PUBLIC HEARING

November 19, 2014

IN THE MATTER OF STATE HIGHWAY 82/GRAND AVENUE BRIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.

Presenters:

Joe Elsen
Craig Gaskill

Facilitator:

Pat Noyes

The above-entitled matter came on for public hearing on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at 5 PM at 915 School Street, Glenwood Springs, Colorado, before Martha Loomis, Certified Shorthand Reporter and Colorado Notary Public, 5418 South Foresthill Street, Littleton, Colorado 80120. 720.530.0474 samloomis@earthlink.net.

(Individual Comments Portion.)

MS. ROMEO: Okay. I would like to see the existing bridge turned into a two-lane bridge, and the outer lanes turned into a pedestrian crossing. That way, there's no need for a new pedestrian bridge. And cars can go straight over to the pool, the Hotel Colorado, and those areas of town.

If necessary, that bridge can be reinforced and raised up, either with trusses or new pilings. I know people that do that kind of work, and they thought my idea was a good one.

My nephew's an engineer. He lives in Pennsylvania. I had him go on line and look at it. He said, Absolutely they can do that. It would maintain the town, you know, as it's been for so many years.

Did you put the part in about reinforcing the current bridge if necessary, and even jacking it up if necessary? Even if they had to bring barges in to do that they can do that, and they might want to do that before starting the new bridge.

I like the bridge the way it is. It adds charm to our town. It's part of our history. And I don't see any reason to destroy something as charming as that bridge.

ANONYMOUS: They should be building instead of talking. Talk, talk, talk, talk. Get finally finished by now.

MR. HAINES: The Highway Department told us to replace the bridge or to repair the old one would be about the same amount of money, which is about $50-, $60 million.

As far as I can tell, the replacement cost is still the same bridge today is at 110-, 120 million, and they still don't have any access to the highway east or west that's not paid for. That, we're looking at another 10- or 15 million.

When you look at those kinds of dollars to be spent in this community it doesn't make any sense, because what they could do is look for another route for Highway 82 to get the traffic that doesn't want to be in Glenwood Springs off Grand Avenue so it could go up Valley or come down Valley.

Citizens of Glenwood Springs asked the city council to send out a vote or a ballot to see what the citizens thought. City council said, Oh, no. We don't need to do that. We already know.

So the committee that I'm a member of, Citizens to Save Grand Avenue, we spent $2,400 of our money to send out about 4,200 ballots to people who have physical addresses in Glenwood Springs. We didn't send any to box numbers because most or some box numbers are people who don't live in Glenwood Springs.

Out of those 4,200 ballots we sent out we got 700 back. And 600 people said, Tell the city and CDOT to stop construction right now and look at the future and see what

they can do to solve the traffic problems.

The other thing that goes along with this, CDOT has these future timelines and future projects like 2030, 2035, 2040. And what do you suppose is on the 2040 timeline? A bypass for Glenwood Springs.

So they're going to spend $130 million now to put a bridge in that may have no reasonable effect or add anything to what they're going to do in 2040. How stupid. These people are just like the people in Washington. They have no common sense and no brains.

So we would like to see everybody stop doing what they are right now, do what they call an EIS, which is an environmental impact statement, which takes into account all the aspects of what this bridge will do.

The City wants to put a bridge in south of town they call South Bridge. They also want to put a connection, a cross street at Eighth Street at Scotts Valley and another cross street at 14th Street to add connectivity. And that all also fits into this bridge, but nobody's looking at that and they need to look at that because that's part of what NEPA says: Any place state highway connects to a federal highway, they are required to do an environment impact study. And these people are not doing that.

They also say our bridge is dysfunctional because it's too narrow. When it was built in 1953 it had two lanes

on it. CDOT are the people who made it four lanes. They're the ones who made it dysfunctional. If this were still two lanes it wouldn't carry near as much traffic, but it would be a very functional bridge.

So why not look for an opportunity to put a bridge someplace else, put this back to a two-lane bridge, put a 20- or 30,000 pound load limit on it, just let local traffic use it. Keep all the trucks off it.

Then you could sit downtown and have coffee, have a meal outside. Today when you try to do that in the summer you can't talk to a person three feet away from you because you can't hear them there's so much traffic there. This way would be a way to get them off Grand Avenue.

If they put this bridge in, they're going to have 11-foot lanes in it, and the traffic is going to come off I-70 at 65 miles an hour so they'll need to slow up a little.

And eventually when it starts backing up, CDOT's going to have a problem with, What do we do with all the traffic that's backed up on I-70? The only thing they can do is raise the speed limit.

There's a law in the state of Colorado that if they do a traffic monitor, and they have a 25-miles-an-hour speed limit and traffic is traveling at 30, 35, 40 miles an hour, they can raise the speed limit to 30, 35 miles an hour and that's just exactly what they'll do. They say no, but you

just watch because they can't have traffic backed up on I-70.
The other comment that I would like to make, they talk about public involvement. The public involvement is just like this. They come, they look. CDOT tells them what they're going to do.
There has been no open dialogue between upper CDOT management and the citizens of Glenwood Springs. One night we tried to have that. They had it at the community center. We still had people waiting to talk. At 9:30, quarter to 10:00 the community center closed, everybody went home. No dialogue. Absolutely atrocious.
They cut down on the people that came to be able to express their opinion and talk to the people from CDOT. When you also look at how CDOT's done this, we have a couple of people from CDOT that live here, Joe Elsen, Roland Wagner. The rest of CDOT's, Don Hunt's in Summit County. Dave and Doug live in Grand Junction so they don't live here. They don't see what happens. They're just trying to shove this down our throat.
And it doesn't feel good to the people of Glenwood Springs. It doesn't work well, it doesn't sit well with the people from Glenwood Springs. And I looked at this and say in the future I don't think these people have a clue of what they're doing.
The reason I say that, if you look at Glenwood

Canyon, when they built it they used all asphalt. Today they're tearing it up to put concrete down. And what a huge expense to both all taxpayers and the State of Colorado.
The other thing you can look at and laugh, when you look at our ski areas, Vail, Beaver Creek, Copper Mountain, Keystone, Breckenridge, A Basin, when they put I-70 through in the 1960s did they think these ski areas weren't going to grow?
They could've put three-lane tunnels in Idaho Springs so cheaply then compared to today it'd have been simple.
Three lanes is not going to fix this program. They need four-lane tunnels at least. It will be all backed up here again shortly. Then we're going to spend more money and more money.
It's like CDOT is solving yesterday's and today's problems today. They're not looking into the future. When you look at all those things that they could do to do a better job, and they're so narrow-sighted with this to spend $130 million I think is absolutely absurd.
When I look at the local people, and look at what they're trying to do, I think they're just absolutely stupid just like the people in Washington DC. When you look at the people in Washington DC they have no clue what's going on in their home states.

All you have to do is ask them how much a postage stamp is they have no clue, or how much a gallon of gasoline costs they have no clue.
I think the people that work for our highway department are very much the same way. When you look at what they did in Denver on US 36, put this whole financial agreement together with an Australian company with no public input, the public is outraged. And they won't do that program again I'll guarantee you.
And now they also are trying to look at putting I-70 underground between I-25 and Colorado Boulevard. And the people that live there say, We're happy the way it is. We don't need to have that done.
So you say is that getting shoved down their throat again because we have people that are trying to do something other people don't want?
Another comment I'll make is that the city of Glenwood Springs, Garfield County, projects that CDOT was involved with, over the years have done what they call a corridor optimization plan.
Well, one that they did I think it was like 1979 called the Centennial plan, the result of that was there needs to be another route through town. They just did another one a couple of years ago, a corridor optimization thing, and came up with the same conclusion: Another route through the city

of Glenwood Springs to get the traffic off of Grand Avenue, to get the traffic out of Glenwood easier and not cause as much congestion.
So this is something that appears that they haven't looked very closely at because there's nothing been done with it so far. They talk about into the future maybe we'll look at doing something. Why not do it today and solve the future's problem now?
The final comment is, if I didn't care about this, I wouldn't be here.
There you have it.
(Presentation Portion.)
MS. NOYES: All right, if everybody can get comfortable, we have a bit of a presentation for you to summarize the project. And then we will hold the actual formal public hearing for the Environmental Assessment.
So the Grand Avenue Bridge Project EA is the purpose of tonight's public hearing. And to present for you to start we have Joe Elsen, who's the CDOT program engineer, and Craig Gaskill, who is the consultant project manager, project manager for the consulting team.
I am Pat Noyes, and I will be facilitating the public hearing portion of this. And so I will give you a little bit more of a rundown on how we're going to proceed through the hearing after the presentation.

If you would like to speak and provide some comments tonight, there is a sign-up sheet. Teri would be happy to take your name and information where to sign in. And we will be working from that list for the comments.

At this point we have over 20 people signed up to speak. We're limiting it to three minutes. So do the math; that's a little over an hour. So we will be very strict about how long everybody gets to speak so that you all have a chance to give us your input.

So with that, I will let Joe and Craig start off by giving a presentation on the project as a whole.

MR. ELSEN: Thank you, Pat. Pleasure to be here with you tonight. Welcome.

So again we're going to present information on the EA, and take your public comments, which are very important to this whole process. We've been doing this for over three years now. There's been multiple public open houses and one-on-ones and working group sessions. And we really value your input.

I'm going to read the Purpose and Need. I think it's really important to this project to make certain you understand what it's about. It's funded primarily with Colorado Bridge Enterprise funding, which is narrowly focused on bridge rehabilitation or bridge replacement so it's not about congestion or mobility issues.

The project purpose is to provide a safe, secure, effective multimodal connection from downtown Glenwood Springs, across the Colorado River and I-70 to the historic Glenwood Hot Springs area.

Two project needs: to improve multimodal connectivity between downtown Glenwood Springs and the Roaring Fork valley, the historic Glenwood Hot Springs pool area, and I-70. The other project need is to address the functional and structural deficiencies of the bridge.

Here's a graphical image of some of the functional and structural issues that exist. You can see the semi tractor-trailer taking up two lanes. It was originally -- this bridge was constructed over 60 years ago as a two-lane structure, and then converted in a late '60s to a four-lane structure. The lanes are substandard; they're about nine foot four and a half inches instead of a standard 12-foot lane.

You can see some of the images of the spalling concrete and the exposed corroding reinforcement steel as well as the warning sign that is posted below the bridge to warn against chunks of concrete and steel have fallen off the bridge.

One other structural challenge of the project is the issue of bridge scour, which is really just erosion due to the dynamic forces of the water of the Colorado River. Everyone

understands its power.

The foundations that are out there, they're not deep foundations; they're just a flat bottom to the footing. The one that's in the center of the river is about five and a half feet below the bottom of the river.

We have reports from some divers back in the early '90s, as part of the effort to replace this bridge a couple of decades ago, they have encountered scour holes that have gone down below the bottom of the footing.

I'm going to hand it over to Craig Gaskill now to cover the planning aspects. Thank you.

MR. GASKILL: Thank you, Joe.

As you've seen around the room, there's a bunch of information. If I had to go through all the information it would probably take more time than we have. I'm going to be fairly brief to try to cover some of the highlights of the project, what we're doing and what will come out of the project, and then I'll go to the public commentary and let Pat take care of that.

Joe talked about why we're doing the project. That's the first thing here. There are problems that are out there, and we need to fix those problems. That's why we're doing the project.

So when you do a project like that, you also have to consider how can we make that project better and fit into the

environment. So we have a bunch of project goals.

We developed the project goals at the beginning of the project based on public scoping and reasons for scoping. As you can see, there is a wide variety of goals. So goals cover pretty much anything you think might be important.

So we use these goals as well as the Purpose and Need to identify ways to address the problems and ways to fix the problems, and evaluate those to come up with the alternates we have.

Before we get into how we got to that, I want to talk about a little bit about the Colorado Bridge Enterprise and what that is. The Colorado Bridge Enterprise is the primary funding source for the Grand Avenue Bridge. It is an entity of CDOT that is a business entity of CDOT that has funding only for building or fixing poor bridges in the state.

The map you see here are those poor bridges in the state that are currently poor bridges in the state. They get added all the time as new bridges get added.

You can see most of the ones that are blue have already been constructed. The bridges, the Grand Avenue Bridge is purple. It's under design, so work on the Grand Avenue Bridge still has to be done.

Now, the Colorado Bridge Enterprise that's doing this, they've committed that they're going to try to work with the communities to make these bridge fit into the communities,

they're going to make sure that they meet state, local, and federal standards, and they're also going to make sure that when they do these things that it makes the right sense for the community as well. That's the second part of the Bridge Enterprise for bridges out there.

So in the environmental process that we started at the beginning of the project -- that was November of 2011 -- we started with the public scoping. The public scoping is the public identifying what the issues are in the community associated with the bridge.

That then led to the development of the Purpose and Need Joe talked about. This is the Purpose and Need developed over some time. And then we go into an alternative screening process, which we'll get to, to help us identify the best way to address the problem.

Then we write the Environmental Assessment. And that Environment Assessment documents how this project impacts the community, and all the various things we're looking for or looking at, which includes environmental and historic elements.

Then we do a public review period, which is what this is. That public review period ends on December 1st.

Then we write a Decision Document. That Decision Document is actually what allows us to determine what we can actually construct or not construct. That's expected to occur

later this spring.

So that screening process I talked about, what we do is we go through a three level screening process. Essentially what it is, the first one will contain the fatal flaw analysis. So we look at the possibilities and options of how we address the problem.

The fatal flaw analysis, some of these will not possibly work. We screen those out; we don't expend too much effort on those.

Then we take the remaining options and alternatives, and look how we can improve those into a qualitative, comparative analysis of alternatives.

A lot of you were involved with this in some of the previous public meetings, and you saw a lot of this information.

Once we take the top alternatives that comparatively best meet those needs and the goals, then we do a detailed alternative screening, evaluation screening based on all those goals in the Purpose and Need, criteria are reached, and we weigh the pros and cons.

What happens is we find that some of these are better for some, and some are better for others. We realize we can't find something that is perfect for everything, so we try to come up with something that best meets all the different things.

That's the process that also includes the next slide, public input. The public input process gives us information on how we measure, how we look at those different goals in the Purpose and Need.

So we have a lot of ways to get public input. A lot of this gets involved with a lot of public input. We had a number of public groups that helped us. Probably the most important one was the Leadership Committee that was made up of representatives of key elements of the community.

Their goals and their mission was to make sure that we follow a context sensitive process; that we're considering the community input and they could see we're getting it. That was their role. We met with them I think maybe 12 times or 14 times or something like that.

We also had a group called the Stakeholder Working Group. That was a larger group that provided input into a lot of design details. We met with them eight different times.

We had a Project Working Group. The Project Working Group is made up of Federal Highway Administration, CDOT, and the City of Glenwood Springs. And they provided input. What we are hearing is recommendations of how to move forward.

There was Issues Task Forces. Issue Task Forces are focus groups on very detailed design. There were questions that came up where we needed more input on.

In addition to that, we had about 3,000 different

individual contacts, primarily through the additional meetings. We had business meetings, we had one-on-one meetings, we had city council meetings organizing this kind of presentation.

We went to the downtown markets, the Strawberry Market, had presentations and booths at those locations. We had some other things as well. That was the public input. The public input -- so that's the alternative process and the public input led to the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is -- this goes in and out. There is a lot of detail on some of these things. It's all available on the boards. So if you can't see it here it's available on the boards. There's also handouts that have a lot of this information.

I'm going to keep going.

The Preferred Alternative it's essentially new alignment for the Grand Avenue Bridge. So it'll connect downtown Glenwood Springs with Exit 116, and that frees up Sixth Street. It takes out the Sixth and Laurel and Sixth and Pine exits from State Highway 82. There's a new local connection or intersection that now connects north Glenwood and those local streets.

In addition you see a new pedestrian bridge. The primary reason the pedestrian bridge plan came out was a way to address the utilities out there in the bridge which we

couldn't take out of service. The pedestrian bridge was a good opportunity to help provide a lot of other opportunities as part of our goals.

The new pedestrian bridge, part of that, besides the new pedestrian amenities, was also a new pedestrian-bicycle underpass on the west side, which provides a great separation for pedestrians and bicyclists under Grand Avenue, and connects to the Two Rivers Park.

That's the main elements of that. There's some more details how we got there.

So what this shows is how do we use public input to derive the Preferred Alternative. Frankly, when we started the project, we thought that the Bridge Enterprise has already determined rehabilitation of the bridge was not a cost effective option. So we knew it intended to replace the bridge.

We thought we could replace the bridge in its current location, and you can see that's not what came out of the process.

One of the things we heard from the public was, We want a larger area for public activity under the downtown area. That was one of the first things we heard at the scope meeting.

We have provided a much larger area downtown under the Grand Avenue Bridge both vertically and horizontally. So

now that bridge goes further south of the abutment than it used to go before, and made it a more open and inviting area.

One of the other items that we heard was, We want improved pedestrian-bicycle connectivity. CDOT, Department of Transportation, we want looking at those elements.

In addition to the pedestrian -- so the pedestrian bridge became part of the project. We wanted to make sure that we provided for the future capacity so it will be a wider bridge, and a pedestrian bridge, and provide better connection at both ends.

In addition it provides a pedestrian underpass under State Highway 82, and better connection to Two Rivers Park. So that was based on that comment.

We had lots of requests to minimize construction impacts. One of the reasons for the new alignment was to try to move the construction away from existing businesses, at least in that area, so we plan to build a lot of that bridge offsite without affecting traffic. So that's part of the reason for the existing alignment of this was to provide lengthened onramp to I-70.

There was a request to simplify Sixth and Laurel intersection roundabout. This was after we developed the original context. So we looked at that. And the group decided that it was simpler to provide better signage with use of that Sixth and Laurel roundabout.

Some of the input that we heard, one was to put the bridge downtown. You might remember the process where there's an access to downtown going on and do we change the access to E Street, and how that affected the bridge downtown.

What we realized was that the bridge downtown was very important to reduce the width of the lanes and the shoulder downtown to minimize that into the downtown.

There was a request to maintain the views across the Colorado River from the Seventh Street businesses. The original plan, when we first looked at that, was to provide a ramp from the south side of the pedestrian bridge. That has been revised to have an elevator and stairs so as to provide better views across the river.

We got some views of that bridge back there if you want to see that. There was a request for view of the Colorado River. That's been done.

