US 160 highway corridor.

Decision: In 2006, after a decade of study and extensive public involvement, the EIS Record of Decision (ROD) for US 160 improvements was completed and signed by the Federal Highway Administration. This ROD included the location for a new US 160/US 550 South interchange, which was to be constructed approximately one-half mile east of its current location at Farmington Hill.

Interchange Construction: Meeting Future Safety & Mobility Needs

Construction Began: In July 2008, the first phase of construction began. This \$34.4 million project includes a second westbound lane, four major bridge structures and some of the interchange ramps. This initial phase will be completed in the fall of 2010.



US 160 bridge construction in Grandview



US 160 is widened to four lanes (with construction of a second westbound lane)

Moving Forward Without US 550 South Connection: A fully functional US 160 interchange will be constructed without a US 550 connection—that connection may or may not be located here in the future, pending the outcome of a reevaluation (see below). The interchange will accommodate future projected traffic volumes, facilitate east-west travel and provide safe and direct access to current and future development north and south of US 160. The interchange will be constructed in three phases and is scheduled for completion by fall 2011. With phase I underway, phase II is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2009 and will include construction of an eastbound off-ramp and ramp work on the north side of the highway. Phase III will begin in 2011 and complete the interchange with bridge tie-ins and paving. (See Figure A)

The US 550 South Connection Reevaluation: Additional Environmental Processes

Need for More Study: When design work had begun on a US 550 South connection, plans were modified to avoid a gas well in the selected alignment. This alignment shift required a review of the environmental process. As a result of this review, in January of 2008, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), CDOT and FHWA determined that a portion of the Webb Ranch was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The US 550 South connection to US 160 selected in the ROD crosses this property.

