

CHAPTER 6

Community Outreach and Agency Involvement

The I-70 East Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has followed an extensive community and agency involvement process since the project began in July 2003 as the I-70 East Corridor EIS. From the beginning, the overall goal of the community outreach and agency involvement program has been to solicit input through an open, dynamic process that includes as many of the residents, businesses, agencies, stakeholders, and community groups within the project area as possible. The process has been structured to involve people early and often, and share information as it has become available.

In June 2006, it was determined that the highway and transit elements of the I-70 East Corridor EIS would move forward as independent projects, as described in Chapter 1, Introduction. The innovative public involvement techniques used during the I-70 East Corridor EIS have continued as part of the I-70 East EIS.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used and procedures followed to engage the community and applicable agencies and solicit input throughout the development of the I-70 East EIS. In general, the community outreach and agency involvement program consisted of three broad elements: scoping, community outreach, and agency coordination.

6.1 SCOPING PROCESS AND RESULTS

Scoping is a formal coordination process used to gain input on the extent of the project and the major issues that need to be addressed. Scoping provides an opportunity for the community and government agencies to identify the range of concerns and possible solutions that need to be addressed in the EIS. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, scoping was initiated early in the combined transit/highway EIS process. All meetings and communication with affected agencies and the community were documented through meeting notes, contact reports, and an outreach database. Through scoping with the community, stakeholders, and numerous governmental agencies, issues were identified that helped define the project purpose and need. Objectives of the scoping process included:

- Inviting federal, tribal, state, and local governments, and other interested parties to participate in the identification of significant environmental, social, and economic issues.
- Identifying a range of reasonable alternatives to be evaluated.
- Determining the depth of analysis and significance of issues to be addressed in the Draft EIS (DEIS).
- Determining which issues and resources do not require detailed analysis.
- Identifying how the proposed project contributes to cumulative effects in the region.

The scoping process included agency scoping and public scoping, and each is described in the following sections.

6.1.1 Agency Scoping

The agency scoping process began in October 2003 under the combined study with the identification of prospective agencies that would guide and contribute to the project development process. The agencies included in scoping fall into the following categories:

- The lead federal agency is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which is responsible for ensuring that NEPA requirements are met.
- The applicant agency is the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) who initiates the project and is responsible for the identification and evaluation of alternatives.
- Cooperating agencies are those with a vested interest in the project for which the EIS is being prepared. These agencies may administer properties within the project boundary, have permitting authority, or have expertise in an affected element of the environment. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Regional Transportation District (RTD), and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment serve as cooperating agencies.
- Other agencies also have a vested interest in the project or effects associated with the project. These agencies may have planning and programming jurisdiction within the project boundary, or have expertise in an affected element of the environment. I-70 East EIS coordinating agencies include Adams County, Aurora, Commerce City, City and County of Denver (CCD), Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and the Public Utilities Commission.

To gather input and respond to individual agency issues, four scoping meetings were held with various agencies including resource agencies, CCD, and Denver International Airport (DIA). The agency issues included potential environmental and construction effects, mitigation measures, alternative development, design constraints, analysis methodologies, and reporting requirements. The meetings were held between October 2003 and February 2004. Correspondence with the various agencies is included in Appendix B, Agency Consultation. Additional information on the agency scoping meetings can be found in the *I-70 East Corridor EIS Scoping Report (2004)*.

6.1.2 Public Scoping

The public scoping process began with an analysis of the neighborhoods and businesses within the project area in an effort to develop a logical community outreach boundary. A comprehensive public scoping process was developed that ensured every neighborhood within the project area had ample opportunities to provide input to the study. Several techniques were used during the public scoping process conducted from July to December 2003, including door-to-door outreach to over 26,000 households, followed by 28 block meetings, 12 neighborhood meetings, eight business meetings, 12 stakeholder meetings, and two corridor-wide meetings. Total attendance at the public scoping meetings exceeded 1,000. Exhibit 6-1 shows the scoping outreach boundaries that were followed, as well as the current I-70 East EIS outreach boundaries and overall project area.