Build an aesthetically pleasing bridge. We worked a lot with city council, the Issues Task Force, and input from the meetings to find a way to come up with a bridge, both the style of the bridge and elements on the bridge will be aesthetically pleasing.

So the Issues Task Force provided a lot of great input on to the materials that were provided on not just the bridge but also the whole project including the hardscape, the landscaping, how the elements might look, where to place the

lighting, which was a pretty important thing.

Pretty much most of those, most of the input we got from this Task Force has now been incorporated into the design. And that design's been ongoing so you won't see all the stuff in the Environmental Assessment, so it's progressed to the point where a lot of these are being worked out with input use of the task forces.

So in addition to the bridge itself, we have to worry about what do we do with traffic during construction. So in that construction, when we close down that bridge to build a new bridge and slide it over, you've got a 90-day period where we're going to have to move traffic onto a detour.

So after a lot of work it was determined that the best detour would be Midland Avenue from Exit 114. It's going to go up Midland at Eighth, and from Eighth to Grand Avenue we're going to build a new temporary connection that will cross through the railroad. That's in the blue over here.

In order to get to the downtown we're going to see a little one-way couplet to try to minimize impact to traffic and make it the lowest impacts in that area.

One of the things we do, we recognize that there's only limited capacity in Midland Avenue. So we've been working with the school district, the site work with the school district, worked with Grafta on transit, and also goods

and services as to how we can continue to minimize impacts on their services, and what can they do to try to maximize their services during the time of construction.

We're working on that. We've got quite a bit of time to do it, but that's in the process right now.

The second detour is a much shorter duration detour. This is when we are going to put girders over the top of I-70 or tearing down the existing bridge, and we can't have live traffic underneath.

So we're going to have to detour traffic out to I-70. It's only going to be during nighttime hours and limited time periods about 10 to 12 times. We'll put them onto Sixth Avenue at nighttime so they don't have to go underneath bridge construction.

One of the reasons for the Environmental Assessment is to document the impacts of the proposed action. So the Environmental Assessment looks at all the different areas where there might be impacts, and identifies both positive impacts and negative impacts.

There's a lot of different impacts that have been identified. And this is only the first of four sets of categories. If you want to look at all the details, look at the Environmental Assessment on the table over here there's 11 by 17 handouts or charts, there's 13 packets of impacts, both positive and negative impacts.

There's lot of things we're looking at. For each of the impacts, we're looking at what's the best way to address the impact, how to mitigate those impacts, alleviate the impacts, minimize the impacts, and we address that in the Environmental Assessment.

For example, it's hard to address because there's so many. So on short term business impact, businesses during construction, so the immediate impact might be if you're a business next to construction you're going to be impacted by a lot of noise, the dust that's going on, and some limited access to your business. We're going to keep access open, but it's going to be more difficult, so this is going to be a negative impact to business. We've documented that in the EA.

A positive impact might be we're bringing in $100 million worth of infrastructure to Glenwood Springs, and a lot of people coming in. There's going be workers there for two years, and they're going to be -- that are going to be spending a lot of money at businesses. So that is a potential positive impact.

So in each of these things we looked at the different impacts and document those, and that helps go into the final decision of what we can actually build.

So we'll flip through these next three slides fairly quickly. Some of the other categories we're looking at have been documented in the EA, rider impacts, construction

facilities, wildlife and aquatic species, special species. The next one, air quality, visual conditions.

Visual conditions priority was one of the most important things we heard at the beginning of the project. They said, We need to come up with -- whatever we do, it needs to be visually pleasing and fit within the community aesthetically. That's why we spent so much effort on it.

We knew it's a bridge, we knew where it's at, but what's that bridge going to look like and how will it fit in? So these are all in the EA.

So in addition to all of the impacts there's a separate category we looked at, which is historic impacts, the National Historic Preservation Act. So we looked at all the historic properties.

There's a number of historic properties in Glenwood. In fact, we have nine different properties that have had adverse impact as far as this project.

One of those properties is the existing Grand Avenue Bridge itself. Obviously tearing it down, that's an adverse impact.

The other eight properties are historic buildings on Grand Avenue between Seven Street and 86th, and so there's adverse impacts because of proximity to the construction and proximity to the new bridge when they build it. That's the adverse impact.

As part of that, we're doing a consultation with the state historic preservation office, the local historic mission to identify a memorandum of understanding on how to best mitigate the historic impact, and that's in process too.

We also have coordination with the Native American tribes. We've asked them to provide us with material. We asked for their input and we've asked for that coordination.

So the cost, you've probably seen the cost. It's been in the paper quite a bit. The construction cost is 60 million. That's been relatively consistent, although not quite the same as the original cost you might've heard of 59 million a while ago.

In addition to construction costs there are preconstruction costs, which include cost of design, cost of environmental documentation, right of way. Of course the right of way is a much higher cost now because we're on a new alignment, and not on the existing alignment as we were before. So that cost has certainly gone up. And there's utility costs. There's a lot of utilities in this area.

In addition to preconstruction costs, there's also what's called indirect costs. When you think about it, you have an agency, CDOT, where we have a lot of cost that apply the process across the entire state. So there's a portion of that that apply to each project, and that has to be applied to this project as well.

So the total cost you might have seen in the paper is $110-, $115 million, and that's probably where we're at in terms of putting the costs together.

So where are we right now? So we kind of talked about some of the stuff, the project scoping, the alternative development screening process, the design process.

So as you can see from these documentations, we're near the end. We're reviewing the environment documentation and public input. That will then be turned into a Decision Document, which will mean we'll take all the input, address all those comments in the Decision Document.

Shortly after that's done there'll be a final design done, assuming that the Decision Document moves us forward. The final design addresses that federal negotiation on the right of way. The right of way process is in process right now.

There'll be intergovernmental agreements, IGAs, with both the funding agency and with the City for who maintains some of this stuff. Then there'll be contract negotiations with the contractor, and once that's done they can actually start construction, which is scheduled for the end of 2015. So the end of next year construction start.

And it's about a two-year construction schedule. One of the key pieces of that construction schedule is the bridge closure. That's when you'll really notice the impact.

The rest of the time a lot of the stuff they're doing is off the bridge; traffic continues to move.

So when they close down the bridge for 90 days that's when you'll really notice it. That's currently scheduled for the spring of 2017. After that gets done and the traffic gets on the new Grand Avenue Bridge, things will pretty much wrap up after that, clean everything up.

This is the last slide. Really the purpose of this meeting and this process right now is public comment. We want to hear your comments so we can provide the best Decision Document, make sure it addresses all these issues, see if there's new information out there.

You can do that either through public comment tonight, you can stand up and speak, or you can provide it directly to the court reporter, or you can provide written comment tonight and hand it in, or you can provide written comment and send it in, or you can fax it in or you can email it in. All the information is on your sheets and also on the boards.

That is all I have, Pat. So the next slide is for you. Thank you.

(Public Comment Portion.)

MS. NOYES: All right. I would like to start first by thanking those of you who have been here for quite some time patiently waiting for this portion of the evening. Thank

you very much for your patience, and we very much appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts and responses to this EA with us.

We're going to do a little bit of logistics here. We have 27 people who have signed up to speak. We do not have time to have any conversation. As Craig pointed out, we've had lengthy conversations and we have used that to really shape the project.

Tonight is a formal hearing where we want to take formal comments from those who would like to provide those to us. And so we will call your name. And please use the microphone.

We have a court reporter here who will be taking down your comments. And we will provide her with your name, address, and email I believe is what's on that list. And she will make sure that that information lines up with your comments. So please state your name. And then she will get the spelling off of the list so we don't have to go through that.

We also have Tom, who will be the official timekeeper. We will give you a one minute and a thirty second countdown. If you don't care to use the full three minutes and move us along, that's fine too.

When we call your name, if you've decided that your issue has been raised or that you have chosen not to speak,

let us know that and we'll move to the next person.

We will cut you off at three minutes so that everyone has a chance to speak if they choose to do so. We really appreciate your willingness to participate in this and follow the rules so that everyone gets a chance.

With that, the first name on the list, Mehrdad Jahani.

MR. JAHANI: Thank you. My name is Mehrdad Jahani. I've been around this area since 45 years ago. I love Glenwood Springs.

I've been following this project from inception. And I'm here to tell you that I'm against this project based on a few things.

First of all, let's find out what is the problem. Why do we have to do what they're doing now? Naturally the first thing they mention is that the bridge is functionally deficient.

Now, the question is, how did it become functionally deficient? Was it an act of God? Or was it the cars that come through here or what?

Of course, they had to take the sidewalks away. And in 1961 they turned it into two lane, four and four. I mean, two and two, four. At the time they knew what size cars and trailers and everything are. So naturally they knew what they were doing was not right.

And who was "they"? CDOT. Now who is doing this project? CDOT. Yeah. This project is forced to Glenwood Springs. They make expressway all to downtown eroding it much more than it has been already.

Let's stand up and say what it is. This is not right. Environmentally it is not right either. That design doesn't fit our environment. That is fine, the expressway alternate, but not here in Glenwood Springs.

(Applause.)

Another thing is, of course, if it was only a matter of bridge repair or replacement, that would be fine. But they have expanded the project; it covers much more from the, from the detour and doing all that.

So I think they should stop and do a total environmental study before they proceed.

I'm going to be very short. That's it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Thank you very much. I appreciate you staying within your time to set the standard.

Our next speaker is Alice Hatner. Alice, are you here? The court reporter needs you to use the microphone so she can hear.

MS. HATNER: I'll probably embarrass myself to death.

I love this town. I love a lot of the people here.

All I see is traffic on Grand Avenue has nothing to do with how you're going to do your bridge.

It might be fine. Why take a bridge out that could still be used? We want bridges on south Grand. We want bridges other places. We have a bridge that can be used if it's fixed. And we can build a nice new bridge so people can live in this town.

(Applause.)

I'm going to say something that's going to hurt some people. This area was founded by Teddy Roosevelt without a road. This bridge, Grand Avenue, will be ruined. And this all will be the demise of this town that people love and have been coming to for years.

(Applause.)

You know what? When people want to walk here you can't walk on Grand Avenue. It's blocked up from the traffic. When you want to cross the street here you have to wait forever.

You can't come out of a side street here. Original people knew the middle of the town was for a street. We only have one main street.

It's just it's all wrong and everybody knows it's wrong. We need a bypass to take care of Aspen and all the areas that are really growing. And this bridge can always serve our town, fixed.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: All right. Stan Speck.

MR. SPECK: I'm Stan Speck.

Maybe I'm missing something, but the CDOT plan to replace the Grand Avenue Bridge would not add, would not move one more vehicle cross the Colorado River than now.

It does not take any traffic off of Grand Avenue; it does not line up with the regular corridor; it is not adding a river crossing.

I have seen CDOT move all the traffic to the Roaring Fork valley on two lanes during the paving of Grand Avenue. Good job.

We could use a slow but steady bypass, two lanes nonstop, especially for big semis. At slow speeds, the tires sound like a river. No gear changes, it sounds like a river.

I say come up with a better plan for our town than that at Grand Avenue.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: I think it's Margi Crow.

MS. CROW: Hi. I'm Margi Crow. My husband and I have a drugstore in downtown Glenwood.

This may be our last chance to express our opinion on what the proposed Grand Avenue Bridge replacement project will do to our city, and what it will not do to deal with the

steadily increasing Grand Avenue traffic congestion problem.

This Environmental Assessment focuses exclusively on the replacement of the existing bridge, and it fails to include any consideration of whether the proposed construction will be compatible with what is going to need to be built to accommodate future traffic volume.

Consequently, it should be rejected as deficient, and replaced with a comprehensive EIS, Environmental Impact Study statement that addresses all future as well as present Grand Avenue-Highway 82 problems.

One thing I noticed, there's no traffic in these pictures. And we are bumper to bumper. And I was rear-ended last night in this traffic. So that doesn't show up in any of these pictures.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Patty Daniels.

MS. DANIELS: I regret that it's taken me this long to weigh in on such an important matter as the bridge replacement bypass.

I have read the articles and been to two previous meetings, open houses, and read numerous letters to the editors. Now is my turn to have my voice heard.

My opinions are not unlike most that I have read and almost seem to be in agreement to everyone I've spoken with

regarding the bridge replacement bypass.
Let me begin by saying we have owned our home on Park Drive in Glenwood Springs since 2000. We are small business owners. And I run a small nonprofit organization.
And I do think a bypass is more important than a new bridge. I cross the bridge almost every day. And recently as I was crossing southbound I realized that I had passed only one other vehicle. I started looking at the bridge and found myself thinking, What a great bridge with such simplicity and historic value. I thought, Does this really need to be replaced to the tune of over $100 million?
Obviously I am not an engineer, but it seems to me that the existing bridge could be shored up, rebuilt, reconfigured, or remodeled for a lot less money.
The real need is for a bypass that should be a statewide project. The current bridge serves the entire state of Colorado and around the nation and the world by transporting people and goods to and from Carbondale, Redstone, Basalt, Snow Mass Village, and Aspen.
And not for just the obvious reason, which is tourism. There are businesses, college campuses, farms, and ranches that provide goods and services worldwide. How awful that the tiny beautiful city of Glenwood Springs should pay the price for -- in more ways than one.
I believe a bypass will save the small-town charm,

and create a safer, more efficient and more sustainable route for transportation to other parts of our valley; that each municipality should support the cost as well as the State of Colorado.
I believe there are several options for a bypass, and that this is the time to take action and not to kick the can further down the road.
That's all.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Rob Anderson.
MR. ANDERSON: I'll pass.
MS. NOYES: Okay. Ed Rosenberg?
MR. ROSENBERG: First, I want to thank you guys. I mean, I, you know, really disagree. But I know this is a lot of work. I know this is a lot of work, and I appreciate that for what it is. But amount of time spent on a bad plan does not necessarily make it a plan to proceed on.
Currently, downtown Glenwood Springs has the following problems currently: too much traffic, too much speed for our town to absorb, too much noise for a town our size to absorb, too much pollution for a town our size to breathe, unsafe pedestrian crossing. Even with crossing with the "walk now" signal, it's dangerous due to lack of pedestrian crossing signs.
Lack of the ability of buses to pull out of traffic

flow into active bus stops that allow them to safely pick up and drop off passengers without totally stopping traffic flow in the right-hand lane. This causes constant traffic backup, and many times results in drivers making abrupt and unsafe maneuvers with their cars and with their hands to get around a stopped bus.
I don't see this project solving any of these problems. I believe the concept of destroying a 61-year-old bridge to create a new entrance to our valley is irresponsible and ill conceived.
I believe there are engineering and construction capabilities to reinforce and widen the existing Grand Avenue Bridge, and allow it to thrive for years to come in a safe and productive manner.
I believe this can be accomplished without ever totally closing the Grand Avenue Bridge by keeping two lanes open during construction, and avoid creating the resulting chaos that this project is proposing.
I believe that fixing the existing bridge can be done for a fraction of the cost as what this project has projected the cost if it even hits that amount.
I believe that the process of construction of the proposed bridge and the resultant traffic speed and traffic flow will not only create an unacceptable hardship to our community during the construction phase, but I believe you're

asking the city of Glenwood Springs, its downtown businesses and the people of Glenwood Springs to accept an unacceptable, unsafe, and unhealthy burden for the next hundred plus years.
It appears to the layman that there are too many people focusing on the financial benefits of the construction project itself, and turning a blind eye to what you are doing to a town of 8,500 trying to solve a regional traffic problem on our main street in the heart of our town.
CDOT needs to find a better plan to improve the increasing traffic exiting off of the I-70. CDOT needs to find a better plan -- CDOT needs to find a better plan to move every piece of traffic flow to Aspen without asking the people of Glenwood to sacrifice our town. And I believe it is totally unacceptable to the city of Glenwood Springs and Garfield County to be expected to put up $6 million to help a regional transportation project.
In conclusion, I believe this project does not solve transportation problems that exist. I believe until CDOT deals with the existing transportation problems as regional, they're only creating future hardships. I believe the funds can be used for modernizing the existing bridge.
Thank you.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Parvin Erlandsen.
MR. ERLANDSEN: Pass. He said it for me.

MS. NOYES: Okay. Leo McKinney.

MR. MC KINNEY: Hi. I'm Leo McKinney. I'm lucky enough to be called the mayor of this awesome city.

I'm only here with one message for you guys. We have asked for a 30-day extension of this public commentary because we simply need more time.

We are a city that is constantly having things done to us. We have you guys with this project. We have the county with some of their projects. And we have Grafta with some of their projects. Our staff, city staff, has grown very very thin. We simply need more time to ferret out any of the issues that might be in this document.

Just last night our planning and zoning commission was expressing the same sentiment; that they really need more time.

So that's the only thing I'm going to say tonight is please give us more time. We can use another 30 days to make sure that Glenwood gets the best possible thing we can get.

Thank you.

MS. NOYES: Suzanne Stewart.

MS. STEWART: Okay. So I'm going to take a position that I guess I've taken a lot in my life, and that's being a contrarian. Contrarian.

I was born and raised here. I know there's a few of you, Mike, Gamba, Angie, and Tony, and probably a number of

other people that I don't know. And I just want to say, give you guys just a little bit of insight.

South Grand Avenue when I was a kid was a two-lane highway. And had big, beautiful trees lined all the way down Grand Avenue. That was gorgeous. When those went away, there was a lot of heartache.

And so I guess as I was sitting here listening to people talk, I thought about that. I don't think I was old enough to really pay attention to what the city fathers were talking about when that happened. But it was a really big deal going from a two lane to a four lane. Oh, my God.

Well, the town was 3,500 people. So people, we have a lot more. I think we are close to 9,000, maybe 10,000 people in the town right now. So people are a problem. But that's a whole personal insight about what Glenwood was 60 plus years ago.

What I want to say is I have served on the PLT? The Project Leadership Team and the Mission Task Force. And it hasn't been smooth; hasn't been easy; haven't agreed with everything that's happened. But the process I think is what I would like to say thank you for.

And I'm glad all of you are here to make your opinions part of the record. But I happen to be in favor of this project. And I am, I really strongly believe that there's going to be a lot of pain and heartache and

frustration and complaints.

It will be about a two-year process. And when it's over, I think we will have even a cooler town than what we have right now. I have a vision of Glenwood being very different, it being bikeable, it being walkable.

I see it having a more vibrant downtown, I see us having a really cool village center in north Glenwood. I see the downtown with more outdoor eating and vibrancy.