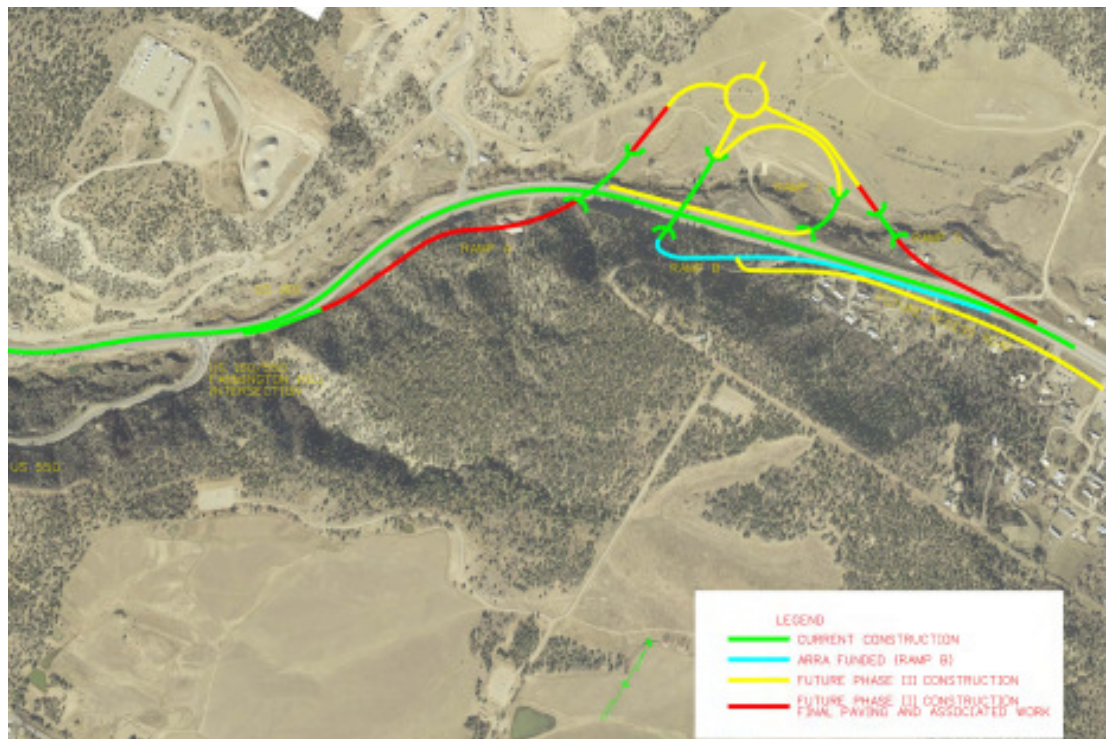
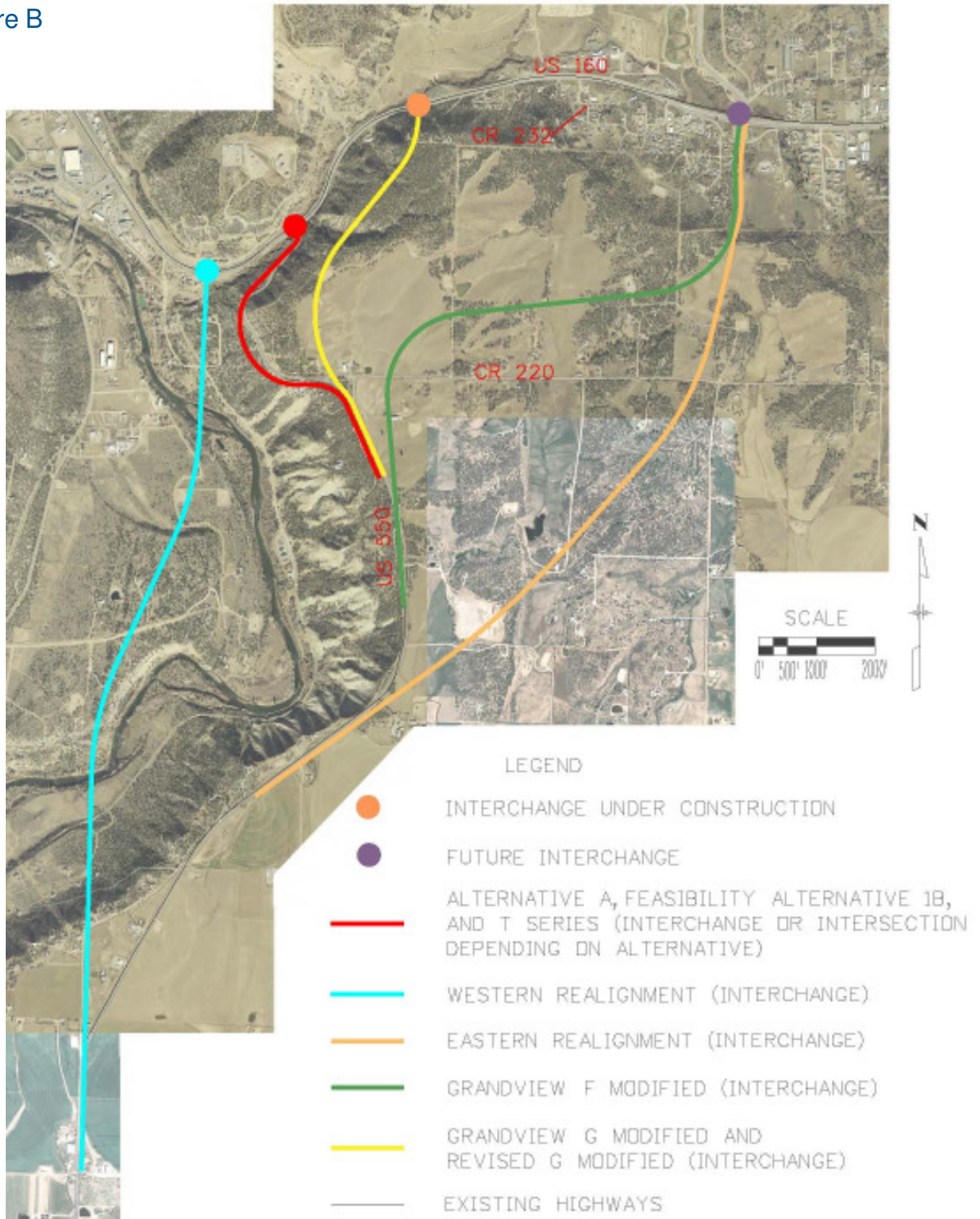


Figure A

Figure B



Next Steps: FHWA, with CDOT's assistance, will reevaluate alternatives for the US 550 South alignment and connection to US 160. *Figure B*, on the previous page, shows the preliminary alternatives being considered. The two agencies will complete several additional environmental processes, including a Section 106 analysis, under the National Historic Preservation Act, a Section 4(f) analysis under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, and a reevaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Environmental surveys are needed along the new alternatives under consideration. The future connection of US 550 South and US 160—whether it remains as selected in the ROD or is relocated—will be determined based on 1) purpose and need for corridor improvements, 2) avoidance or minimization of impacts to historic properties and other environmental resources and community impacts, and 3) cost. These processes are expected to take up to two years.

Contacting Us: For more information on the environmental processes for this project and next steps, please visit the CDOT website at <http://www.dot.state.co.us/us550at160/>. If you are unable to connect to the web site, or have other questions, please call (970) 385-1428.



Colorado Department of Transportation
Office of Planning & Environmental
3803 N. Main Ave., Ste. 300
Durango, CO 81301