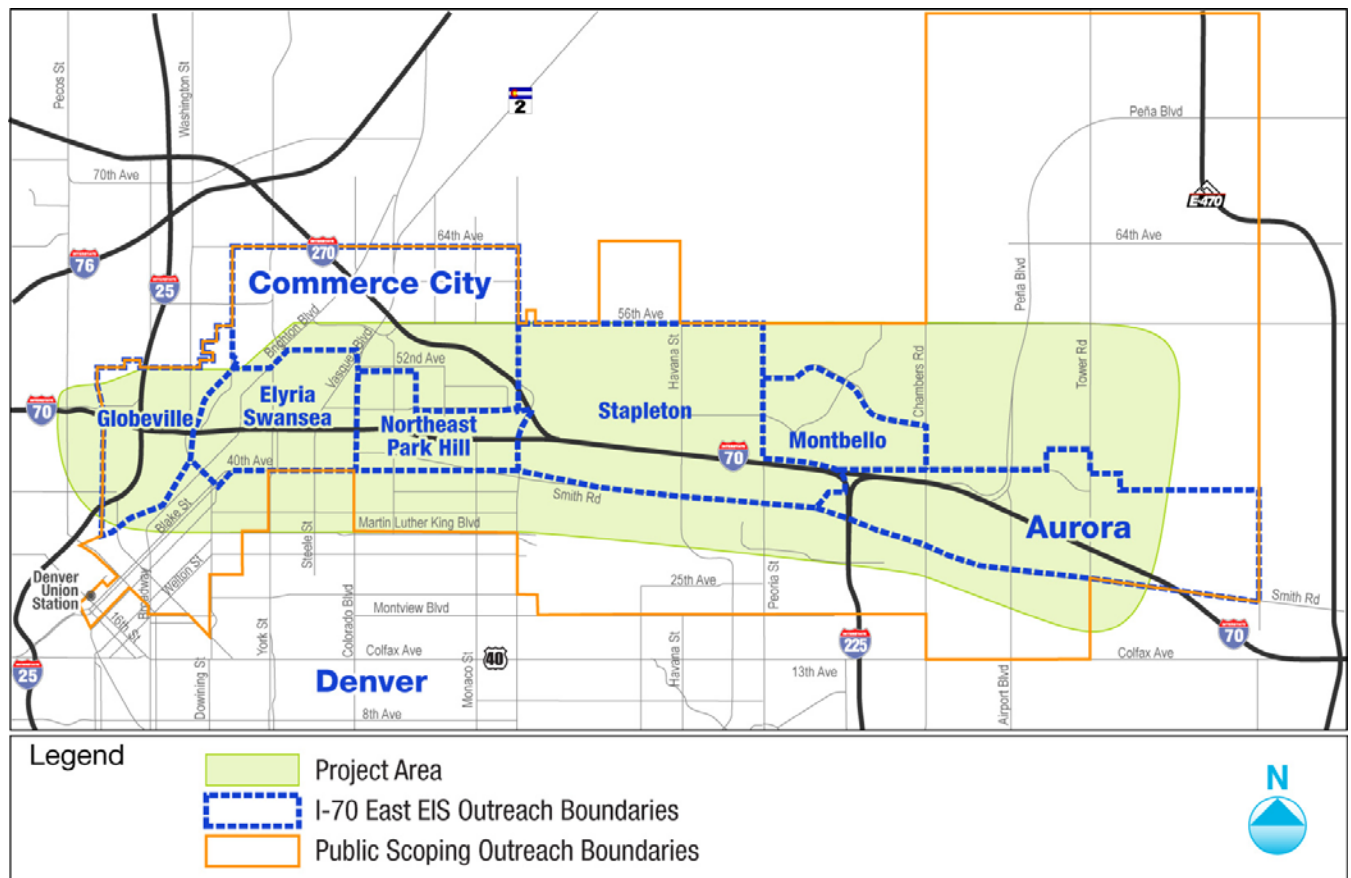
Issues identified by the public in the scoping process included health and safety, availability of funding for construction, toll roads, noise, congestion, bus routes, alternate routes, environmental justice, construction timing and impacts, interchanges, accommodating growth and local plans, and drainage on highways and existing bridges. Examples of how public input played a role in the development of the EIS include:

- The process by which mobile source air toxics are studied was modified to include analysis not typically conducted in an EIS as a response to community concerns.
- As requested by the public, a summary of the current health status of the communities and neighborhoods within and near the corridor is included in the EIS.