So I'll be the contrarian. I think this is a hellova good project, and I say take a pill and go for it.

(Boos and applause.)

MS. NOYES: Jim Breasted.

MR. BREASTED: Hi. My name is Jim Breasted.

First thing I want to do is ask for a ride back to Carbondale. If anybody's going up that way they can just drop me. My car blew up and I'm carless.

I'll just say -- I'm not going to say it to you. I'm just going to read a letter that was written and printed in the Aspen Times September 19. It was signed by 12 valley citizens.

"We are addressing this letter to the newspapers in Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Aspen, Vail, and Grand Junction because we think it's time to call upon all the governments, both county and municipal, all the county and municipal in Roaring Fork and Colorado River valleys to weigh in on the

question of a state Highway 82 bypass around Glenwood Springs.

"Valleywide transportation groups should be discussed and decided upon by regional consensus. The routing of a state highway through or around any municipality should never be determined uniquely by that municipality.

"We believe that over the past 60 years the continued routing of Highway 82 around Grand Avenue has not been successful.

We believe that the time has come to put the question of a bypass to a vote of all the people who live here. We ask that the residents of Garfield, Eagle, Pitkin, and Gunnison counties be given the opportunity to vote on the question."

(Applause.)

"We would ask that further work on the bridge design and construction be halted until such time as we've been able to vote on whether there should be a State Highway 82 bypass."

This letter was signed by 12 people: Ernie and Carol Gianetti, Gregory Durrett, Dean Moffatt, Melanie Cardiff, Jerry and Judy Gerbaz, Skip Bell, John Foulkrod, Bradford and Patsy Nicholson, and Mark Chain and ten others.

How much more time?

Arline Stabenou, Phil Gallagher, Keith Speranza, Steve Campbell, Cheryl Cain, Ed Rosenberg, Sherry Reed, Patrick Hunter, June and Pat Copenhaver, and Dale Reed.

I rest my case.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: All right. Dave Winsor.
MR. WINSOR: I'm here to talk about I oppose this project off the top of my head for a lot of reasons. My whole background has been doing environmental impact statements on transportation projects around the world and around the country.
I moved to Glenwood Springs because of quality of life issues and the people who live here. I understand that we have an old bridge here that needs to be repaired or maybe replaced.
But I also know that impacts are both direct impacts, which I say are here in Glenwood, and indirect impacts of all the people who use that bridge throughout the valley and who travel up and down the I-70 corridor. Because of that, I think that we need to take a hard look and prepare an environment impact statement.
I think it's the only way, a transportational environmental impact statement, to really look at all the alternatives. Those alternatives should not start at the city of Glenwood city limits and end at the other side of the Glenwood city limits; it should be throughout the area. I think that's the healthiest way to do it.
Whether a bypass is an option, I'm not sure we have

the land for a bypass, but we need to evaluate that in a formal process as opposed to saying, We're going to do an EA and we're going to restrict it to a very small area of Glenwood Springs.
I would also hope that all of you out there, you have the chance to put your input in in writing on this, and suggest that an EIS be done, and then make a determination because this is a big determination which is going to have a major impact on the quality of life for this entire valley.
Please be involved. Thanks for showing up on this. And stay in touch. And don't forget, we've got to get some written comments on this. That is how this process works.
If anyone would like to talk to me about how you handle questions and stuff, give me a call. You can get to John Haines if you want to, or you can call me at 945-6493. I'd love to talk to you about it.
Thank you.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Dale Reed.
MR. REED: I'm Dale Reed. And I've got a concern here maybe about two issues. And that is traffic volume, and pedestrian safety.
As we stand right now, if you have driven in the traffic right through town at 8 o'clock in the morning or at 5:00 in the evening, you know what kind of traffic volume we

have, and how hard it is often to cross Grand Avenue, whether you have to wait for the light or not.
One of the issues that overrides both these is connectivity: How do we have this state highway right through the middle of town, and yet be able to cross back and forth.
There's two things that come to mind. One is the underpass that was shown. I'm not sure if there are other underpasses involved or not. But it needs to be a very well made and attractive underpass if there is one.
If you have seen the underpass near Highway 82 at Whole Foods, you know that they can build an attractive underpass, well lighted and attractive.
This town has not been noted very well for keeping track of some of its underpasses. There are some underpasses and side streets for drainage and supposedly pedestrians, but they're pathetic.
An issue that perhaps CDOT should look at is that the pedestrian overpass is listed here for 9.5 million with an elevator. I don't know about you, but I don't have a good feel about an elevator. How many bicycles, how many strollers, how many dogs, and loss of electricity, then what?
How about an up and down elevator -- or escalator I should say? An escalator at that site, and would not be so restricted.
Thank you.

(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Thank you. Hal Sundin.
MR. SUNDIN: I have a couple of quotes here that come from CDOT. Says, Because of the way this project has evolved to include a variety of other Highway 82-I-70 interchange improvements, it's now more than a simple bridge replacement. That's one of them.
The second is, Both the Glenwood Springs comprehensive plan and CDOT's own corridor optimization plan address the need to spread some of the traffic around that's now funneled onto Grand Avenue.
These are two glaring reasons why this EA should be rejected as seriously deficient. The project is no longer merely a replacement of the existing bridge in its present location for which an EA would have been appropriate; instead, it now consists of a construction of a new bridge in an entirely different location and a complete reconfiguration of the Sixth and Laurel intersection and raises some serious questions about compatibility with what may be needed to be constructed to accommodate these new traffic volumes exceeding the carrying capacity of Grand Avenue.
Incidentally, connectivity, this is one of the purposes of the project is to improve the connectivity from across the river. I don't see how increasing the length by 50 percent and running all the traffic through a traffic

circle improves connectivity.
CDOT has now joined, has now joined the propensity to speculate about where and how this should be accomplished without the benefit of any comprehensive engineering study comparing all feasible alternatives, and recommending the best alternative. That would be the purpose of an environmental impact study, which should be done before this project proceeds any further.
The EA is a segmentation of a much larger project needed to serve the transportation needs of the Roaring Fork corridor, an action that is prohibited by NEPA regulations.
The EA is focused exclusively on a single goal of replacing the exiting bridge in total ignorance of, and without any consideration of what may be needed in the future. In other words, what is now being proposed is to proceed without a plan for the future.
This EA should be rejected as a single purpose segmentation of the broader scope of the transportation needs facing the Roaring Fork valley, and replaced with an EIS addressing all of those needs.
Let's do it right.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: John Haines.
MR. HAINES: Thanks, Pat.
Rob Anderson and Parvin gave their time, so now I

have nine minutes. Thank you very much.
Joe, you and Craig and Tom ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You asked us for our input. The pictures that you show up here of the meeting where you and I stood up in front, there were lots and lots of people staying and wanted to talk. But the community center closed at 10 o'clock, so they had to go home.
I hope that's not the case here either. Because this meeting is supposed to end at 9:00. You say we're a valuable part of this whole program and that you need our input, so now you need to listen.
Where it says the document and the survey that you guys have done, you know, we, our group, Citizens to Save Grand Avenue asked the City to put a ballot out, a ballot issue about how they feel about this program. And the City says, Oh, no, John. We're not going to spend our money to do that.
That's why I'm bringing this up now because it's public record. We spent $2,500 of our own money, sent 4,200 ballots out to citizens with addresses in Glenwood Springs, no box numbers.
Out of those 4,200 we sent out, we got 700 back. Out of that 700 -- now listen -- 600 people said, Tell CDOT and the City to stop right now.
(Applause.)

Don't do anything more. Do a joint plan where you look at the South Bridge, where you look at Eighth Street, where you look at 14th Street, where you look at this bridge, and let's come up with a plan.
Now, I'm not the guy who put this on. So when they put -- they didn't want anything more done until you can put this together. And that's part of this whole program, look at it, make the best thing that you can do with it. There are other opportunities to do it, and these other people have said you need to have an EIS done.
Here's what a highway engineer has to say. "The text of this EA, while interesting, comes to a conclusion not meeting the requirements of the National Policy Environmental Act and NEPA since that act requires the explanation which is the examination of all alternatives to be proposed for the proposed action."
The stated goal 2.11 is to improve connectivity between the south side of the Colorado River, downtown Glenwood Springs and the north side of the river, historic Glenwood Hot Springs, and the I-70. An excellent opportunity happens to exist only 200 feet downstream that meets the above stated goal.
Despite repeated requests for inclusion by individuals and interested groups, part of this legal study was brushed aside during the '73, railroad corridor was an

alternative included in the study, ways to reduce traffic on Grand Avenue was encouraged by the City, written request to the Department of Highways, budget money in construction.
Since that time many additional studies have been made and alternatives not acknowledged or even mentioned in the EA.
You know the Centennial study. They said the same thing. Let's put an alternate route to Glenwood Springs.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Gregg Vasquez?
MR. VASQUEZ: Hi. I'm Gregg Vasquez.
Just a couple of points that kind of concern me about this. First of all, the impacts that are going to be caused by all the traffic during the construction, the police department probably doesn't have enough guys as it is.
And is CDOT going to compensate the City for that? How is that going to work? That's another impact on City tax dollars.
The other thing was, at the inception of this at the community center, we saw these grandiose plans with all this great design. Well, now all of a sudden they're asking the city, county, Pitkin County and everybody else for additional funds.
In my opinion, if it's going to happen, CDOT needs to pay for it, and leave the local residents to use their tax

dollars as they need to.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Bob Gish.
MR. GISH: Hello. I'm Bob Gish. I'm not as passionate as you guys are. I've only lived here a year.
I believe CDOT. I believe maybe CDOT has a temporary solution. But I don't really see anything feasible for any kind of a bypass.
So I take the position that I inherited this traffic. Now, what can we do to make it better? And I honestly do believe Joe and CDOT, they came up with the best solution.
I made plenty of notes. Talked to David, I talked to the city council, talked to the mayor. I believe CDOT is going to do it, will minimize the impact to us, okay?
I'm asking for enhanced pedestrian safety during this period of time. I don't think people know what's going to happen downtown. The impact, businesses downtown, the impact to us as citizens -- I live in the 800 block of Pitkin.
I believe CDOT is going to do it. I think it's just a matter of let's do the best we can to make it as easy on us. I do believe it will help us in the long run.
Some of the things I talked to him about was, How much of that $5.5 million can we use for a permanent Eighth Street? How much of that 5.5 million could we, can we work

with the city council on just don't put it in; take it back out. Let's make it a positive.
Let's keep that a permanent amenity, enhance the pedestrian safety, make sure the emergency and sheriff egress in and out of Eighth Street, we need physical barriers to keep them from going through our downtown at Pitkin and Colorado Avenue.
I'm concerned about the stores downtown, the stores with having the one-way traffic all the way around it. Let's look at that. Let's make it positive. Let's go through that two years and let's get it over with. I think it's going to make our city better.
I apologize I'm not passionate like you folks are. I'm just looking for a solution.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Bobbi Hodge.
MS. HODGE: Hello. I'm Bobbi Hodge.
I want to focus my comments on the removal of the trees in the 700 block of Grand.
Our citywide comprehensive plan addresses street trees as having historic value. The code, the current code requires replacement of street trees more than 14 inches. These trees are 14 inches in diameter.
I'm sympathetic to the issue of the utilities being buried, and a concern of the roots growing into the utilities.

But in my opinion, I would think it would be of less of an environmental impact if these utilities were placed under the shoulder of the road so that there would be more room for the roots.
My concerns are further increased after learning this last week how much water trees absorb, which is imperative to prevent erosion from the runoff that comes down the street.
I've also learned about how trees filter the air. They catch pollutants that come from the cars. And I think it's important to get these pollutants caught in the trees before they land on our historic buildings.
Another point is trees are cooling. Lots of people like to sit out front in the restaurants. So we need a cool place to sit. The trees also serve as a sound barrier for those who live in the apartments above the street level.
Trees have been shown to attract more shoppers. Studies have shown that shoppers view stores having trees that they have superior products.
I would also like to recommend, as a final thought, wrought iron fencing as a choice for the rail on the bridge.
Thank you.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Michael Blair.
MR. BLAIR: I am Michael Blair, a resident of

Glenwood Springs.
I am a member of the city planning commission also, but I speak as a citizen. And my background is land use planning. I'm a geographer by education. I'm looking at the larger picture if you will rather than the engineering pictures, which the EA seems to consider.
My interests are in the effects of the regional area. And I think that the EA is not sufficient in considering the larger picture if you will of the effects on our nontechnical environment. The effects of the livability of our community, and the circulation of pedestrians and traffic within our overall community, and how the general livability of our community is affected.
The engineers I think have done a great job. I admire them for doing the engineering work. But we have a community that needs to be engineered if I can put it that way, hopefully not by engineers.
I have two particular concerns. One, the City has not considered, in my initial review of it -- because I really have not had time to review the whole thing, and I hope I don't have to review the whole thing -- because it doesn't consider the regional aspects other people have brought up.
More people in this region from the top of the Roaring Fork valley to clear down the Colorado River etvalley and up to the Continental Divide, all that traffic affects the

City of Glenwood Springs and the entire Roaring Fork valley in my view.

I think that the EA should not be accepted, and it should be reconsidered to consider the entire region, and a lot more people in the community and agencies within the community, and they should participate.

I also feel that the CDOT bridge design, wherever it might be located, should have a very favorable and interesting design that fits with the city of Glenwood Springs, not just a rail and guardrail design.

But if the city and people in the city want to add a few embellishments just for the sake of the city, I don't object to my tax money helping to pay for that a little bit. That would be only fair I think.

Thirdly, other people have said what I want to say. I appreciate those considerations. But we need to consider this as a regional effect, and the downtown area should not be affected as it appears to be affected.

And I will say that my dear wife has quit coming to downtown. She won't anymore in the last few years because of the traffic. But she did love the town in the past. I'm beginning to feel the same way.

Plus all the new restaurants on Seventh Street are only a part of the downtown, and other parts of the downtown will be greatly affected by all of the additional traffic

that's going to be added. We need more consideration from a regional aspect.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Royal Layburn.

MR. LAYBURN: Well, I appreciate the opportunity to share some views that I have of how the process has failed the community at large in that if you look through the documents and all the hard work, the staff that's here, and the presentations, you can't see the forest for the trees.

The fact is is that they say that the studies consulted with numerous layers to develop the public policy that serves the community. And then we have to give them an F, because the reality is, that's repeated over and over, is that the scope of this document is not appropriate; it's a microcosm rather than looking at what is a community issue that is weakening the fabric of Glenwood Springs.

I'm a resident of the upper valley. I have a business. I understand transportation. I understand workers. I understand the other importance of Highway 82 and I-70. But the burden of it should not be borne by the citizens of Glenwood Springs.

(Applause.)

And if we have good planners and if we have good government and we have tax dollars we can do a lot better.

This is, I would agree, maybe a good engineering solution for a bridge. But it doesn't address what the community issue is. And as such, it's a sham to put together an environmental assessment that doesn't address the problem.

And really, how can we as a community that extends from the upper Colorado River drainage down to Rifle and actually the connectivity to Grand Junction is that this is the major crossroad; this is a bottleneck. Bottlenecks shouldn't go through the downtown Glenwood Springs.

I would propose a solution. There's a tunnel under the English channel. There is a tunnel through Mont Blanc 20 miles long. There's a 17 mile tunnel that's built through the Swiss Alps on a regular basis.

This is an easy solution to just go from west Glenwood to the airport and bore a twin tunnel right through that mountain, and take all the traffic out of downtown Glenwood Springs.

And they can also very easily change the load limit on the bridge that exists, and take the heavy trucks off of there, and leave it for pedestrians and residential traffic, and we could be a lovely place again.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Michael Dunn? Michael Dunn? Going, going, gone.

All right. Don Bernes.

MR. BERNES: I'll start off by saying my main concerns about the new project, nothing ever comes in on budget. I'm concerned about if it goes over budget who's going to pick up the additional cost of this bridge? Is Glenwood writing a check or has this already been planned out ahead of time?

I've got concerns about the mitigation that will have to take place when they take the old bridge out. And I haven't seen this in any document in terms of who's going to pay to put that area where the old bridge is going to be removed back into an attractive area.

My major concern about the bridge is that I don't think historically it visually fits into the appearance of the town. If you go back in history and look at all the pictures of the town, what you see is the bridge runs north and south that looks like a railroad bridge.

What we're proposing is a great engineering solution, which I agree makes great sense to run the bridge where they plan to run it. But in terms of how it fits into the town, it's going to have a major impact in terms of what this town's going to look like in the future.

And Sixth Street, Sixth Street actually at the present time it may not be the best street in the world, but it does act as a traffic calming device. And people know when

they leave I-70 and hit Sixth Street, it changes their environment.

I think that pretty much says it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Dave Sturges.

MR. STURGES: I have plenty of opportunity to speak my opinions. I'm pleased to see so many citizens. Thank you for coming.

MS. NOYES: Leslie Bethel.

MS. BETHEL: Hi. I'm Leslie Bethel. And I'm the director for the Downtown Development Authority here in Glenwood.

And we have, or I have been a part of the PLT, the Project Leadership Team for three and a half years. I think the way we approached it was to try to make it the best project possible.

I have to say that the team, the consultant team has been very responsive to the comments that have come up in our meetings. Today we met. And there are brick walls and stone walls. Tried to listen to all the comments that we have brought forward. And they have been very responsive.

The board asked me to bring a couple of concerns tonight, and that is the closure time, the 90-day closure time. We feel that's going to be tough on downtown businesses. And want to reduce that if at all possible.

And second is looking at Eighth Street and how you can continue to participate so that's a permanent connection. We're concerned about having it be a temporary connection and not a permanent one.

But just want you to know that we have worked hard to try to listen. And the team's been responsive as we have brought up concerns.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Darek Shapiro.

MR. SHAPIRO: Hi. I'm an architect. I've been involved -- I grew up in New York City. I've seen overpasses built as pathways under and over. And it's concerning to see this place I finally ended up, Carbondale, could be destroyed by what looks like a super highway entrance into a downtown.

It's like delivering all this activity that can only go so fast once you hit the light, and I think it's a mistake.

I think the exit at 116 off of Highway 70, off of the interstate, where Laurel comes down from the hill, it would be an ideal location to put a bridge onto the location where the railroad track is. You can look at that.

So I'm kind of new to this. This is my first meeting. But I think you can see from the drawings and the maps that it's really an issue of the abandoned railway.

