



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CDOT IDENTIFIES THE *MIDLAND EXPRESSWAY* AS THE
RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE FOR US 24 WEST

Colorado Springs, CO – The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has identified the *Midland Expressway* as the recommended alternative for the US 24 West corridor between Manitou Avenue and I-25. The recommendation will be presented to the public at an open house on Wednesday, May 10, 2006. The event will be from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the West Center for Intergenerational Learning, 25 North 20th Street. CDOT is asking citizens to attend and review the alternative and provide their comments and opinions.

“The *Midland Expressway* emphasizes mobility for local trips and access to local neighborhoods and destinations,” said Dave Watt, CDOT project engineer on the US 24 West project. “It maintains the flavor of a Westside ‘Main Street’ with a 40-mile-per-hour speed limit, a raised median suitable for landscaping, and plenty of access to local destinations.”

In addition to the emphasis on mobility for local trips and access to neighborhoods and destinations, the *Midland Expressway* provides for regional travel to and from the mountains with through-lanes to maintain a quality of level of service beyond 2030. The alternative uses at-grade, signalized intersections for access at 26th Street, 31st Street, and Ridge Road. Interchanges would provide access to 8th Street, 21st Street and Manitou Avenue.

“Now that we have made an initial recommendation, we will conduct detailed environmental studies, and develop and discuss several design options before we have a Preferred Alternative,” Watt added. “This does not preempt the ideas and design options being developed by neighborhood groups and stakeholders. There is a lot of refinement and detailed environmental analysis that we still need to do.”

Several of the design options that need to be finalized include:

- Adding access between 8th Street and 21st Street
- Selecting the best type of interchange at 21st Street
- Shifting US 24 to the north or to the south near 21st Street
- Adding a pedestrian overpass between 25th and 31st Streets
- Considering the option of an overpass, rather than an intersection, at Ridge Road
- Adding a signal at Ridge Road and Colorado Avenue
- Considering improvements to the Manitou Avenue interchange
- Determining location of the Midland Trail extensions
- Improving access to existing businesses

The alternative is compatible with a bike/pedestrian trail system between Manitou Avenue and I-25 that is proposed by local governments, and includes north-south trail connections at the interchanges and intersections. A grade-separated bike and pedestrian bridge is proposed near 31st Street to connect the Red Rock Canyon Open Space to parking facilities, transit stops and other trails.

A transit service package is included in the expressway alternative, with express bus service for the commuter market and existing bus service or a future historic trolley for the local and tourist markets.

The *Midland Expressway* offers many opportunities for improved signage, aesthetic improvements and better side street access. For example, improvements to Colorado Avenue at 31st Street include longer turn lanes, and improvements along 21st Street at Bott Avenue and Broadway Avenue will provide access to existing and future businesses.

The U.S. 24 West project is an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the U.S. 24 Corridor from Manitou Springs to I-25. CDOT, on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), develops the plan and conducts the EA for the corridor with participation and assistance from other local, state and federal agencies and the general public.

An EA is a comprehensive study that evaluates potential effects, both positive and negative, of alternative actions under consideration. The EA will help agency officials decide which project alternative to approve based on the potential environmental consequences of each alternative developed.

For information on meetings leading up to this point, visit the project website at www.us24west.com. With comments or questions, call 719-477-4970.

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