- A suggested alternative from the community was to realign the highway to avoid extensive residential effects that would result from a wider highway. This suggested alternative is evaluated in the EIS.

Additional information on the public scoping can be found in the *I-70 East Corridor EIS Scoping Report* (2004).

**Exhibit 6-1
Scoping/Outreach Boundaries**



6.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The goal of the community outreach effort was to develop a process that created an atmosphere of openness and trust with the public. Exhibit 6-2 shows a summary of community outreach activities. Each outreach activity was customized to address the individual characteristics of the neighborhood. Specific community outreach techniques were used to establish a level of trust in neighborhoods, beginning with developing an understanding of the community's culture.

6.2.1 Community Awareness

Prior to beginning the community outreach process, individual community leaders, stakeholders, advocates, and activists provided input that allowed the study team to gain a practical overview of neighborhood concerns and sensitivities. The input collected during public scoping meetings as well as during one-on-one conversations with project team members produced several recommended procedures

that served as the foundation of overall public involvement protocols, including:

- Providing food and child care at public meetings to make them more accessible.
- Placing meeting announcements in church bulletins and attending church for services to address their congregations.
- Providing a translator at all public meetings.
- Having the working group members define topics for the sessions (see Section 6.2.7).
- Providing a comment period at the beginning and end of every committee meeting.
- Adding three health experts to the Air Quality Compliance Committee (see Section 6.3.3).

Soliciting and incorporating these elements into the community outreach process showed that the project team was committed to providing the residents, businesses, and property owners access to information and opportunities for input.

6.2.2 Outreach Specialists and Training

To facilitate the initial phase of the community outreach process, individuals living within the community were hired to assist with outreach efforts including door-to-door outreach, block meetings, and neighborhood meetings. These individuals leveraged their existing relationships and community understanding to gain credibility and trust and engaged their neighbors to get involved in the project. All individuals were required to go through an extensive one day training program to better understand the project and their roles. This training was also required for any member of the project team involved in community outreach.

6.2.3 Door-to-Door Survey

A door-to-door survey was used in specific neighborhoods that were directly affected by the project. Outreach specialists used the survey to gather information from the residents as part of the scoping process. A standard dialogue was used to ensure that all of the outreach specialists were communicating the same message to the residents. Spanish-speaking outreach specialists were also made available. A neighborhood resources canvas bag was offered to every person that agreed to complete a survey. Surveys were collected at the end of each day and input into a database to track the results. The information was used to develop a summary of the transportation characteristics and issues disclosed by each neighborhood. Summary reports for each neighborhood were also developed.

6.2.4 Block Meetings

In neighborhoods where door-to-door outreach was conducted, block meetings were also held. The purpose of the meetings was to inform residents of the EIS process, introduce the project team, and provide an intimate setting to develop a better understanding of specific concerns in certain areas. Meetings began with a short presentation followed by an open forum to answer questions and solicit input. Translation services and meals were provided.



Residents attend one of many project block meetings

Exhibit 6-2 Community Outreach Activities



6.2.5 Neighborhood Meetings

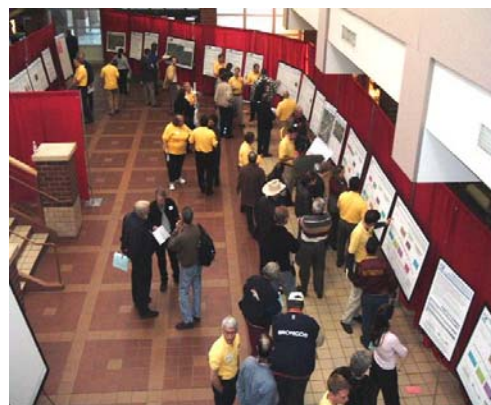
Following the block meetings, neighborhood meetings were conducted to focus on broader neighborhood issues. These meetings were held in all of the neighborhoods throughout the corridor and included short presentations and an open forum to allow the community to interact with the project team. Meeting materials were available in both English and Spanish. Summaries of the questionnaires and block meetings from within each neighborhood were discussed. Translation services, meals, and childcare were provided at each neighborhood meeting. Exhibit 6-3 shows the date, neighborhood, and number of attendees at each neighborhood meeting.