What we can do -- Royal had an idea about building a

tunnel, which I think could work. We could build a tunnel underneath Grand Avenue for the people who want to continue through. That's one wild idea.

The idea of using the railroad now, the railroad corridor, if we look at the map, whether we have to go cross over the river again, over the Roaring Fork and build along Midland Avenue and that space -- the homeowners there would be unhappy with that -- that's an issue that might not cost $100 million, but would save the downtown in addition.

That's all I have to say at this point. I would like to see some more creative solutions and things that may have been thrown out earlier, and take a look at those again.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Bill Lockwood.

MR. LOCKWOOD: I went to the library to read the environmental report. And I initially got the sense that I couldn't compete with you guys. It was over my head. I'm not bright enough. But here I am after all to speak.

Page 2 of the appendix talks about context sensitivity. That sounds promising. And indeed they talked about a project that is collaborative, has a collaborative interdisciplinary approach in order to preserve the scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources of the bridge.

It seemed a bit ironic considering that the focus

seems to be on the beauty of the structure, of the concrete in the highway, which seems to have been made the main focus of the presentation that I saw.

There is no actual regional context that would include scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources in the whole interconnective valley in which I live.

When I speak of the whole region, I'd like to include my own region, which is living downtown on the east side of Grand Avenue where we need to cross Grand Avenue to get to the post office, to get to the rec center, to do our business downtown.

And it's become very difficult. I mean, getting over to Margi's drugstore now becomes a big deal and not so much fun, and it's not going to be much funner when the traffic accelerates, as it promises to do.

The other page that I want to refer to is page 54 of the visual impact study. It talks about the visual impact. And they make much of equal value of the view from the Grand Avenue -- I'm sorry, the area around Laurel to Colorado Avenue and the Hot Springs resort and the city center unit, which means, translates Grand Avenue.

With Grand Avenue, they talk about motorists, quote, Changes would be indiscernible to motorists driving along the road. Local motorists are predicted to have a neutral response to the visual changes.

We people on the east side live and walk down there and so forth. We're not just motorists, you know, driving through the area to get us through as quickly as possible.

So I wish that the neighborhoods in this town could get more credit. We're not very vociferous over on the east side of town, politically powerful, but we are the group of people who I think one consultant in an earlier meeting who was from Boulder talked about the values of our town. And he talked about the sense of authenticity in the town.

I think my neighborhood has that. You look down the side streets, as I first did when I visited here 13 years ago looking for a place to live, I looked down the side streets and I saw Victorian houses, places close together relatively on city lots, and trees in the front of them and so forth. That's irreplaceable.

We need to take, I would hope, take some consideration beyond the technical expertise that you guys have that's just below the guys like me to try to read about it to humanize the matter, put it into a really regional context since what you're involved in, as how some people says, is not just replacing the bridge, you're replacing the whole bridge and park and whole area of the town point of view.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Gay Moore.

MS. MOORE: My name is Gay Moore. And I've lived here about 15 years. First five years were on Grand Avenue and 11th Street. Traffic was pretty horrendous back then. I have asthma. So it was really hard for me to breathe down there.

We did eventually move to north Glenwood. I now live up above Antlers. My asthma was immediately improved. So that's one thing that a lot of people don't think about when they think about traffic is that the respiratory problems that people have are exacerbated. And you even, if you don't have asthma, you may end up with respiratory problems you don't even know about it. That's one thing I wanted to mention that isn't being brought up here.

The traffic, the trucks would roll down Grand Avenue. My house on Grand Avenue would shake every night they would go so fast.

I was walking here. I walked down to north Glenwood to this meeting because I felt like, first of all, traffic would be bad. It was. The parking would be not very good. I decided to just walk, which I love to do. That's one of the reasons why I live here.

On the way down, right next to the bridge, I see a truck go up Grand Avenue Bridge just woosh, as fast as he could go.

That was one of the things that I was thinking about what I wanted to speak about tonight is to say that you guys have never addressed the speed of the traffic that's going to be coming. So if they're coming down the bridge fast right -- and I'll admit I'm a fast one. Don't get me for that. I think everybody goes fast on the bridge.

You get on that bridge you've even more time to go as fast as you can, and then it gets to Eight Street and there's a light for now, and you've got people trying to cross.

A lot of them don't know how to cross because they're visitors here. Someone very nicely just put some signs up I noticed that says, Look, the button's behind you. You got to push the button.

A lot of people that visit here, they don't know you have to push the button before you get a walk signal. I've seen them sit there for two light cycles before they start looking around, Whoa, what do I do?

Well, you know, that is not going to be any better; as a matter of fact it's going to be even worse. And I foresee there's going to be some day a young child, a mother with a stroller or an old person who happens to be someone like my 82-year-old mother -- I'm not so spry anymore -- get hit by a car because they've been speeding across Grand Avenue Bridge, you know, don't stop for the light.

That's just not going to be -- we're not going to be happy about that at all 'cause that's going to be ourselves, our mother, our child. That's not going to be a good thing. I have not seen that get addressed.

The other thing I want to talk about was as far as the wishes of the community. So they say, Look, we want to hear what you want to say. We want to hear your thoughts. Then they go ahead and do whatever they want to do because they just are giving us lip service.

I think that this is going to continue. They did this -- now, granted the canyon looks great and they've done that with the canyon. But I know that in part of the canyon, they did that little rock thing, whatever that is down to No Name, it's horrible.

So this thing has just moved quickly. I know I'm running out of time, but I want to say this. This is where we're talking about the bypass, because the paper teased us today, Come to this meeting because they're going to talk about a bypass.

Who has a bypass? Durango has a bypass. Basalt has a bypass now. Redstone has a bypass, if I may say so. Estes Park has a bypass. Why can't we have a bypass? The money has to be there. There's coalitions. They can get into the regional section. They can work with all kinds of people to get a bypass. I think it's overdue.

Thank you very much.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Mark Adler.
MR. ADLER: Hello. I moved here in 1971. And I think the town has probably doubled in population since then. We always had a traffic problem. It's not been really addressed because we need cooperation from the City and from CDOT.
Now, we're actually in a marriage that we can't be divorced from. They own 82. It goes through our town. But like any good marriage, we need to make this so we can all get along now to the future, 50 years from now, when everybody in this room is. Gone we're just looking out for our kids and grandkids.
So I can remember back in the mid '90s John Shift and I put a power point presentation together -- it was on the city council's site for a while -- about a cut and cover tunnel. We bought the railroad right of way; we own -- we can do it under Grand Avenue, a cut and cover tunnel like they do in Europe.
Now, it's expensive. But you're spending money, a lot of money all around the state. I think we need to spend some here.
Glenwood Springs is a confluence of two rivers. We have a wonderful community but unfortunately we are the neck

of the funnel that serves the rest of the valley. We have traffic coming from Silt, Rifle, going all the way to Aspen every single day. And we take the brunt of it. It's about time that we just get together and work out something for a long range solution.
Granted, as has been said, the engineering on the bridge is beautiful. But wouldn't it be better to fix what we have and take all that money and put it into something that would be a long range solution?
(Applause.)
You know, we can always drill a tunnel in the pass there. But I think if we really look at this, and if CDOT would look at it, it's not a Glenwood problem; it's a big regional problem. Let's do something for the whole Roaring Fork valley. And I think that this marriage could be quite enjoyable.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: Cheryl Cain.
MS. CAIN: My name's Cheryl Cain. I live on Grand Avenue. I've been a neighbor of CDOT for 25 years. It hasn't been a happy relationship. And it's frustrating to me that CDOT claims to be our partner, but they don't behave like a good neighbor.
I can speak to the details of that. I think this has always been a question as to whether Glenwood wants to be

a community, or if it wants to be a thoroughfare. And my position is that I want Glenwood to be a community.
There's been numerous studies done. We've spent all kinds of money on various studies that have indicated that a bypass, a different route, is the solution here.
I don't see that the bridge needs to be replaced. But what I do see is that we need to decide what we want to be when we grow up. I've been saying all of this time this is a regional problem. And I'm finding it a little bit ironic that the only time that CDOT talked to any of the other communities was when they wanted some money to pay for the road.
Seems to me like we're being sold a bill of goods. Seems to me like this is a situation where we're expected to believe that the emperor's fully dressed except he happens to be naked.
We're told all kinds of different benefits come from this road. Under the bridge is going to be bigger, and somehow that's more wonderful. I suppose it is for the pigeons. But I don't know even a smaller area is that great, so what are we going to do with a bigger area?
I think there's so many downsides to this. And it's unfortunate because I think there's a lot of people within this community and throughout the valley who have said, We want to be part of a complete regional transportation solution planning process, and they have been rejected in that.

So I think that everybody who's come up here, with the exception of a couple of people, have talked about this being a regional problem. And it is a regional problem.
It's more than just a bridge, and we all know that. And there's clearly a vocal majority of people who are here who believe that we need to stop, we need to regroup, and we need to decide exactly which direction we want to go, and that this is a much bigger problem.
And then there's all the details. What does it look like when it hits Eighth Street? I have additional concern, since I live on Grand, that the reason that it was chosen to be the way it is is because it's easier for oil and gas to go on a curve rather than a 90-degree turn.
Frankly, I don't want oil and gas trucks going in front of my house or anywhere in Glenwood Springs.
I think we need to stop. And I certainly think we need to take more time to look at this assessment. There was only two copies available. One at the library, one at CDOT. Neither one are very easy to access. And they take a long time to read.
I printed the entire thing. It's three and a half reams of paper.
So people need to be able to go to it, look at it, and spend some thoughtful time and make comment. There's no reason for this plan should be pushed down our throats.

(Applause.)
We need to be able to make comments as we're able. I think my time is out. Thank you.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: That is everybody who signed up to speak. If you'd like to come up and give us your name and spelling of your name, we will get your comments in the record.
MR. STARK: Thank you. My name is Terry Stark. I live at 809 Blake Avenue.
I've listened to a lot of this. And my real question is how do we stop the city council from going forward and letting CDOT do what they want to do. They've got to be stopped.
The other thing is the quality of life of the citizens of Glenwood Springs has really got to be considered big time.
There was something else. Oh, yes. I forgot about it.
(Applause.)
MS. NOYES: All right.
MR. KELLY: Thanks. My name is Nick Kelly. I'm new to Glenwood Springs. I've only lived here for two years.
But I got to say I'm really pleased with all the people here who are standing up for what they believe. That's

great. I believe the same thing.
We don't need more traffic in Glenwood Springs. We don't need to have a better bridge for people to go up valley. The people up valley need a better way to get there. They don't need necessarily to have a new bridge in Glenwood Springs over Grand Avenue.
There's got to be a way, even though I appreciate that CDOT is limited by what the state legislature allows it to do and how they appropriate money, there's got to be a way for CDOT to go back to the governor, the legislature, all of the politicians and tell them that Glenwood Springs doesn't need a new bridge now; we need a bypass somewhere that they have to figure out.
MS. NOYES: All right. We are passed our scheduled time. Stay. I'm just pointing out that we are here until 8:00. It is now ten minute after 8:00.
We will continue to take comments, remembering of course that this is not your only opportunity to get your comment in the record. So if you did not speak as long as you wanted or did not feel that you had the opportunity tonight to express all of your concerns, please make sure that you provide comments in the written form through the various channels that have been made available to you.
JOHN DUVEN: John Duven. I'm a county resident. I used to live in Glenwood Springs for about eight years.

MS. NOYES: How do you spell your last name?
MR. DUVEN: D-u-v-e-n.
A couple comments. First thing is, you know, the bridge that's there right now is really adequate for Glenwood Springs. It's really what we're doing with the upper valley towns that do need this bridge improved because of the traffic that's going up there.
This new bridge doesn't fix one problem except an inadequate bridge. It doesn't fix pollution, doesn't take one car off the road, the noise and the smell will still be on Grand Avenue.
This new bridge -- and it's hard to see on this model. But there's a computer over there, one of the laptops. There's still three lighted intersections, there's three stoplights that are going to make you stop, traffic flow. One of them's on I-70 to Sixth Avenue west.
You'll get off of I-70 and go west. You'll head kind of over the bridge and take a left-hand turn and go back westbound on Sixth Avenue.
Those things are not going to help the traffic flow. It's not going to be like it looks on that where the traffic's just going to flow through. There's going to be stops.
I guess one other question I had, I just found this out that the Highway 82 access plan was already approved I guess. You all need to look at that and see what that does to

Grand Avenue.
It takes a lot of intersections out. It takes a lot of access to stores and moves some stoplights. Please look at that. Basically what we're going to have is a freeway off of I-70 all the way through Glenwood to 27th Avenue.
Take a look at that. See what we can do. This bridge, Glenwood Springs doesn't need it. Glenwood Springs is doing fine.
MS. NOYES: All right. Is there anyone else that wants to speak so I have some sense of time? I'm trying to be respectful of the staff that needs to stay. We said we would be wrapping up at 8:00.
I have one and then another. Anyone else? At the you can have 30 second. We don't have a great deal of time for questions. A lot of questions have come up tonight, all of which will be part of the record for the EA in response to the comments that we've heard tonight.
You all will have responses to all the issues raised tonight.
Please, name and spelling.
MR. DENTON: Jim Denton, D-e-n-t-o-n.
I want to add one thing briefly. I have no doubt that CDOT, that our guys have worked hard creating this. But the solution is the regional solution, and it does require a bypass much more than a bridge.

I remember two or three years ago talking to John Haines. He had been in Snow Mass at the meeting that John Hickenlooper attended. He tried to talk with the governor about this issue.

And I remember him telling me the governor blew him off and said, The people of Glenwood Springs want more than they can afford.

I'd like for him to see what they can afford to do for Estes Park right now. They're rebuilding three highways in a town of 7,500 people. They're building a new highway to Heaven in Estes Park that will cost in excess of $300 million that will include beautiful new parks, everything imaginable. It is something that will really deserve to have his name on it.

The person, the one person who's not here tonight who should be here listening and doing something about this to help us is the governor. We need a political solution and we need political support for this.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Did you want to say something? Please come up.

MS. REED: Sherry Reed, R-e-e-d.

I live in Glenwood Springs. My heart is in Glenwood Springs. I work and commute up to Aspen. I've had to endure Highway 82 for 25 years on my commute, and especially at

Briarwood Canyon. It was supposed to make Highway 82 safer. It's a nightmare.

So I see nothing that we're gaining by putting something faster, because we're going to have more lanes to drive us through town.

That's basically it. Thank you. We're not gaining a thing.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: All right. Anybody else?

Okay, John. You may have 30 seconds. And I'm going to hold you to that.

MR. HAINES: My name is John Haines. This probably won't take 30 seconds.

As much as Joe and Craig and the folks at city council would like to think that these are all plants that I have here tonight, none of them are. These are honest to goodness citizens of Glenwood Springs that have come out to share what's in their heart with you people.

You talk about all the people that you talked to at the market. I'm not sure where they are tonight, but they certainly aren't here.

You guys, look at what's going on. I think you need to revisit it. I asked Don Hunt to come tonight so that he would hear this forum. But he has another meeting so he couldn't come.

And I just hope you'll take some of this back to him and the other people that are involved in city council, and listen to what these citizens are saying. They're not here for fun; this comes from their heart. Please listen.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NOYES: Thank you.

I want to reiterate that all these comments will be in the public record. And all the comments that you submit on line, in writing, by mail, by fax, on your comment sheets tonight, and any other way you get them in will be part of the public record.

Very much appreciate the time that you've taken to provide that input to us so that we can further consider your concerns as part of this EA process.

With that, I'll thank you all very much for your patience, participation, and your passion. Thank you.

(Whereupon the within proceedings adjourned at 8:20 PM.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Martha Loomis, Certified Shorthand Reporter, appointed to take the within proceedings hereby certify that the proceedings was taken by me, then reduced to typewritten form by means of computer-aided transcription; that the foregoing is a true transcript of the proceedings had subject to my ability to hear and understand, and that I have no interest in the proceedings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand.

