

# US 550 Widening and Connection to US 160 Design/Build Project.

## PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

**Public Meeting on October 22, 2018: 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Durango Library, 1900 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Durango, CO**

### **1.0 Purpose of Meeting**

On October 22, 2018, the project team held an open house format public meeting to present information about the key project components of the upcoming Design/Build project and to solicit any comments or concerns the general public may have about the project.

All materials about the public meeting are included on the project website: [US550-160ConnectionSouth.COdot.gov](http://US550-160ConnectionSouth.COdot.gov)

<https://www.codot.gov/projects/us-550-us-160-Connection-design-build>

### **2.0 Summary of Events**

**5:30 to 7:00 P.M.:** Members of the general public arrived and signed in at the front desk. There were approximately 20 members of the general public who signed in. A handout was distributed to people as they signed in. This is included as **Attachment A**.

Attendees then reviewed the project boards and the maps on three different tables. Eleven CDOT representatives and four consultant staff were available at the boards and the roll plot to answer questions. The following boards were included (and are attached as **Attachment B**).

- Welcome
- Project partnerships and funding
- Project overview
- What is Design/Build
- Purpose for project
- Typical sections
- Environmental considerations
- Archaeological excavations
- Right-of-way
- Schedule

At a long table in the middle of the room, a roll plot was displayed that included the location of specific project elements such as retaining walls, bridges, wildlife underpasses and the stock overpass, frontage roads, and intersection improvements.

### **3.0 Verbal Comments or Questions Received (Q) with Responses (R)**

**Q:** US 550 definitely needs to be widened. I drive it a lot and people speed and create unsafe conditions.

**R:** One of the primary purposes of the project is to make it safer for motorists. We are flattening unsafe curves, widening from two to four lanes, adding wider shoulders and adding provisions to reduce the number of crashes associated with wild animals.

**Q:** How will this be funded?

**R:** There is a board at the meeting tonight with the details about the funding plan. Just under \$100 million has been secured from federal, state, local and tribal sources.

**Q:** What is the plan for the old road down Farmington Hill? Will it be turned into a bikepath? Left in place?

**R:** At this time, the plan is to remove the existing asphalt for the road and remove all of the traffic signal equipment at the actual intersection with US 160. CDOT will transfer title of the road to La Plata County for their purposes.

**Q:** I am glad to see the CR 220 intersection with US 550 will be improved. We drive it a lot and it is not safe.

**R:** The improvements that are being planned at that location include a frontage road intersection that consolidates access, minimizing conflict points along US 550. These enhancements will improve safety at that intersection.

**Q:** We own a hauling company and do not like roundabouts because they are difficult for trucks to negotiate. Is this new one designed to easily accommodate WB-67 trucks?

**R:** The new roundabout is designed to operate similar to the existing one north of US 160, which will safely accommodate WB-67 trucks. US 550 and US 160 are recognized as significant freight routes for the region.

**Q:** What are the posted speeds?

**R:** Posted speeds will be 65 mph along US 550. As it approaches CR 220, it drops to 55 mph and as it approaches the new roundabout, it drops to 35 mph.

**Q:** Why the differences between the median barrier versus an open median?

**R:** The median barrier (used north of CR 220) reduces the amount of excavation and impacts to existing property owners. In the open median section (south of CR 220) the amount of excavation is substantially reduced because the terrain is flatter - so the open median was a better choice.

**Q:** Why not fill in the gulches?

**R:** The gulches are important for movement of large mammals across and down to the Animas River and for accommodating natural drainage to the river. Large fills on top of the unique geology of the gulches would create significant long term settlement issues that would create long term pavement quality issues thus increasing maintenance requirements. In addition the large fills would extend close to US 160 creating a lasting visual impact.

**Q:** Will this result in more trucks?

**R:** There will be more trucks during construction but after the project opens, the number of trucks is anticipated to grow at a standard growth rate along with passenger cars.

**Q:** What is the purpose for the stock overpass on the Webb property?

**R:** The stock underpass originally planned for the Webb property was determined to cause more issues with excavated material. The overpass is a better fit with the natural terrain.

**Q:** What is happening on US 160 at the existing intersection?

**R:** The signal equipment will be removed, the islands removed, signage removed and all traffic directed to the new interchange to connect with US 550.

**Q:** Cars should be required to signal right when they are planning to leave a roundabout. That would cause fewer delays with cars just entering the roundabout.

**R:** Colorado law requires the use of turn signals and drivers are required to indicate lane changes (including when leaving a roundabout) with turn signals. Adequate enforcement could be a deterrent to inadequate signaling.

**Q:** Will large piles of dirt affect the viewshed on Florida Mesa?

**R:** The Contractor is responsible for finding the best use of excavated material.

**Q:** What will happen to the excavated material? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored?

**R:** The Contractor is responsible for finding the best use of excavated material.

**Q:** What will be the impact to deer and bear currently using the Florida Mesa? Will bears still be in the area?

**R:** Wildlife exclusion fencing and wildlife underpasses are included to guide wildlife (including deer and bear) across the newly aligned US 550 to the Animas River. The highway improvements will not result in displacement of wildlife from the area.

**Q:** Will the disturbed area be revegetated after construction and will erosion control be provided during construction?

**R:** Both revegetation of disturbed areas and erosion control during construction are a standard part of CDOT requirements of Contractors.

**Q:** What is Design-Build? Why are you using it over a low bid process?

**R:** Design-build is an innovative contracting technique that allows the owner (CDOT) to maximize the value of the project for a given budget through competitive technical and price proposals. CDOT has selected design-build over the low bid process to benefit from technical and cost competitive innovations of the proposers and to achieve the most for its budget.