**Exhibit 6-3
Neighborhood Meetings**

Date	Neighborhood(s)	Number of Attendees
10/14/2003	Montbello/Parkfield/Gateway	36
10/24/2003	Five Points	56
10/28/2003	Clayton	27
10/29/2003	Cole	28
11/06/2003	Green Valley Ranch	42
11/12/2003	Globeville	29
11/17/2003	Lower Downtown (LoDo)	23
11/19/2003	Elyria and Swansea	49
11/20/2003	Northeast Park Hill	16
11/25/2003	Stapleton	50
12/02/2003	Commerce City	21
12/03/2003	Aurora	107
Total:		484

6.2.6 Corridor-wide Meetings

Following the neighborhood meetings, corridor-wide meetings were conducted to discuss all of the issues from the various neighborhoods and to provide a corridor-wide understanding of similarities and differences. Meeting notes were produced, including a summary of the questions that were asked. Each round of corridor-wide meetings provided two opportunities for the public to attend. The meetings were held back-to-back on a Wednesday and Thursday evening at strategic locations within the project area to make it as convenient as possible for the public to attend. Translation, meals, and child care were provided at each corridor-wide meeting.



Project team members answer questions at a corridor-wide meeting

The traditional audience-style format with informational boards, presentation, and question and answer period was used for the corridor-wide meetings during the scoping process. The format of subsequent community outreach meetings was modified by substituting the formal presentation and question and answer period with small, topic-specific discussion groups, moderated by technical consultants. Each

discussion group had a scribe who recorded comments and questions. Comments received during the open house were recorded and posted on comment boards to be reviewed by all participants. Overall summaries of the meetings were prepared and posted on the project website along with all of the meeting exhibits and handouts.

Issues identified in the corridor-wide meetings during scoping included funding options and availability, health and safety concerns, aesthetics, project schedule, design options, compatibility with other area transportation plans, and right of way impacts. The input obtained during corridor-wide meetings helped identify the needs of highway travelers, business owners, and residents living near the highway, and played an important role in the development and screening of alternatives, such as the elimination of double-decking the highway due to strong community opposition.

Exhibit 6-4 provides a list of the corridor-wide meeting dates, locations, topics, and number of attendees.

**Exhibit 6-4
Corridor-wide Meetings**

Date	Location	Topic	Number of Attendees
12/10/2003	Now Faith Christian Church	Scoping: Project overview and what we've heard	73
12/11/2003	Bruce Randolph Middle School		158
02/18/2004	Sable Elementary School	Scoping: Screening process and alternatives to be evaluated	26
02/19/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		58
05/12/2004	Montbello Recreation Center	Alternatives eliminated in pre-screening and comparative screening	60
05/13/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		101
09/29/2004	Montbello Recreation Center	Detailed screening alternatives and screening information	68
09/30/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		166
02/23/2005	Montbello Recreation Center	DEIS alternatives and alternatives removed after detailed screening	74
02/24/2005	Bruce Randolph Middle School		162
10/12/2005	Montbello Recreation Center	DEIS alternatives and initial DEIS evaluation results	56
10/13/2005	Bruce Randolph Middle School		140
05/17/2006	Montbello Recreation Center	Upcoming decisions and additional screening	58
05/18/2006	Swansea Recreation Center		128
Total:			1,328

6.2.7 Working Groups

After the scoping phase, six working groups were established to provide an opportunity for residents, businesses, stakeholders, and property owners to continue their participation and learn more about how the scientists, engineers, and planners would evaluate specific resources. Working groups were comprised of members of the community that expressed interest in joining the groups at neighborhood and corridor-wide meetings or signed up on the project website.

The working groups were used to solicit input, establish dialogue about specific issues, and educate the members about the resources that would be considered in the EIS. Innovative exercises were incorporated into the meetings, such as monitors on local streets to get readings on traffic noise, puzzles

that helped participants gain an understanding of alternative packaging, and an exercise designed to help participants understand how the various alternatives would be screened by comparing the process to buying a car. Issues from each working group were then communicated back to the Project Management Committee (PMC) (see Section 6.3.2) and compliance committees to be resolved. Exhibit 6-5 shows the working groups that were formed and dates of working group meetings.