_____

Martha Loomis

Certified Shorthand Reporter

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$100 (3)
23:15;34:11;60:9
$110- (1)
26:2
$115 (1)
26:2
$130 (2)
4:6;7:20
$2,400 (1)
3:18
$2,500 (1)
47:19
$300 (1)
74:11
$5.5 (1)
50:24
$50- (1)
3:3
$6 (1)
37:15
$60 (1)
3:3

A

abandoned (1)
59:24
ability (1)
35:25
able (6)
6:12;41:16;44:5;
69:23;70:2,2
above (3)
48:21;52:16;63:8
abrupt (1)
36:4
Absolutely (4)
2:12;6:11;7:20,22
absorb (3)
35:20,21;52:6
absurd (1)
7:20
abutment (1)
19:1
accelerates (1)
61:15
accept (1)
37:2
accepted (1)
54:3
access (8)
3:6;20:3,3;23:11,11;
69:19;72:24;73:3
accommodate (2)
33:6;45:20
accomplished (2)
36:15;46:3
account (1)
4:13
acknowledged (1)
49:5
across (6)
11:3;20:8,13;25:23;
45:24;64:24
Act (5)
24:13;29:19;48:14,
14;57:25
action (4)
22:16;35:6;46:11;
48:16
active (1)
36:1
activity (2)
18:21;59:16
actual (2)
9:15;61:4
actually (7)
14:24,25;23:22;
26:20;56:7;57:23;66:9
add (5)
4:7,18;32:5;54:11;
73:22
added (3)
13:18,18;55:1
adding (1)
32:8
addition (9)
16:25;17:23;19:6,11;
21:8;24:11;25:13,20;
60:9
additional (6)
17:1;49:4,22;54:25;
57:5;69:10
address (13)
11:8;13:7;14:15;
15:6;17:25;23:2,4,6;
26:10;28:15;45:10;
56:2,4
addressed (3)
64:3;65:4;66:7
addresses (6)
3:19;26:14;27:11;
33:9;47:20;51:20
addressing (2)
40:21;46:20
adds (1)
2:20
adequate (1)
72:4
adjourned (1)
76:19
Adler (2)
66:3,4
Administration (1)
16:19
admire (1)
53:15
admit (1)
64:5
adverse (4)
24:17,19,23,25
aesthetic (2)
60:23;61:5
aesthetically (3)
20:17,21;24:7
affected (5)
20:4;53:13;54:18,18,
25
affecting (1)
19:18
affects (1)
53:25
afford (2)
74:7,8
again (7)
7:14;8:9,15;10:14;
56:21;60:6,12
against (2)
11:21;29:12
agencies (1)
54:5
agency (2)
25:22;26:18
ago (8)
8:24;11:13;12:8;
25:12;29:9;39:16;
62:11;74:1
agree (2)
56:1;57:19
agreed (1)
39:19
agreement (2)
8:7;33:25
agreements (1)
26:17
ahead (2)
57:7;65:8
air (2)
24:2;52:9
airport (1)
56:15
Alice (2)
30:20,20
alignment (5)
17:17;19:15,19;
25:17,17
alleviate (1)
23:3
allow (2)
36:1,13
allows (2)
14:24;71:8
almost (2)
33:25;34:6
along (5)
4:2;28:23;60:6;
61:23;66:12
Alps (1)
56:13
alternate (2)
30:8;49:8
alternates (1)
13:9
alternative (10)
14:13;15:18;17:8,9,
10,16;18:12;26:5;46:6;
49:1
alternatives (8)
15:10,12,16;42:21,
21;46:5;48:15;49:5
although (1)
25:10
always (4)
31:24;66:6;67:11,25
amenities (1)
18:5
amenity (1)
51:3
American (1)
25:5
amount (3)
3:3;35:16;36:21
analysis (3)
15:5,7,12
Anderson (3)
35:10,11;46:25
Angie (1)
38:25
ANONYMOUS (1)
2:23
Antlers (1)
63:8
anymore (2)
54:20;64:23
apartments (1)
52:16
apologize (1)
51:13
appearance (1)
57:14
appears (3)
9:4;37:4;54:18
appendix (1)
60:19
Applause (36)
30:9,17;31:8,14;
32:1,19;33:16;35:9;
37:23;40:11;41:14;
42:2;43:18;45:1;46:22;
47:25;49:9;50:2;51:15;
52:23;55:4,23;56:23;
58:4;59:9;60:13;62:25;
66:2;67:10,17;70:1,4,
20;74:19;75:8;76:6
applied (1)
25:24
apply (2)
25:22,24
appreciate (8)
28:1;29:4;30:18;
35:15;54:16;55:6;71:7;
76:13
approach (1)
60:22
approached (1)
58:15
appropriate (3)
45:15;55:15;71:9
approved (1)
72:24
aquatic (1)
24:1
architect (1)
59:11
area (22)
11:4,7;18:21,22,24;
19:2,17;21:21;25:19;
29:9;31:10;42:23;43:3;
53:8;54:17;57:11,12;
61:19;62:3,22;68:19,
20
areas (5)
2:6;7:5,7;22:17;
31:24
Arline (1)
41:23
around (14)
12:13;29:9;34:17;
36:5;41:1,4,7;42:7,7;
45:10;51:9;61:19;
64:18;66:22
articles (1)
33:21
ashamed (1)
47:2
aside (1)
48:25
aspect (1)
55:2
aspects (3)
4:14;12:11;53:22
Aspen (7)
31:23;34:19;37:12;
40:19,22;67:2;74:24
asphalt (1)
7:1
Assessment (11)
9:16;14:16,17;21:5;
22:15,17,23;23:5;33:2;
56:4;69:17
associated (1)
14:10
assuming (1)
26:13
asthma (3)
63:5,8,12
atrocious (1)
6:11
attended (1)
74:3
attention (1)
39:9
attract (1)
52:17
attractive (4)
44:9,11,12;57:12
Australian (1)
8:7
authenticity (1)
62:9
Authority (1)
58:11

available (4)
17:12,13;69:18;
71:23
Avenue (60)
3:12,18;5:13;9:1,17;
13:13,20,22;17:17;
18:7,25;21:15,16,23;
22:13;24:18,22;27:6;
31:1,11,16;32:5,7,11,
17,24;33:1;36:12,16;
39:3,5;41:7;44:1;
45:11,21;47:14;49:2;
51:7;60:2,7;61:9,9,19,
19,21,22;63:3,16,16,
24;64:24;66:19;67:20;
70:10;71:6;72:11,16,
19;73:1,5
Avenue-Highway (1)
33:10
avoid (1)
36:17
away (4)
5:11;19:16;29:21;
39:5
awesome (1)
38:3
awful (1)
34:22

B

back (15)
3:24;5:6;12:6;20:14;
40:14;44:5;47:22;51:1;
57:12,15;63:4;66:15;
71:10;72:18;76:1
backed (3)
5:19;6:1;7:13
background (2)
42:6;53:3
backing (1)
5:17
backup (1)
36:3
bad (2)
35:16;63:20
ballot (3)
3:14;47:14,14
ballots (3)
3:19,23;47:20
barges (1)
2:17
barrier (1)
52:15
barriers (1)
51:5
Basalt (2)
34:19;65:20
based (4)
13:3;15:18;19:13;
29:12
Basically (2)
73:4;75:6
Basin (1)
7:6
basis (1)
56:13
beautiful (4)
34:23;39:4;67:7;
74:12
beauty (1)
61:1
Beaver (1)
7:5
became (1)
19:7
become (2)
29:18;61:12
becomes (1)
61:13
begin (1)
34:2
beginning (4)
13:2;14:7;24:4;
54:22
behave (1)
67:22
behind (1)
64:13
Bell (1)
41:20
below (4)
11:20;12:5,9;62:18
benefit (1)
46:4
benefits (2)
37:5;68:16
Bernes (2)
57:1,2
besides (1)
18:4
best (14)
14:14;15:17,24;
21:15;23:2;25:3;27:10;
38:18;46:5;48:8;50:11,
21;57:24;58:15
Bethel (3)
58:9,10,10
better (19)
7:18;12:25;15:22,22;
19:9,12,24;20:13;
32:16;37:9,11,11;
50:10;51:12;55:25;
64:19;67:7;71:3,4
beyond (1)
62:17
bicycles (1)
44:20
bicyclists (1)
18:7
big (7)
32:14;39:4,10;43:8;
61:13;67:13;70:17
bigger (3)
68:17,20;69:8
bikeable (1)
40:5
Bill (2)
60:14;68:12
bit (10)
9:14,24;13:11;22:4;
25:9;28:4;39:2;54:13;
60:25;68:9
Blair (3)
52:24,25,25
Blake (1)
70:10
Blanc (1)
56:11
blew (2)
40:16;74:5
blind (1)
37:6
block (2)
50:19;51:19
blocked (1)
31:16
blue (2)
13:19;21:18
board (1)
58:22
boards (3)
17:12,13;27:19
Bob (2)
50:3,4
Bobbi (2)
51:16,17
Boos (1)
40:11
booths (1)
17:6
bore (1)
56:15
born (1)
38:24
borne (1)
55:21
both (11)
7:3;18:25;19:10;
20:19;22:18,25;26:18;
40:24;42:13;44:3;45:8
bottleneck (1)
56:8
Bottlenecks (1)
56:8
bottom (3)
12:3,5,9
bought (1)
66:18
Boulder (1)
62:8
Boulevard (1)
8:11
box (3)
3:20,21;47:21
Bradford (1)
41:21
brains (1)
4:10
Breasted (3)
40:12,13,13
breathe (2)
35:22;63:5
Breckenridge (1)
7:6
Briarwood (1)
75:1
brick (1)
58:19
bridge (148)
2:3,3,5,7,16,19,20,
22;3:2,5;4:7,14,15,16,
19,24;5:4,5,6,14;9:17;
10:23,24,24;11:9,13,
20,22,24;12:7;13:11,
12,13,21,22,23,25;
14:4,10;17:17,23,24,
25;18:1,4,13,14,16,17,
25;19:1,7,9,9,17;20:2,
4,5,11,14,17,19,20,20,
24;21:8,10,11;22:8,14;
24:8,9,19,24;26:25;
27:2,3,6;29:16;30:11;
31:2,3,5,6,11,24;32:5,
24;33:3,19;34:1,6,6,8,
9,13,16;36:9,13,16,19,
23;37:21;41:15;42:11,
15;45:6,14,16;46:13;
48:2,3;52:21;54:7;
56:2,19;57:5,9,11,13,
16,17,19;59:20;60:24;
62:21,22;63:23,24;
64:4,6,7,25;67:7;68:6,
17;69:4;71:3,5,12;
72:4,6,8,9,12,18;73:7,
25
bridges (8)
13:15,16,17,18,20;
14:5;31:4,5
brief (1)
12:16
briefly (1)
73:22
bright (1)
60:18
bring (2)
2:17;58:22
bringing (2)
23:14;47:18
broader (1)
46:18
brought (4)
53:22;58:21;59:7;
63:14
brunt (1)
67:3
brushed (1)
48:25
budget (3)
49:3;57:4,4
build (10)
19:17;20:17;21:11,
17;23:22;24:24;31:6;
44:11;60:1,6
building (4)
2:23;13:15;59:25;
74:10
buildings (2)
24:21;52:12
built (5)
4:25;7:1;33:5;56:12;
59:13
bumper (2)
33:12,12
bunch (2)
12:13;13:1
burden (2)
37:3;55:21
buried (1)
51:25
bus (2)
36:1,6
buses (1)
35:25
business (9)
13:14;17:2;23:7,9,
11,13;34:4;55:19;
61:11
businesses (8)
19:16;20:9;23:7,18;
34:21;37:1;50:18;
58:25
button (2)
64:14,16
button's (1)
64:13
bypass (27)
4:5;31:23;32:13;
33:20;34:1,5,15,25;
35:5;41:1,10,17;42:25;
43:1;50:8;65:17,19,20,
20,21,21,22,22,25;
68:5;71:12;73:25

C

Cain (4)
41:24;67:18,19,19
call (8)
4:12,16;8:19;28:11,
24;40:23;43:14,15
called (4)
8:22;16:15;25:21;
38:3
calming (1)
57:25
came (6)
6:12;8:24;16:24;
17:24;18:18;50:11
Campbell (1)
41:24
campuses (1)
34:21
can (74)
2:5,7,13,18;3:4;4:1;

5:19,24;7:4;9:13;
11:11,18;12:25;13:4,
19;14:24;15:11;18:18;
22:1,2;23:22;26:7,20;
27:10,13,14,14,15,16,
17,17;30:22;31:5,6,6,
24;35:7;36:15,19;
37:21;38:17,18;40:15;
43:14,15;44:11;48:6,8;
50:10,21,24,25;53:16;
55:25;56:5,18;59:2,16,
21,23,25;64:8;65:23,
24;66:11,15,18;67:11,
24;73:6,14;74:7,8;
76:14
Canyon (5)
7:1;65:11,12,12;75:1
capabilities (1)
36:12
capacity (3)
19:8;21:23;45:21
car (3)
40:16;64:24;72:10
Carbondale (4)
34:18;40:15,22;
59:14
Cardiff (1)
41:20
care (4)
9:9;12:19;28:22;
31:23
carless (1)
40:16
Carol (1)
41:19
carry (1)
5:3
carrying (1)
45:21
cars (5)
2:5;29:19,23;36:5;
52:10
case (2)
42:1;47:8
catch (1)
52:10
categories (2)
22:22;23:24
category (1)
24:12
caught (1)
52:11
cause (2)
9:2;65:2
caused (1)
49:14
causes (1)
36:3
CDOT (45)
3:24;4:2;5:1;6:4,6,
13,15;7:16;8:18;9:19;
13:14,14;16:19;19:4;
25:22;30:1,2;32:4,10;
37:9,10,11,18;44:17;
45:4;46:2;47:23;49:16,
24;50:6,6,11,14,20;
54:7;66:8;67:12,20,22;
68:10;69:18;70:13;
71:8,10;73:23
CDOT's (4)
5:17;6:14,16;45:9
Centennial (2)
8:22;49:7
center (8)
6:8,10;12:4;40:7;
47:6;49:20;61:10,20
certain (1)
10:21
certainly (3)
25:18;69:16;75:21
Chain (1)
41:21
challenge (1)
11:23
chance (5)
10:8;29:3,5;32:23;
43:6
change (2)
20:3;56:18
changes (4)
32:15;58:1;61:23,25
channel (1)
56:11
channels (1)
71:23
chaos (1)
36:18
charm (2)
2:20;34:25
charming (1)
2:22
charts (1)
22:24
cheaply (1)
7:10
check (1)
57:6
Cheryl (3)
41:24;67:18,19
child (2)
64:21;65:3
choice (1)
52:21
choose (1)
29:3
chosen (2)
28:25;69:11
chunks (1)
11:21
circle (1)
46:1
circulation (1)
53:11
citizen (1)
53:3
Citizens (13)
3:13,14,17;6:7;
40:20;47:13,20;50:19;
55:21;58:7;70:16;
75:17;76:3
city (46)
3:13,15,24;4:15;
8:17,25;16:20;17:3;
20:18;26:18;32:25;
34:23;37:1,14;38:3,7,
10;39:9;42:21,22,23;
47:14,15,24;49:2,16,
17,22;50:14;51:1,12;
53:2,18;54:1,9,11,11,
12;59:12;61:20;62:14;
66:7,17;70:12;75:14;
76:2
citywide (1)
51:20
claims (1)
67:22
clean (1)
27:7
clear (1)
53:24
clearly (1)
69:5
close (4)
21:10;27:3;39:13;
62:13
closed (2)
6:10;47:6
closely (1)
9:5
closing (1)
36:16
closure (3)
26:25;58:23,23
clue (4)
6:23;7:24;8:2,3
coalitions (1)
65:23
code (2)
51:21,22
coffee (1)
5:9
collaborative (2)
60:21,22
college (1)
34:21
Colorado (21)
2:6;5:21;7:3;8:11;
10:23;11:3,25;13:11,
12,23;20:9,15;32:6;
34:17;35:4;40:25;
48:18;51:6;53:24;56:6;
61:19
comfortable (1)
9:14
coming (7)
23:16;31:13;54:19;
58:8;64:4,4;67:2
comment (12)
6:2;8:17;9:9;19:13;
27:9,13,16,17,22;
69:24;71:19;76:10
commentary (2)
12:18;38:5
Comments (21)
2:1;10:1,4,15;26:11;
27:10;28:10,14,17;
43:12;51:18;58:18,20;
70:2,7;71:17,22;72:3;
73:17;76:8,9
commission (2)
38:13;53:2
committed (1)
13:24
committee (2)
3:17;16:8
common (1)
4:10
communities (3)
13:25,25;68:10
community (28)
3:9;6:8,10;14:4,9,18;
16:9,12;24:6;36:25;
47:6;49:20;53:11,12,
13,16;54:5,6;55:8,13,
16;56:3,5;65:6;66:25;
68:1,2,23
commute (2)
74:24,25
company (1)
8:7
comparative (1)
15:12
comparatively (1)
15:16
compared (1)
7:10
comparing (1)
46:5
compatibility (1)
45:19
compatible (1)
33:5
compensate (1)
49:16
compete (1)
60:17
complaints (1)
40:1
complete (2)
45:17;68:24
comprehensive (4)
33:8;45:9;46:4;
51:20
computer (1)
72:13
conceived (1)
36:10
concept (1)
36:8
concern (5)
43:20;49:12;51:25;
57:13;69:10
concerned (3)
51:8;57:4;59:3
concerning (1)
59:13
concerns (8)
52:5;53:18;57:3,8;
58:22;59:7;71:21;
76:15
conclusion (3)
8:25;37:17;48:12
concrete (4)
7:2;11:19,21;61:1
conditions (2)
24:2,3
confluence (1)
66:24
congestion (3)
9:3;10:25;33:1
connect (1)
17:17
connection (8)
4:16;11:2;17:21;
19:9,12;21:17;59:2,3
connectivity (9)
4:18;11:6;19:4;44:4;
45:22,23;46:1;48:17;
56:7
connects (3)
4:21;17:21;18:8
cons (1)
15:20
consensus (1)
41:3
Consequently (1)
33:7
consider (6)
12:25;53:6,22;54:4,
16;76:14
consideration (4)
33:4;46:14;55:1;
62:17
considerations (1)
54:16
considered (2)
53:19;70:16
considering (3)
16:11;53:9;60:25
consistent (1)
25:10
consists (1)
45:16
constant (1)
36:3
constantly (1)
38:7
construct (2)
14:25,25
constructed (3)
11:13;13:20;45:20
construction (27)
3:25;19:14,16;21:9,
10;22:3,14;23:8,9,25;
24:23;25:9,13;26:21,

22,23,24;33:4;36:11, 17,22,25;37:5;41:16; 45:16;49:3,14
consultant (3) 9:20;58:17;62:7
consultation (1) 25:1
consulted (1) 55:12
consulting (1) 9:21
contacts (1) 17:1
contain (1) 15:4
context (5) 16:11;19:23;60:19; 61:4;62:20
Continental (1) 53:25
continue (5) 22:1;59:2;60:2; 65:10;71:17
continued (1) 41:7
continues (1) 27:2
contract (1) 26:19
contractor (1) 26:20
contrarian (3) 38:23,23;40:9
conversation (1) 28:6
conversations (1) 28:7
converted (1) 11:14
cool (2) 40:7;52:14
cooler (1) 40:3
cooling (1) 52:13
cooperation (1) 66:7
coordination (2) 25:5,7
Copenhaver (1) 41:25
copies (1) 69:18
Copper (1) 7:5
corridor (8) 8:20,24;32:8;42:16; 45:9;46:11;48:25;60:5
corroding (1) 11:19
cost (18) 3:4;18:14;25:8,8,9, 11,14,14,16,18,22; 26:1;35:3;36:20,21; 57:5;60:8;74:11
costs (7) 8:3;25:13,14,19,20, 21;26:3
council (9) 3:13,15;17:3;20:18; 50:14;51:1;70:12; 75:15;76:2
council's (1) 66:17
countdown (1) 28:22
counties (1) 41:12
country (1) 42:8
County (9) 6:16;8:18;37:15; 38:9;40:24,24;49:22, 22;71:24
couple (8) 6:14;8:24;12:7;45:3; 49:12;58:22;69:2;72:3
couplet (1) 21:20
course (4) 25:15;29:21;30:10; 71:18
court (3) 27:15;28:13;30:21
cover (5) 12:11,16;13:5;66:17, 19
covers (1) 30:12
Craig (6) 9:19;10:10;12:10; 28:6;47:2;75:14
create (3) 35:1;36:9,24
creating (3) 36:17;37:20;73:23
creative (1) 60:11
credit (1) 62:5
Creek (1) 7:5
criteria (1) 15:19
cross (12) 4:17,18;21:18;31:17; 32:6;34:6;44:1,5;60:5; 61:9;64:10,11
crossing (6) 2:4;32:9;34:7;35:22, 22,24
crossroad (1) 56:8
Crow (3) 32:20,21,21
current (4) 2:16;18:18;34:16; 51:21
currently (4) 13:17;27:4;35:18,19
curve (1) 69:13
cut (4) 6:12;29:2;66:17,19
cycles (1) 64:17

D

Dale (3) 41:25;43:19,20
dangerous (1) 35:23
Daniels (2) 33:17,18
Darek (1) 59:10
Dave (3) 6:16;42:3;58:5
David (1) 50:13
day (3) 34:6;64:21;67:3
days (2) 27:3;38:17
DC (2) 7:23,24
deal (4) 32:25;39:11;61:13; 73:14
deals (1) 37:19
Dean (1) 41:19
dear (1) 54:19
death (1) 30:24
decades (1) 12:8
December (1) 14:22
decide (2) 68:7;69:7
decided (4) 19:24;28:24;41:3; 63:21
Decision (7) 14:23,23;23:22;26:9, 11,13;27:10
deep (1) 12:2
deficiencies (1) 11:9
deficient (4) 29:17,19;33:7;45:13
delivering (1) 59:16
demise (1) 31:12
DENTON (2) 73:21,21
D-e-n-t-o-n (1) 73:21
Denver (1) 8:6
Department (5) 3:1;8:5;19:4;49:3,15
derive (1) 18:12
deserve (1) 74:13
design (14) 13:21;16:17,23;21:4; 25:14;26:6,12,14;30:6; 41:15;49:21;54:7,9,10
design's (1) 21:4
Despite (1) 48:23
destroy (1) 2:22
destroyed (1) 59:14
destroying (1) 36:8
detail (1) 17:11
detailed (2) 15:17;16:23
details (5) 16:17;18:10;22:22; 67:24;69:9
determination (2) 43:7,8
determine (1) 14:24
determined (3) 18:14;21:14;41:5
detour (6) 21:13,15;22:6,6,10; 30:13
develop (1) 55:12
developed (3) 13:2;14:12;19:22
development (3) 14:11;26:6;58:11
device (1) 57:25
dialogue (2) 6:6,11
diameter (1) 51:23
different (12) 15:25;16:3,17,25; 22:17,20;23:21;24:16; 40:5;45:17;68:5,16
difficult (2) 23:12;61:12
direct (1) 42:13
direction (1) 69:7
directly (1) 27:15
director (1) 58:11
disagree (1) 35:14
discussed (1) 41:3
district (2) 21:24,25
divers (1) 12:6
Divide (1) 53:25
divorced (1) 66:10
Document (12) 14:23,24;22:16; 23:21;26:10,11,13; 27:11;38:12;47:12; 55:15;57:10
documentation (2) 25:15;26:8
documentations (1) 26:7
documented (2) 23:13,25
documents (2) 14:17;55:8
dogs (1) 44:21
dollars (4) 3:8;49:18;50:1; 55:25
Don (3) 6:16;57:1;75:23
done (20) 6:14;8:13,19;9:5; 13:22;20:16;26:12,13, 20;27:5;36:20;38:7; 43:7;46:7;47:13;48:6, 10;53:14;65:11;68:3
doubled (1) 66:5
doubt (1) 73:22
Doug (1) 6:17
down (29) 3:12;6:12,19;7:2; 8:14;12:9;21:10;22:8; 24:19;27:3;28:14;35:7; 39:4;42:16;44:22;52:7; 53:24;56:6;59:19;62:1, 10,12;63:5,15,18,23; 64:4;65:13;69:25
downsides (1) 68:21
downstream (1) 48:21
downtown (37)

5:9;11:2,6;17:5,18;
18:21,24;20:2,3,4,5,7,
7;21:19;30:3;32:22;
35:18;37:1;40:6,8;
48:18;50:18,18;51:6,8;
54:17,20,24,24;56:9,
17;58:11,24;59:15;
60:9;61:8,11
drainage (2)
44:15;56:6
drawings (1)
59:23
dressed (1)
68:14
drill (1)
67:11
Drive (2)
34:3;75:5
driven (1)
43:23
drivers (1)
36:4
driving (2)
61:23;62:2
drop (2)
36:2;40:15
drugstore (2)
32:22;61:13
due (2)
11:24;35:23
Dunn (2)
56:24,24
Durango (1)
65:20
duration (1)
22:6
during (10)
21:9;22:3,11;23:7;
32:11;36:17,25;48:25;
49:14;50:16
Durrett (1)
41:19
dust (1)
23:10
Duven (3)
71:24,24;72:2
D-u-v-e-n (1)
72:2
dynamic (1)
11:25
dysfunctional (2)
4:24;5:2

E

EA (19)
9:17;10:15;23:13,25;
24:10;28:3;43:2;45:12,
15;46:9,12,17;48:12;
49:6;53:6,8;54:3;
73:16;76:15
Eagle (1)
41:11
earlier (2)
60:12;62:7
early (1)
12:6
easier (2)
9:2;69:12
easily (1)
56:18
east (4)
3:6;61:8;62:1,5
easy (4)
39:19;50:21;56:14;
69:19
eating (1)
40:8
Ed (2)
35:12;41:24
editors (1)
33:23
education (1)
53:4
effect (2)
4:7;54:17
effective (2)
11:2;18:15
effects (3)
53:7,9,10
efficient (1)
35:1
effort (3)
12:7;15:9;24:7
egress (1)
51:4
eight (4)
16:17;24:21;64:8;
71:25
Eighth (8)
4:17;21:16,16;48:2;
50:24;51:5;59:1;69:10
EIS (5)
4:12;33:8;43:7;
46:20;48:10
either (4)
2:8;27:13;30:6;47:8
electricity (1)
44:21
elements (6)
14:20;16:9;18:9;
19:5;20:20,25
elevator (4)
20:12;44:19,20,22
else (6)
5:6;49:22;70:18;
73:9,13;75:9
Elsen (3)
6:15;9:19;10:12
email (2)
27:17;28:15
embarrass (1)
30:23
embellishments (1)
54:12
emergency (1)
51:4
emperor's (1)
68:14
encountered (1)
12:8
encouraged (1)
49:2
end (6)
26:8,21,22;42:22;
47:9;63:12
ended (1)
59:14
ends (2)
14:22;19:10
endure (1)
74:24
engineer (4)
2:11;9:19;34:12;
48:11
engineered (1)
53:16
engineering (7)
36:11;46:4;53:5,15;
56:1;57:18;67:6
engineers (2)
53:14,17
English (1)
56:11
enhance (1)
51:3
enhanced (1)
50:16
enjoyable (1)
67:16
enough (4)
38:3;39:9;49:15;
60:18
Enterprise (6)
10:23;13:11,12,23;
14:5;18:13
entire (6)
25:23;34:16;43:9;
54:1,4;69:21
entirely (1)
45:17
entity (2)
13:14,14
entrance (2)
36:9;59:15
environment (8)
4:22;13:1;14:17;
26:8;30:7;42:18;53:10;
58:2
environmental (23)
4:13;9:16;14:6,16,
19;21:5;22:15,17,23;
23:5;25:15;30:15;33:2,
8;42:6,20;46:6;48:13;
52:2;56:4;60:16,23;
61:5
Environmentally (1)
30:6
equal (1)
61:18
Erlandsen (2)
37:24,25
Ernie (1)
41:18
eroding (1)
30:3
erosion (2)
11:24;52:7
escalator (2)
44:22,23
especially (2)
32:14;74:25
Essentially (2)
15:3;17:16
Estes (3)
65:21;74:9,11
etvalley (1)
53:24
Europe (1)
66:20
evaluate (2)
13:8;43:1
evaluation (1)
15:18
even (12)
2:16,17;35:22;36:21;
40:3;49:5;63:11,13;
64:7,20;68:19;71:7
evening (2)
27:25;43:25
eventually (2)
5:17;63:7
everybody (10)
4:11;6:10;9:13;10:8;
31:22;49:22;64:6;
66:12;69:1;70:5
Everyone (4)
11:25;29:3,5;33:25
evolved (1)
45:5
exacerbated (1)
63:11
exactly (2)
5:25;69:7
examination (1)
48:15
example (1)
23:6
exceeding (1)
45:20
excellent (1)
48:20
except (2)
68:14;72:8
exception (1)
69:2
excess (1)
74:11
exclusively (2)
33:2;46:12
exist (3)
11:11;37:18;48:21
existing (13)
2:2;19:16,19;22:8;
24:18;25:17;33:3;
34:13;36:12,19;37:19,
21;45:14
exists (1)
56:19
Exit (3)
17:18;21:15;59:18
exiting (2)
37:10;46:13
exits (1)
17:20
expanded (1)
30:12
expected (3)
14:25;37:15;68:13
expend (1)
15:8
expense (1)
7:3
expensive (1)
66:21
expertise (1)
62:17
explanation (1)
48:14
exposed (1)
11:19
express (3)
6:13;32:23;71:21
expressing (1)
38:14
expressway (2)
30:3,7
extends (1)
56:5
extension (1)
38:5
eye (1)
37:6

F

fabric (1)
55:17
facilitating (1)
9:22
facilities (1)
24:1
facing (1)
46:19
fact (3)
24:16;55:11;64:20
failed (1)
55:7
fails (1)
33:3
fair (1)
54:14
fairly (2)
12:16;23:23
fallen (1)

11:21
far (4)
3:4;9:6;24:17;65:5
farms (1)
34:21
fast (7)
59:17;63:17,24;64:4,5,6,8
faster (1)
75:4
fatal (2)
15:4,7
fathers (1)
39:9
favor (1)
39:23
favorable (1)
54:8
fax (2)
27:17;76:10
feasible (2)
46:5;50:7
federal (4)
4:21;14:2;16:19;26:14
feel (7)
6:20;44:20;47:15;54:7,22;58:24;71:20
feet (3)
5:11;12:5;48:21
felt (1)
63:19
fencing (1)
52:21
ferret (1)
38:11
few (4)
29:13;38:24;54:12,20
figure (1)
71:13
filter (1)
52:9
final (5)
9:9;23:22;26:12,14;52:20
finally (2)
2:24;59:14
financial (2)
8:6;37:5
find (7)
15:21,23;20:19;29:14;37:9,11,11
finding (1)
68:9
fine (5)
28:23;30:7,11;31:3;73:8
finished (1)
2:24
first (17)
12:21;15:4;18:22;20:10;22:21;27:23;29:6,14,16;35:13;40:14;49:13;59:22;62:11;63:3,19;72:3
fit (5)
12:25;13:25;24:6,9;30:7
fits (4)
4:19;54:9;57:14,20
five (2)
12:4;63:3
fix (6)
7:12;12:22;13:7;67:7;72:8,9
fixed (2)
31:6,25
fixing (2)
13:15;36:19
flat (1)
12:3
flaw (2)
15:4,7
flip (1)
23:23
flow (7)
36:1,2,24;37:12;72:15,20,22
focus (4)
16:23;51:18;60:25;61:2
focused (2)
10:23;46:12
focuses (1)
33:2
focusing (1)
37:5
folks (2)
51:13;75:14
follow (2)
16:11;29:5
following (2)
29:11;35:19
Foods (1)
44:11
foot (1)
11:16
footing (2)
12:3,9
Force (4)
20:18,22;21:3;39:18
forced (1)
30:2
forces (4)
11:25;16:22,22;21:7
foresee (1)
64:21
forest (1)
55:10
forever (1)
31:18
forget (1)
43:11
forgot (1)
70:18
Fork (9)
11:7;32:11;40:25;46:10,19;53:24;54:1;60:6;67:15
form (1)
71:22
formal (4)
9:16;28:9,10;43:2
forth (3)
44:5;62:2,14
forum (1)
75:24
forward (4)
16:21;26:13;58:21;70:12
Foulkrod (1)
41:20
found (2)
34:8;72:23
foundations (2)
12:2,3
founded (1)
31:10
four (7)
5:1;11:16;22:21;29:22,22,23;39:11
four-lane (2)
7:13;11:14
fraction (1)
36:20
Frankly (2)
18:12;69:14
frees (1)
17:18
freeway (1)
73:4
front (4)
47:5;52:14;62:14;69:15
frustrating (1)
67:21
frustration (1)
40:1
full (1)
28:22
fully (1)
68:14
fun (2)
61:14;76:4
functional (3)
5:4;11:8,10
functionally (2)
29:16,18
funded (1)
10:22
funding (4)
10:23;13:13,15;26:18
funds (2)
37:20;49:23
funnel (1)
67:1
funneled (1)
45:11
funner (1)
61:14
further (6)
19:1;35:7;41:15;46:8;52:5;76:14
future (14)
3:25;4:3,3;6:23;7:17;9:6;19:8;33:6,9;37:20;46:14,16;57:22;66:12
future's (1)
9:8

G

gaining (2)
75:3,6
Gallagher (1)
41:23
gallon (1)
8:2
Gamba (1)
38:25
Garfield (3)
8:18;37:15;41:11
gas (2)
69:12,14
Gaskill (3)
9:20;12:10,12
gasoline (1)
8:2
gave (1)
46:25
Gay (2)
63:1,2
gear (1)
32:15
general (1)
53:12
geographer (1)
53:4
Gerbaz (1)
41:20
gets (7)
10:8;16:6;27:5,6;29:5;38:18;64:8
Gianetti (1)
41:19
girders (1)
22:7
Gish (3)
50:3,4,4
given (1)
41:12
gives (1)
16:2
giving (2)
10:11;65:9
glad (1)
39:22
glaring (1)
45:12
Glenwood (79)
3:11,13,20,21;4:5;6:7,20,22,25;8:18;9:1,2;11:2,4,6,7;16:20;17:18,21;23:15;24:15;29:10;30:2,8;32:22;34:3,23;35:18;37:1,2,13,14;38:18;39:15;40:4,7,22;41:1;42:9,14,22,23;43:4;45:8;47:20;48:19,20;49:8;53:1;54:1,9;55:17,22;56:9,15,17;57:6;58:12;63:7,18;66:24;67:13,25;68:2;69:15;70:16,23;71:2,5,11,25;72:4;73:5,7,7;74:6,23,23;75:17
goal (3)
46:12;48:17,22
goals (10)
13:1,2,4,4,6;15:17,19;16:4,10;18:3
God (2)
29:19;39:11
goes (6)
4:2;17:10;19:1;57:4;64:6;66:10
good (13)
2:9;6:20;18:2;32:12;40:10;44:19;55:24,24;56:1;63:20;65:3;66:11;67:23
goodness (1)
75:17
goods (4)
21:25;34:18,22;68:12
gorgeous (1)
39:5
government (1)
55:25
governments (1)
40:23
governor (4)
71:10;74:3,5,17
Grafta (2)
21:25;38:9
Grand (57)
3:11,18;5:13;6:17;9:1,17;13:13,20,21;17:17;18:7,25;21:16;24:18,22;27:6;31:1,4,11,16;32:5,7,11,17,24;33:1,10;36:12,16;39:3,5;40:22;41:7;44:1;45:11,21;47:14;49:2;51:19;56:7;60:2;61:9,9,18,21,22;63:3,15,16,24;64:24;66:19;67:19;69:11;71:6;72:11;73:1
grandiose (1)
49:20
grandkids (1)

66:14
granted (2)
65:11;67:6
graphical (1)
11:10
great (11)
18:6;20:22;34:9;
49:21;53:14;57:18,19;
65:11;68:19;71:1;
73:14
greatly (1)
54:25
Gregg (2)
49:10,11
Gregory (1)
41:19
grew (1)
59:12
group (9)
10:18;16:15,16,16,
18,19;19:23;47:13;
62:6
groups (4)
16:7,23;41:2;48:24
grow (2)
7:8;68:8
growing (2)
31:24;51:25
grown (1)
38:10
guarantee (1)
8:9
guardrail (1)
54:10
guess (4)
38:22;39:7;72:23,25
Gunnison (1)
41:12
guy (1)
48:5
guys (13)
35:13;38:4,8;39:2;
47:13;49:15;50:5;
60:17;62:17,18;64:2;
73:23;75:22

H

HAINES (7)
3:1;43:15;46:23,24;
74:2;75:12,12
Hal (1)
45:2
half (4)
11:16;12:4;58:14;
69:21
halted (1)
41:16
hand (2)
12:10;27:16
handle (1)
43:14
handouts (2)
17:13;22:24
hands (1)
36:5
happen (3)
39:23;49:24;50:18
happened (2)
39:10,20
happens (5)
6:18;15:21;48:21;
64:22;68:14
happy (4)
8:12;10:2;65:2;
67:21
hard (8)
23:6;42:17;44:1;
55:9;59:5;63:5;72:12;
73:23
hardscape (1)
20:24
hardship (1)
36:24
hardships (1)
37:20
Hatner (2)
30:20,23
head (3)
42:5;60:17;72:17
healthiest (1)
42:24
hear (6)
5:12;27:10;30:22;
65:7,7;75:24
heard (8)
18:20,22;19:3;20:1;
24:4;25:11;33:23;
73:17
hearing (6)
9:16,18,23,25;16:21;
28:9
heart (4)
37:8;74:23;75:18;
76:4
heartache (2)
39:6,25
Heaven (1)
74:11
heavy (1)
56:19
Hello (3)
50:4;51:17;66:4
hellova (1)
40:10
help (6)
14:14;18:2;37:15;
50:22;72:20;74:17
helped (1)
16:7
helping (1)
54:13
helps (1)
23:21
Here's (2)
11:10;48:11
Hi (6)
32:21;38:2;40:13;
49:11;58:10;59:11
Hickenlooper (1)
74:3
higher (1)
25:16
highlights (1)
12:16
Highway (26)
3:1,6,10;4:21,21;8:4;
16:19;17:20;19:12;
39:4;41:1,4,7,17;44:4,
10;45:5;48:11;55:20;
59:15,18;61:2;72:24;
74:10,25;75:1
Highways (2)
49:3;74:9
hill (1)
59:19
historic (17)
11:3,7;14:19;24:12,
13,14,15,21;25:2,2,4;
34:10;48:19;51:21;
52:12;60:23;61:5
historically (1)
57:14
history (2)
2:21;57:15
hit (3)
58:1;59:17;64:24
hits (2)
36:21;69:10
Hodge (3)
51:16,17,17
hold (2)
9:15;75:11
holes (1)
12:8
home (4)
6:10;7:25;34:2;47:7
homeowners (1)
60:7
honest (1)
75:16
honestly (1)
50:11
hope (5)
43:5;47:8;53:20;
62:16;76:1
hopefully (1)
53:17
horizontally (1)
18:25
horrendous (1)
63:4
horrible (1)
65:14
Hot (4)
11:4,7;48:20;61:20
Hotel (1)
2:6
hour (4)
5:16,23,24;10:7
hours (1)
22:11
house (2)
63:16;69:15
houses (3)
10:17;33:22;62:13
huge (1)
7:2
humanize (1)
62:19
hundred (1)
37:3
Hunt (1)
75:23
Hunter (1)
41:25
Hunt's (1)
6:16
hurt (1)
31:9
husband (1)
32:21