**Exhibit 6-5
Working Groups**

Working Group*	Number of Members	Date(s) of Meetings
Alternate Routes	6	4/20/2004
Bicycle/Pedestrian/Open Space	39	6/16/2005
Community Impacts	138	2/12/2004, 3/18/2004, 4/15/2004, 5/20/2004, 6/17/2004, 7/15/2004, 8/19/2004, 9/16/2004, 10/21/2004, 12/09/2004, 1/20/2005, 2/17/2005
Economic Development	35	8/2/2005
Interchanges	31	4/1/2004, 5/6/2004, 6/3/2004, 9/14/2004
Trucking/Motor Carriers	13	3/12/2005

*Shown above are working groups applicable to the I-70 East EIS.

6.2.8 Community Outreach Process Forum

Representatives from local jurisdictions, as well as business owners and members of the public, attended the Community Outreach Process Forum on March 31, 2004. The purpose of the forum was to solicit insights and suggestions on how to improve the community outreach process. As a result of the forum, the study team began posting working group minutes on the project website.

6.2.9 Topic-specific Neighborhood Meetings

During the development of alternatives and analysis of impacts, additional neighborhood meetings were conducted to focus on issues that affected sub-areas of the overall project area. Exhibit 6-6 shows the date, neighborhood, topic, and number of attendees at each topic-specific neighborhood meeting.

**Exhibit 6-6
Topic-specific Neighborhood Meetings**

Date	Neighborhood(s)	Topic	Number of Attendees
11/30/2004	Globeville, Elyria and Swansea	No-action alternative and highway alternatives	74
3/21/2006	Commerce City	Highway alternatives	55
Total:			129

6.2.10 Stakeholder Meetings

Individual meetings were conducted with elected officials and established community groups throughout the development of the DEIS. The meetings were used to answer questions, solicit input, provide information about the EIS process and the need for meaningful involvement, establish a dialogue with individuals and groups who live and work in specific neighborhoods, obtain input on the outreach methodology, and solicit their support early to help lend credibility to the process. Prior to major project decisions, the project team met with elected officials to brief them on project recommendations.

In addition to formal neighborhood leaders, the project provided outreach to church congregations in the project area to inform them about the outreach process and upcoming meetings.

Project team members also visited community organizations during their regular meetings to provide an update on the project, answer questions, solicit input, and inform the participants of upcoming meetings for the project. Stakeholder meetings were also held by request and typically included property or business owners, business or homeowners associations, special interest groups, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, police/fire personnel, and others as appropriate. As part of the outreach process, members of the project team participated with or made presentations to these stakeholder groups at various meetings.

6.2.11 Additional Communication

Other forms of communication were used to provide information to the public about either upcoming meetings or to provide new information.

Flyers and Posters

Flyers were distributed prior to all door-to-door visits and community meetings. The flyers were typically distributed within one or two days of meetings and provided meeting specifics in both English and Spanish. Posters advertising public meetings were placed throughout the corridor to invite those not reachable through existing community groups, the project's mailing list, or e-mail distribution list. Posters were placed in libraries, community centers, businesses, recreation centers, barbershops, beauty salons, and neighborhood economic centers.

Newsletters

Newsletters provided status updates and information throughout the project and were one of the primary sources for meeting notification. Newsletters were mailed to property owners, businesses, interested parties, and those who requested being contacted via mail. The mailing list contained over 13,600 addresses. Newsletters were also flyered to all corridor residents. Newsletters were published in English and Spanish and included contact information for the project team and a section on how to stay involved. The newsletter, like the rest of the project information, could also be found on the project website. A total of six newsletters were produced and distributed between February 2004 and March 2008.

Advertising and Media Outreach

Advertisements were placed in the weekly newspapers, Denver daily newspapers, and other relevant and local publications to announce corridor-wide meetings. All of the advertisements were published in both English and Spanish newspapers, including *Commerce City Beacon*, *Denver Post*, *Denver Weekly News*, *El Hispano*, *El Seminario*, *Greater Park Hill News*, *La Voz*, *North Denver Tribune*, *Rocky Mountain News*, and *Urban Spectrum*.

In addition to paid advertisements, the project team received significant coverage in both local and regional media through media outreach. The outreach included press releases distributed before every corridor-wide meeting, as well as briefings with local reporters.

E-mail and Telephone Notification

Members of the public who had specified that they wanted to be informed of project activities through e-mail were sent regular information. The notifications covered new information on the website, upcoming public meetings, and any other pertinent information. The e-mail notification database contained 300 addresses. People who preferred to be notified of public meetings through telephone communications were called within one week of corridor-wide meetings or working groups. The telephone notification database contained 68 phone numbers.

Project Website

An external project website (initially www.i-70eastcorridor.com, now www.i-70east.com) was developed to disseminate information and provide a schedule of events. The site offered English and Spanish options and included features such as an on-line feedback form, an automatic e-mail distribution for when new information was posted, technical documents, meeting materials, and summaries. The website was updated every time new information was available to share with the public, such as meeting announcements and the availability of meeting materials. The website received over 3,300 unique visits since it became www.i-70east.com in 2007.

Project Office

At the initiation of the I-70 East Corridor EIS, the project team established a project office within the corridor. Managers and key project staff from RTD, CDOT, and the consultant team were co-located in this office and day-to-day project management activities were conducted from there. After the separation of the two projects, the office remained available for many of the working group and compliance committee meetings, and allowed the public to drop-in and meet with CDOT staff during regular business hours.

6.3 AGENCY COORDINATION

The I-70 East EIS committee structure provided a framework for involvement by interested federal, state, and local agencies. The specific roles and responsibilities, membership, and meeting logistics are described in the following sections.

6.3.1 Executive Oversight Committee

The Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) was formed to provide guidance, insight, and input to the project team throughout the study. Major policy-related recommendations and general updates were presented to the EOC. The EOC served as a decision-making group for major policy-related decisions.

During the I-70 East Corridor EIS, the EOC was comprised of executive management from CDOT, RTD, FHWA, FTA, and CCD. As the I-70 East EIS continued the EOC was restructured to include CDOT, FHWA, and CCD.

6.3.2 Project Management Committee

The primary role of the PMC was to provide direction to the project team and make recommendations to the EOC. The PMC reviewed all major deliverables, decided on recommendations from the compliance committees, and provided decisions for overall project direction with EOC oversight.

The PMC provided project oversight and had representatives from the federal, state, and local agencies sponsoring the project. During the I-70 East Corridor EIS, the PMC was comprised of managers from CDOT, FHWA, RTD, FTA, and CCD. Once the projects separated in June 2006, the PMC for the I-70 East EIS included CDOT, FHWA, and CCD. Coordination with other agencies was conducted through individual meetings.

6.3.3 Compliance Committees

Various compliance committees were formed to provide general guidance and ensure adherence to the various federal, state, and local directives, regulations, policies, and procedures. Membership included agency staff with expertise and knowledge in the respective committee area. Committee members were tasked with providing technical guidance and support with respect to the members' respective agencies, regulations, and areas of expertise or compliance category (i.e., air quality, environmental justice, etc.). Compliance committee meetings were open to the public and a public comment period was provided at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee

The Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee (ICCC) provided technical guidance and support with respect to the members' respective agencies, regulations, and areas of expertise. The ICCC consisted of staff from various agencies in the project area and provided an opportunity for staff to understand and work toward balancing the sometimes conflicting needs and desires from a corridor-wide perspective. The ICCC reviewed the Project Management and Public Involvement Plans, reviewed the study process relative to respective agency policies, reviewed and provided insights on alternative analysis, provided project updates to respective senior management and peers, and evaluated analysis and recommendations of the various working groups that did not have corresponding compliance committees. The ICCC was comprised of representatives from Adams County, Aurora, CDOT, Commerce City, CCD, DIA, DRCOG, EPA, Federal Aviation Administration, FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration, FTA, the Public Utilities Commission, and RTD. Exhibit 6-7 highlights the dates when ICCC meetings were held.