I

I-25 (1)
8:11
I-70 (18)
5:15,19;6:1;7:6;
8:10;11:3,8;19:20;
22:7,11;37:10;42:16;
48:20;55:20;58:1;
72:16,17;73:5
Idaho (1)
7:9
idea (4)
2:9;59:25;60:3,4
ideal (1)
59:20
identified (1)
22:21
identifies (1)
22:18
identify (3)
13:7;14:14;25:3
identifying (1)
14:9
IGAs (1)
26:17
ignorance (1)
46:13
ill (1)
36:10
image (1)
11:10
images (1)
11:18
imaginable (1)
74:12
immediate (1)
23:8
immediately (1)
63:8
impact (28)
4:13,22;21:20;23:3,
7,8,13,14,19;24:17,20,
25;25:4;26:25;33:8;
42:6,18,20;43:9;46:7;
49:17;50:15,18,19;
52:2;57:21;61:17,17
impacted (1)
23:9
impacts (24)
14:17;19:15;21:21;
22:1,16,18,19,19,20,24,
25;23:2,3,4,4,21,25;
24:11,12,23;42:13,14,
15;49:13
imperative (1)
52:7
importance (1)
55:20
important (10)
10:15,21;13:5;16:8;
20:6;21:1;24:4;33:19;
34:5;52:11
improve (5)
11:5;15:11;37:9;
45:23;48:17
improved (3)
19:4;63:8;72:6
improvements (1)
45:6
improves (1)
46:1
inadequate (1)
72:9
inception (2)
29:11;49:19
inches (3)
11:16;51:22,23
Incidentally (1)
45:22
include (6)
25:14;33:4;45:5;
61:5,8;74:12
included (1)
49:1
includes (2)
14:19;16:1
including (1)
20:24
inclusion (1)
48:23
incorporated (1)
21:3
increased (1)
52:5
increasing (3)
33:1;37:10;45:24
indeed (1)
60:20
indicated (1)
68:4
indirect (2)

25:21;42:14
indiscernible (1)
61:23
Individual (2)
2:1;17:1
individuals (1)
48:24
information (10)
10:3,14;12:14,14;
15:15;16:3;17:14;
27:12,18;28:16
infrastructure (1)
23:15
inherited (1)
50:9
initial (1)
53:19
initially (1)
60:16
input (27)
8:8;10:9,19;16:2,2,5,
6,12,16,20,24;17:7,8,9;
18:11;20:1,18,23;21:2,
7;25:7;26:9,10;43:6;
47:3,11;76:14
insight (2)
39:2,15
instead (3)
2:23;11:16;45:15
intended (1)
18:15
interchange (1)
45:6
interconnective (1)
61:6
interdisciplinary (1)
60:22
interested (1)
48:24
interesting (2)
48:12;54:8
interests (1)
53:7
intergovernmental (1)
26:17
intersection (3)
17:21;19:22;45:18
intersections (2)
72:14;73:2
interstate (1)
59:19
into (26)
2:3,4;4:13,19;7:17;
9:6;12:25;13:10,25;
14:13;15:11;16:16;
20:7;21:3;23:21;26:9;
29:22;36:1;51:25;
57:12,14,20;59:15;
62:19;65:23;67:8
inviting (1)
19:2
involved (8)
8:19;15:13;16:6;
43:10;44:8;59:12;
62:20;76:2
involvement (2)
6:3,3
iron (1)
52:21
ironic (2)
60:25;68:9
irreplaceable (1)
62:15
irresponsible (1)
36:9
issue (11)
11:24;16:22;28:25;
44:17;47:15;51:24;
55:16;56:3;59:24;60:8;
74:4
issues (12)
10:25;11:11;14:9;
16:22;20:18,22;27:11;
38:12;42:10;43:21;
44:3;73:18
items (1)
19:3

J

jacking (1)
2:16
Jahani (3)
29:7,8,8
Jerry (1)
41:20
Jim (3)
40:12,13;73:21
job (3)
7:19;32:12;53:14
Joe (9)
6:15;9:19;10:10;
12:12,20;14:12;47:2;
50:11;75:14
John (11)
41:20;43:15;46:23;
47:16;66:15;71:24,24;
74:1,2;75:10,12
joined (2)
46:2,2
joint (1)
48:1
Judy (1)
41:20
Junction (3)
6:17;40:22;56:7
June (1)
41:25

K

Keep (5)
5:8;17:15;23:11;
51:3,5
keeping (2)
36:16;44:13
Keith (1)
41:23
KELLY (2)
70:22,22
key (2)
16:9;26:24
Keystone (1)
7:6
kick (1)
35:6
kid (1)
39:3
kids (1)
66:13
kind (8)
2:9;17:3;26:4;43:25;
49:12;50:8;59:22;
72:18
kinds (4)
3:8;65:24;68:4,16
KINNEY (1)
38:2
knew (6)
18:15;24:8,8;29:23,
24;31:20
knows (1)
31:22

L

lack (2)
35:23,25
land (3)
43:1;52:12;53:3
landscaping (1)
20:25
lane (5)
11:17;29:22;36:3;
39:11,11
lanes (13)
2:3;4:25;5:1,3,15;
7:12;11:12,15;20:6;
32:11,13;36:16;75:4
laptops (1)
72:13
large (1)
55:8
larger (6)
16:16;18:21,24;46:9;
53:5,9
last (7)
27:8;32:23;33:13;
38:13;52:6;54:20;72:1
late (1)
11:14
later (1)
15:1
laugh (1)
7:4
Laurel (6)
17:19;19:21,25;
45:18;59:19;61:19
law (1)
5:21
Layburn (2)
55:5,6
layers (1)
55:12
layman (1)
37:4
Leadership (3)
16:8;39:18;58:14
learned (1)
52:9
learning (1)
52:5
least (2)
7:13;19:17
leave (3)
49:25;56:20;58:1
led (2)
14:11;17:9
left-hand (1)
72:18
legal (1)
48:24
legislature (2)
71:8,10
length (1)
45:24
lengthened (1)
19:20
lengthy (1)
28:7
Leo (2)
38:1,2
Leslie (2)
58:9,10
less (2)
34:14;52:1
letter (3)
40:18,21;41:18
letters (1)
33:22
letting (1)
70:13
level (2)
15:3;52:16
library (2)
60:15;69:18
life (4)
38:22;42:10;43:9;
70:15
light (5)
44:2;59:17;64:9,17,
25
lighted (2)
44:12;72:14
lighting (1)
21:1
limit (5)
5:7,20,23,24;56:18
limited (4)
21:23;22:12;23:10;
71:8
limiting (1)
10:6
limits (2)
42:22,23
line (3)
2:12;32:8;76:10
lined (1)
39:4
lines (1)
28:16
lip (1)
65:9
list (4)
10:4;28:15,18;29:6
listed (1)
44:18
listen (6)
47:11,23;58:20;59:6;
76:3,4
listened (1)
70:11
listening (2)
39:7;74:16
little (10)
5:16;9:24;10:7;
13:11;21:20;28:4;39:2;
54:13;65:13;68:9
livability (2)
53:10,13
live (21)
3:21;6:15,17,17;
8:12;22:8;31:7;41:10;
42:10;50:19;52:16;
61:6;62:1,12;63:8,22;
67:19;69:11;70:10;
71:25;74:23
lived (3)
50:5;63:2;70:23
lives (1)
2:11
living (1)
61:8
load (2)
5:7;56:18
local (8)
5:7;7:21;14:1;17:20,
22;25:2;49:25;61:24
located (1)
54:8
location (5)
18:18;45:15,17;
59:20,20
locations (1)
17:6
Lockwood (2)
60:14,15
logistics (1)
28:4
long (8)
10:8;33:18;50:22;
56:12;67:5,9;69:19;
71:19
longer (1)
45:13

look (52)
2:12;3:8,10,25;4:20;
5:5;6:4,14,25;7:4,5,18,
21,21,23;8:5,10;9:6;
15:5,11;16:3;20:25;
22:22,22;24:9;42:17,
20;44:17;48:2,2,3,3,7;
51:10;55:8;57:15,22;
59:21;60:5,12;62:10;
64:13;65:6;67:12,13;
69:9,17,23;72:25;73:3,
6;75:22
looked (8)
6:22;9:5;19:23;
20:10;23:20;24:12,13;
62:12
looking (17)
3:7;4:19;7:17;14:18,
19;19:5;23:1,2,24;
34:8;51:14;53:4;55:16;
59:1;62:12;64:18;
66:13
looks (5)
22:17;57:17;59:15;
65:11;72:21
loss (1)
44:21
lot (42)
15:13,14;16:5,5,6,
16;17:11,14;18:2;
19:17;20:18,22;21:6,
14;22:20;23:1,10,16,
18;25:19,22;27:1;
30:25;34:14;35:14,15;
38:22;39:6,13,25;42:5;
54:5;55:25;63:9;64:11,
15;66:22;68:22;70:11;
73:2,2,15
lots (5)
19:14;47:5,5;52:13;
62:14
love (7)
29:9;30:25,25;31:12;
43:16;54:21;63:21
lovely (1)
56:21
lowest (1)
21:21
lucky (1)
38:2

M

mail (1)
76:10
main (5)
18:9;31:21;37:8;
57:2;61:2
maintain (2)
2:13;20:8
maintains (1)
26:18
major (4)
43:9;56:8;57:13,21
majority (1)
69:5
makes (2)
14:3;57:19
making (1)
36:4
management (1)
6:7
manager (2)
9:20,21
maneuvers (1)
36:5
manner (1)
36:14
many (10)
2:14;23:7;36:4;37:4;
44:20,20,21;49:4;58:7;
68:21
map (2)
13:16;60:5
maps (1)
59:24
Margi (2)
32:20,21
Margi's (1)
61:13
Mark (2)
41:21;66:3
Market (2)
17:6;75:20
markets (1)
17:5
marriage (3)
66:9,11;67:15
Mass (2)
34:19;74:2
material (1)
25:6
materials (1)
20:23
math (1)
10:6
matter (5)
30:10;33:19;50:21;
62:19;64:20
maximize (1)
22:2
may (9)
4:7;32:23;45:19;
46:14;57:24;60:11;
63:12;65:21;75:10
maybe (8)
9:6;16:13;32:4;
39:13;42:11;43:21;
50:6;56:1
mayor (2)
38:3;50:14
MC (1)
38:2
McKinney (2)
38:1,2
meal (1)
5:10
mean (4)
26:10;29:22;35:14;
61:12
means (1)
61:21
measure (1)
16:3
meet (2)
14:1;15:17
meeting (11)
18:23;27:9;47:4,9;
48:13;59:23;62:7;
63:19;65:18;74:2;
75:24
meetings (8)
15:14;17:2,2,3,3;
20:19;33:22;58:19
meets (2)
15:24;48:21
Mehrdad (2)
29:6,8
Melanie (1)
41:19
member (2)
3:17;53:2
memorandum (1)
25:3
mention (2)
29:16;63:14
mentioned (1)
49:5
merely (1)
45:14
message (1)
38:4
met (3)
16:13,17;58:19
Michael (4)
52:24,25;56:24,24
microcosm (1)
55:16
microphone (2)
28:12;30:21
mid (1)
66:15
middle (2)
31:20;44:5
Midland (4)
21:15,16,23;60:7
might (12)
2:18;13:5;20:2,25;
22:18;23:8,14;26:1;
31:3;38:12;54:8;60:8
might've (1)
25:11
Mike (1)
38:25
mile (1)
56:12
miles (4)
5:16,23,24;56:12
million (16)
3:3,5,7;4:6;7:20;
23:15;25:10,12;26:2;
34:11;37:15;44:18;
50:24,25;60:9;74:11
mind (1)
44:6
minimize (6)
19:14;20:7;21:20;
22:1;23:4;50:15
minute (2)
28:21;71:16
minutes (4)
10:6;28:22;29:2;
47:1
missing (1)
32:4
mission (3)
16:10;25:2;39:18
mistake (1)
59:17
mitigate (2)
23:3;25:4
mitigation (1)
57:8
mobility (1)
10:25
model (1)
72:13
modernizing (1)
37:21
Moffatt (1)
41:19
money (17)
3:3,18;7:14,15;
23:18;34:14;47:16,19;
49:3;54:13;65:22;
66:21,22;67:8;68:4,11;
71:9
monitor (1)
5:22
Mont (1)
56:11
Moore (3)
63:1,2,2
more (42)
7:14,15;9:24;12:15;
16:24;18:9;19:2;23:12;
30:4,12;32:6;34:5,24;
35:1,1;38:6,11,14,17;
39:13;40:6,8;41:22;
45:6;48:1,6;51:22;
52:3,17;53:23;54:5;
55:1;60:11;62:5;64:7;
68:18;69:4,17;71:2;
73:25;74:6;75:4
morning (1)
43:24
most (7)
3:21;13:19;16:7;
21:2,2;24:3;33:24
mother (3)
64:21,23;65:3
motorists (4)
61:22,23,24;62:2
Mountain (2)
7:5;56:16
move (10)
16:21;19:16;21:12;
27:2;28:23;29:1;32:5,
10;37:11;63:7
moved (3)
42:9;65:15;66:4
moves (2)
26:13;73:3
much (39)
5:3,12;8:1,2,5;9:2;
13:5;15:8;18:24;21:2;
22:6;24:7;25:16;27:7;
28:1,1;30:3,12,18;
35:19,19,20,21;41:22;
46:9;47:1;50:24,25;
52:6;58:3;61:14,14,18;
66:1;69:8;73:25;75:14;
76:13,16
multimodal (2)
11:2,5
multiple (1)
10:17
municipal (2)
40:24,24
municipality (3)
35:3;41:4,5
myself (2)
30:23;34:9

N

naked (1)
68:15
name (18)
10:3;28:11,14,17,24;
29:6,8;40:13;63:2;
65:14;70:6,7,9,22;
72:1;73:20;74:13;
75:12
name's (1)
67:19
narrow (1)
4:25
narrowly (1)
10:23
narrow-sighted (1)
7:19
nation (1)
34:17
National (2)
24:13;48:13
Native (1)
25:5
Naturally (2)
29:15,24
near (3)
5:3;26:8;44:10
necessarily (2)
35:17;71:5
necessary (3)

2:7,16,17
neck (1)
66:25
need (58)
2:4;3:15;4:20;5:16;
7:13;8:13;10:20;11:8;
12:22;13:7;14:12,12;
15:19;16:4;24:5;31:23;
33:5;34:10,15;38:6,11,
14;42:17;43:1;45:10;
47:10,11;48:10;50:1;
51:5;52:14;54:16;55:1;
61:9;62:16;66:7,11,22;
68:7;69:6,6,7,16,17,23;
70:2;71:2,3,4,5,12,12;
72:6,25;73:7;74:17,18;
75:22
needed (4)
16:24;45:19;46:10,
14
needs (17)
8:22;11:5;15:17;
24:5;30:21;37:9,10,11;
42:11;44:8;46:10,18,
20;49:24;53:16;68:6;
73:11
negative (3)
22:19,25;23:13
negotiation (1)
26:14
negotiations (1)
26:19
neighbor (2)
67:20,23
neighborhood (1)
62:10
neighborhoods (1)
62:4
Neither (1)
69:19
NEPA (3)
4:20;46:11;48:14
nephew's (1)
2:11
neutral (1)
61:24
new (33)
2:5,8,19;13:18;
17:16,20,23;18:4,5,5;
19:15;21:11,17;24:24;
25:16;27:6,12;31:6;
34:5;36:9;45:16,20;
54:23;57:3;59:12,22;
70:22;71:5,12;72:8,12;
74:10,12
newspapers (1)
40:21
next (10)
16:1;23:9,23;24:2;
26:22;27:20;29:1;
30:20;37:3;63:23
nice (1)
31:6
nicely (1)
64:12
Nicholson (1)
41:21
Nick (1)
70:22
night (4)
6:7;33:13;38:13;
63:16
nightmare (1)
75:2
nighttime (2)
22:11,13
nine (3)
11:15;24:16;47:1
nobody's (1)
4:19
noise (3)
23:10;35:20;72:10
none (1)
75:16
nonprofit (1)
34:4
nonstop (1)
32:14
nontechnical (1)
53:10
north (6)
17:21;40:7;48:19;
57:16;63:7,18
noted (1)
44:13
notes (1)
50:13
notice (2)
26:25;27:4
noticed (2)
33:11;64:13
November (1)
14:7
NOYES (38)
9:13,22;27:23;30:18;
32:2,20;33:17;35:10,
12;37:24;38:1,20;
40:12;42:3;43:19;45:2;
46:23;49:10;50:3;
51:16;52:24;55:5;
56:24;58:5,9;59:10;
60:14;63:1;66:3;67:18;
70:5,21;71:14;72:1;
73:9;74:20;75:9;76:7
number (3)
16:7;24:15;38:25
numbers (3)
3:20,21;47:21
numerous (3)
33:22;55:12;68:3