Exhibit 6-7
Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee Meeting Dates

ICCC Meeting Dates		
January 14, 2004	June 7, 2004	February 15, 2005
February 17, 2004	June 15, 2004	June 22, 2005
March 16, 2004	July 20, 2004	August 19, 2005
April 20, 2004	September 14, 2004	October 11, 2005
May 25, 2004	November 2, 2004	May 9, 2006
November 2008 (TBD)		

Environmental Justice Compliance Committee

The Environmental Justice Compliance Committee (EJCC) provided technical input into environmental justice analysis. The EJCC was comprised of regulatory agency experts supported by consultant team experts both locally and nationally to provide a broad perspective. The EJCC identified major issues for analysis and ensured compliance with NEPA and federal directives. Exhibit 6-8 lists EJCC committee members and Exhibit 6-9 highlights the dates when EJCC meetings were held.

**Exhibit 6-8
Environmental Justice Compliance Committee Members**

Agency	Committee Members*
CDOT	Jim Paulmeno, Michelle Rabouin
CCD	Gene Hook, Steve Gordon
DRCOG	Jannell Shaw
EPA	Tami-Thomas Burton
FHWA	Chris Horn, Joe Duran
FTA	Rebecca Tanrath

**Consultant team expertise provided by PBS&J, Neighborhood Solutions, and SAIC.*

**Exhibit 6-9
Environmental Justice Compliance Committee Meeting Dates**

EJCC Meeting Dates		
February 13, 2004	November 9, 2004	September 17, 2004
March 19, 2004	May 14, 2004	March 3, 2005
April 16, 2004	June 18, 2004	

Air Quality Compliance Committee

The Air Quality Compliance Committee (AQCC) provided technical input into the air quality analysis. The intent of the committee was to provide experts in air quality analysis and a strong understanding of the federal and state processes to provide guidance and oversight. The AQCC was comprised of a combination of consultant and regulatory agency experts both locally and nationally to provide a broad perspective. Based on requests from the community, three health experts were added to the AQCC. The AQCC played a key role in determining the methodology for air quality analysis, provided relevant information about other air quality studies in the area, and ensured compliance with NEPA and federal directives. Exhibit 6-10 lists the AQCC committee members, and Exhibit 6-11 highlights the dates when AQCC meetings were held.

**Exhibit 6-10
Air Quality Compliance Committee Members**

Agency/Company	Committee Members*
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	Jim Dileo, Lisa Silva-Derou
CCD	Gregg Thomas
DIA	Janell Barrilleaux, Janet Kieler
EPA	Deborah Lebow, Suzanne Wuerthele
National Jewish Medical Research Center	Lee Newman

**Consultant team expertise provided by PBS&J, Asoian and Associates, and SAIC.*

**Exhibit 6-11
Air Quality Compliance Committee Meeting Dates**

AQCC Meeting Dates		
April 15, 2004	November 10, 2004	May 10, 2005
June 11, 2004	February 14, 2005	
September 23, 2004	March 15, 2005	

6.3.4 Intergovernmental Forum

The Intergovernmental Forum (IF) provided guidance, input, and advice on policy issues relative to their respective agencies. The IF also provided an opportunity for local elected officials to understand other agency issues and the need to balance conflicting needs from a corridor-wide perspective. The IF provided input into the public outreach efforts, reviewed the study process relative to respective agency policies and precedence, provided insights on alternative analysis, and provided project updates to respective councils, boards, and commissions. A total of eight IF meetings were held. The IF was comprised of elected and appointed officials from the following entities:

- Adams County
- CDOT
- Aurora
- Commerce City
- Congressman Ed Perlmutter's Office
- Congresswoman Diana DeGette's Office
- Denver Mayor's Office and City Council
- RTD
- Senator Ken Salazar's Office
- Senator Wayne Allard's Office

6.3.5 Ongoing Resource Agency Coordination

Coordination activities with federal and state resource agencies included phone calls, emails, letters, and meetings to provide study information to these agencies and to gain necessary acceptance through the planning and environmental process. The agencies consulted include:

- Colorado Historical Society
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- FTA
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
- State Historic Preservation Office
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Army Reserve Center
- EPA
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Appendix B, Agency Coordination, contains correspondence with the various resource agencies.