O

object (1)
54:13
obvious (1)
34:20
Obviously (2)
24:19;34:12
occur (1)
14:25
o'clock (2)
43:24;47:6
off (22)
3:11;5:8,13,15;9:1;
10:10;11:21;27:1;
28:18;29:2;32:7;36:2;
37:10;42:5;56:19;57:2;
59:18,18;72:10,17;
73:4;74:6
office (2)
25:2;61:10
official (1)
28:20
offsite (1)
19:18
often (1)
44:1
oil (2)
69:12,14
old (6)
3:2;39:8;42:11;57:9,
11;64:22
Once (3)
15:16;26:20;59:17
one (52)
2:10;3:2;6:7;8:21,
23;11:23;12:4;15:4;
16:8;18:20,22;19:3,15;
20:1;21:22;22:15;24:2,
3,18;26:24;28:21;
31:21;32:6;33:11;34:8,
24;38:4;44:3,6,9;45:7,
22;53:18;59:4;60:3;
62:7;63:9,13,21;64:1,
5;69:18,18,19;72:8,9,
13,15,23;73:13,22;
74:15
one-on-one (1)
17:2
one-on-ones (1)
10:18
ones (2)
5:2;13:19
one-way (2)
21:20;51:9
ongoing (1)
21:4
only (22)
5:19;13:15;21:23;
22:11,21;30:10;31:20;
34:7;36:24;37:20;38:4,
16;42:19;48:21;50:5;
54:14,24;59:16;68:10;
69:18;70:23;71:18
onramp (1)
19:20
onto (4)
21:12;22:13;45:11;
59:20
open (6)
6:6;10:17;19:2;
23:11;33:22;36:17
opinion (4)
6:13;32:23;49:24;
52:1
opinions (3)
33:24;39:23;58:7
opportunities (2)
18:2;48:9
opportunity (8)
5:5;18:2;41:12;
48:20;55:6;58:6;71:18,
20
oppose (1)
42:4
opposed (1)
43:2
optimization (3)
8:20,24;45:9
option (2)
18:15;42:25
options (3)
15:5,10;35:5
order (2)
21:19;60:22
organization (1)
34:4
organizing (1)
17:3
original (4)
19:23;20:10;25:11;
31:19
originally (1)
11:12
others (2)
15:22;41:21
ought (1)
47:2
ourselves (1)
65:2
out (47)
3:14,18,23,23;9:2;
12:2,17,21;14:5;15:8;
17:11,19,24,25;18:1,
18;21:6;22:10;27:12;
28:6;29:14;31:3,19;
35:25;38:11;43:5;
47:14,20,22,22,23;
51:2,5;52:14;56:16;
57:6,9;60:12;65:16;
66:13;67:4;70:3;71:13,
15;72:24;73:2;75:17
outdoor (1)
40:8
outer (1)
2:3
outraged (1)
8:8
outside (1)
5:10
over (28)
2:5;8:19;10:5,7,16;
11:13;12:10;14:13;
21:11,18;22:7,23;
34:11;40:3;41:6;51:11;
55:14,14;57:4;59:13;
60:6,6,17;61:13;62:5;
71:6;72:13,18
overall (1)
53:12
overdue (1)
65:25
overpass (1)
44:18
overpasses (1)
59:12
overrides (1)
44:3
own (5)
45:9;47:19;61:8;
66:10,18
owned (1)
34:2
owners (1)
34:4

P

packets (1)
22:24
Page (3)
60:19;61:16,16
paid (1)
3:7
pain (1)
39:25
paper (4)
25:9;26:1;65:17;
69:22
Park (7)
18:8;19:12;34:3;
62:22;65:22;74:9,11
parking (1)
63:20
parks (1)
74:12
part (21)
2:15,21;4:20;12:7;
14:4;18:3,4;19:7,18;
25:1;39:23;47:10;48:7,
24;54:24;58:13;65:12;
68:24;73:16;76:11,15
participate (3)
29:4;54:6;59:2
participation (1)
76:17
particular (1)
53:18
partner (1)
67:22
parts (2)
35:2;54:24
Parvin (2)
37:24;46:25

pass (3)
35:11;37:25;67:11
passed (2)
34:7;71:14
passengers (1)
36:2
passion (1)
76:17
passionate (2)
50:5;51:13
past (2)
41:6;54:21
Pat (6)
9:22;10:12;12:18;
27:20;41:25;46:24
pathetic (1)
44:16
pathways (1)
59:13
patience (2)
28:1;76:17
patiently (1)
27:25
Patrick (1)
41:25
Patsy (1)
41:21
Patty (1)
33:17
paving (1)
32:11
pay (6)
34:23;39:9;49:25;
54:13;57:11;68:11
pedestrian (18)
2:4,5;17:23,24;18:1,
4,5;19:6,6,9,11;20:11;
35:22,24;43:22;44:18;
50:16;51:4
pedestrian-bicycle (2)
18:5;19:4
pedestrians (4)
18:7;44:15;53:11;
56:20
Pennsylvania (1)
2:11
people (77)
2:8;3:19,21,24;4:9,9,
23;5:1;6:9,12,13,15,20,
22,23;7:21,23,24;8:4,
12,15,16;10:5;23:16;
28:5;30:25;31:6,10,12,
15,20;34:18;37:2,5,12;
39:1,8,12,12,14,14;
41:10,18;42:10,15;
47:5,23;48:9;50:17;
52:13;53:22,23;54:5,
11,15;57:25;60:2;62:1,
7,20;63:9,11;64:9,15;
65:24;68:22;69:2,5,23;
70:25;71:3,4;74:6,10;
75:18,19;76:2
percent (1)
45:25
perfect (1)
15:23
perhaps (1)
44:17
period (4)
14:21,22;21:12;
50:17
periods (1)
22:12
permanent (4)
50:24;51:3;59:2,4
person (5)
5:11;29:1;64:22;
74:15,15
personal (1)
39:15
phase (1)
36:25
Phil (1)
41:23
physical (2)
3:19;51:5
pick (2)
36:1;57:5
picture (2)
53:5,9
pictures (5)
33:12,14;47:3;53:6;
57:15
piece (1)
37:12
pieces (1)
26:24
pigeons (1)
68:19
pilings (1)
2:8
pill (1)
40:10
Pine (1)
17:20
Pitkin (4)
41:11;49:22;50:19;
51:6
place (7)
4:21;20:25;52:15;
56:21;57:9;59:14;
62:12
placed (1)
52:2
places (2)
31:5;62:13
plan (21)
8:20,22;17:24;19:17;
20:10;32:4,16;35:16,
17;37:9,11,11;45:9,9;
46:16;48:1,4;51:20;
57:20;69:25;72:24
planned (1)
57:6
planners (1)
55:24
planning (5)
12:11;38:13;53:2,4;
68:25
plans (1)
49:20
plants (1)
75:15
please (9)
28:11,17;38:17;
43:10;71:21;73:3,20;
74:20;76:4
pleased (2)
58:7;70:24
pleasing (3)
20:17,21;24:6
Pleasure (1)
10:12
plenty (2)
50:13;58:6
PLT (2)
39:17;58:13
plus (3)
37:3;39:16;54:23
PM (1)
76:20
point (6)
10:5;21:6;52:13;
60:10;62:22;66:16
pointed (1)
28:6
pointing (1)
71:15
points (1)
49:12
police (1)
49:14
Policy (2)
48:13;55:12
political (2)
74:17,18
politically (1)
62:6
politicians (1)
71:11
pollutants (2)
52:10,11
pollution (2)
35:21;72:9
pool (2)
2:6;11:7
poor (3)
13:15,16,17
population (1)
66:5
Portion (6)
2:1;9:12,23;25:23;
27:22,25
position (3)
38:21;50:9;68:2
positive (6)
22:18,25;23:14,19;
51:2,10
possibilities (1)
15:5
possible (4)
38:18;58:16,25;62:3
possibly (1)
15:8
post (1)
61:10
postage (1)
8:1
posted (1)
11:20
potential (1)
23:18
pound (1)
5:7
power (2)
12:1;66:16
powerful (1)
62:6
preconstruction (2)
25:14,20
predicted (1)
61:24
Preferred (4)
17:9,10,16;18:12
prepare (1)
42:17
present (5)
9:18;10:14;33:9;
45:14;57:24
Presentation (7)
9:12,14,25;10:11;
17:4;61:3;66:16
presentations (2)
17:6;55:10
Preservation (2)
24:13;25:2
preserve (1)
60:22
pretty (6)
13:5;21:1,2;27:7;
58:3;63:4
prevent (1)
52:7
previous (2)
15:14;33:21
price (1)
34:24
primarily (2)
10:22;17:1
primary (2)
13:13;17:24
printed (2)
40:18;69:21
priority (1)
24:3
probably (9)
12:15;16:7;25:8;
26:2;30:23;38:25;
49:15;66:5;75:12
problem (17)
5:18;9:8;14:15;15:6;
29:14;33:1;37:7;39:14;
56:4;66:6;67:13,14;
68:9;69:3,3,8;72:8
problems (13)
4:1;7:17;12:21,22;
13:7,8;33:10;35:19;
36:8;37:18,19;63:10,
12
proceed (4)
9:24;30:15;35:17;
46:15
proceedings (1)
76:19
proceeds (1)
46:8
process (27)
10:16;14:6,14;15:2,
3;16:1,2,11;17:8;
18:19;20:2;22:5;25:4,
23;26:6,6,15,15;27:9;
36:22;39:20;40:2;43:2,
12;55:7;68:25;76:15
productive (1)
36:14
products (1)
52:19
program (6)
7:12;8:8;9:19;47:10,
15;48:7
progressed (1)
21:5
prohibited (1)
46:11
project (59)
9:15,17,20,20;10:11,
21;11:1,5,8,23;12:17,
18,20,23,24,25;13:1,2,
3;14:7,17;16:18,18;
18:13;19:7;20:24;24:4,
17;25:24,25;26:5;28:8;
29:11,12;30:2,2,12;
32:24;34:16;36:7,18,
20;37:6,16,17;38:8;
39:18,24;40:10;42:5;
45:4,13,23;46:7,9;
57:3;58:14,16;60:21
projected (1)
36:21
projects (5)
4:3;8:18;38:9,10;
42:7
promises (1)
61:15
promising (1)
60:20
propensity (1)
46:2
properties (5)
24:14,15,16,18,21
propose (1)
56:10
proposed (7)
22:16;32:24;33:4;
36:23;46:15;48:15,16

proposing (2)
36:18;57:18
pros (1)
15:20
provide (18)
10:1;11:1;18:2;19:9,19,24;20:10,12;25:6;27:10,14,15,16;28:10,14;34:22;71:22;76:14
provided (6)
16:16,20;18:24;19:8;20:22,23
provides (2)
18:6;19:11
proximity (2)
24:23,24
public (37)
6:3,3;8:7,8;9:16,18,23;10:15,17;12:18;13:3;14:8,8,9,21,22;15:14;16:2,2,5,6,7;17:7,8,9;18:11,20,21;26:9;27:9,13,22;38:5;47:19;55:12;76:9,12
pull (1)
35:25
purple (1)
13:21
purpose (11)
9:17;10:20;11:1;13:6;14:11,12;15:19;16:4;27:8;46:6,17
purposes (1)
45:23
push (2)
64:14,16
pushed (1)
69:25
put (32)
2:15;4:6,15,16;5:5,6,6,14;7:2,6,9;8:6;20:1;22:7,12;37:15;41:9;43:6;47:14;48:5,6,6;49:8;51:1;53:16;56:3;57:11;59:20;62:19;64:12;66:16;67:8
putting (3)
8:10;26:3;75:3

Q

qualitative (1)
15:11
quality (4)
24:2;42:9;43:9;70:15
quarter (1)
6:9
quickly (3)
23:24;62:3;65:15
quit (1)
54:19
quite (5)
22:4;25:9,11;27:24;67:15
quote (1)
61:22
quotes (1)
45:3

R

rail (2)
52:21;54:10
railroad (7)
21:18;48:25;57:17;59:21;60:4,4;66:18
railway (1)
59:24
raise (2)
5:20,24
raised (4)
2:8;28:25;38:24;73:18
raises (1)
45:18
ramp (1)
20:11
ranches (1)
34:22
range (2)
67:5,9
rather (3)
53:5;55:16;69:13
reached (1)
15:19
read (8)
10:20;33:21,22,24;40:18;60:15;62:18;69:20
real (2)
34:15;70:11
reality (1)
55:14
realize (1)
15:22
realized (2)
20:5;34:7
really (30)
10:18,21;11:24;26:25;27:4,8;28:7;29:4;31:24;34:10;35:14;38:14;39:9,10,24;40:7;42:20;50:7;53:19;56:5;59:24;62:19;63:5;66:6;67:12;70:16,24;72:4,5;74:13
reams (1)
69:22
rear-ended (1)
33:12
reason (7)
2:22;6:25;17:24;19:19;34:20;69:11,25
reasonable (1)
4:7
reasons (6)
13:3;19:15;22:15;42:5;45:12;63:22
rebuilding (1)
74:9
rebuilt (1)
34:13
rec (1)
61:10
recently (1)
34:6
recognize (1)
21:22
recommend (1)
52:20
recommendations (1)
16:21
recommending (1)
46:5
reconfiguration (1)
45:17
reconfigured (1)
34:14
reconsidered (1)
54:4
record (7)
39:23;47:19;70:8;71:19;73:16;76:9,12
Redstone (2)
34:19;65:21
reduce (3)
20:6;49:1;58:25
Reed (7)
41:24,25;43:19,20,20;74:22,22
R-e-e-d (1)
74:22
refer (1)
61:16
regarding (1)
34:1
region (4)
53:23;54:4;61:7,8
regional (17)
37:7,16,19;41:3;53:7,22;54:17;55:2;61:4;62:19;65:24;67:14;68:9,24;69:3,3;73:24
regret (1)
33:18
regroup (1)
69:6
regular (2)
32:8;56:13
regulations (1)
46:11
rehabilitation (2)
10:24;18:14
reinforce (1)
36:12
reinforced (1)
2:7
reinforcement (1)
11:19
reinforcing (1)
2:15
reiterate (1)
76:8
rejected (4)
33:7;45:13;46:17;68:25
relationship (1)
67:21
relatively (2)
25:10;62:13
remaining (1)
15:10
remember (4)
20:2;66:15;74:1,5
remembering (1)
71:17
remodeled (1)
34:14
removal (1)
51:18
removed (1)
57:12
repair (2)
3:2;30:11
repaired (1)
42:11
repeated (2)
48:23;55:14
replace (5)
3:2;12:7;18:15,17;32:5
replaced (5)
33:8;34:11;42:12;46:19;68:6
replacement (10)
3:4;10:24;30:11;32:24;33:3,20;34:1;45:7,14;51:22
replacing (3)
46:13;62:21,21
report (1)
60:16
reporter (3)
27:15;28:13;30:21
reports (1)
12:6
representatives (1)
16:9
request (4)
19:21;20:8,15;49:2
requests (2)
19:14;48:23
require (1)
73:24
required (1)
4:22
requirements (1)
48:13
requires (2)
48:14;51:22
resident (3)
52:25;55:18;71:24
residential (1)
56:20
residents (2)
41:11;49:25
resort (1)
61:20
resources (2)
60:23;61:6
respectful (1)
73:11
respiratory (2)
63:10,12
response (2)
61:25;73:16
responses (2)
28:2;73:18
responsive (3)
58:18,21;59:6
rest (4)
6:16;27:1;42:1;67:1
restaurants (2)
52:14;54:23
restrict (1)
43:3
restricted (1)
44:24
result (1)
8:22
resultant (1)
36:23
resulting (1)
36:17
results (1)
36:4
review (5)
14:21,22;53:19,20,21
reviewing (1)
26:8
revised (1)
20:12
revisit (1)
75:23
ride (1)
40:14
rider (1)
23:25
Rifle (2)
56:6;67:2
right (36)
3:25;4:12;9:13;14:3;22:5;25:15,16;26:4,15,15,15;27:9,23;29:25;30:6,6;32:2;39:14;40:4;42:3;43:23,24;44:4;46:21;47:24;56:15;57:1;63:23;64:4;66:18;70:21;71:14;72:4;73:9;74:9;75:9
right-hand (1)
36:3

River (18)
11:3,25;12:4,5;20:9,13,16;32:6,9,15,15;40:25;45:24;48:18,19;53:24;56:6;60:6
Rivers (3)
18:8;19:12;66:24
road (7)
31:11;35:7;52:3;61:24;68:11,17;72:10
Roaring (9)
11:6;32:10;40:25;46:10,19;53:24;54:1;60:6;67:14
Rob (2)
35:10;46:25
rock (1)
65:13
Roland (1)
6:15
role (1)
16:13
roll (1)
63:15
ROMEO (1)
2:2
room (3)
12:13;52:3;66:13
Roosevelt (1)
31:10
roots (2)
51:25;52:4
Rosenberg (3)
35:12,13;41:24
roundabout (2)
19:22,25
route (6)
3:10;8:23,25;35:1;49:8;68:5
routing (2)
41:3,7
Royal (2)
55:5;59:25
ruined (1)
31:11
rules (1)
29:5
run (4)
34:4;50:22;57:19,20
rundown (1)
9:24
running (2)
45:25;65:16
runoff (1)
52:7
runs (1)
57:16

S

sacrifice (1)
37:13
safe (2)
11:1;36:13
safely (1)
36:1
safer (2)
35:1;75:1
safety (3)
43:22;50:16;51:4
sake (1)
54:12
same (9)
3:3,5;8:5,25;25:11;38:14;49:7;54:22;71:1
Save (4)
3:18;34:25;47:13;60:9
saw (4)
15:14;49:20;61:3;62:13
saying (5)
34:2;43:2;57:2;68:8;76:3
scenic (2)
60:23;61:5
schedule (2)
26:23,24
scheduled (3)
26:21;27:5;71:14
school (2)
21:24,25
scope (3)
18:22;46:18;55:15
scoping (5)
13:3,3;14:8,8;26:5
Scotts (1)
4:17
scour (2)
11:24;12:8
screen (1)
15:8
screening (6)
14:13;15:2,3,18,18;26:6
second (6)
14:4;22:6;28:21;45:8;59:1;73:14
seconds (2)
75:10,13
section (1)
65:24
secure (1)
11:1
seem (1)
33:25
seemed (1)
60:25
seems (6)
34:12;53:6;61:1,2;68:12,13
segmentation (2)
46:9,18
semi (1)
11:11
semis (1)
32:14
send (4)
3:14,18,20;27:17
sense (7)
3:9;4:10;14:3;57:19;60:16;62:9;73:10
sensitive (1)
16:11
sensitivity (1)
60:20
sent (3)
3:23;47:19,22
sentiment (1)
38:14
separate (1)
24:12
separation (1)
18:6
September (1)
40:19
serious (1)
45:18
seriously (1)
45:13
serve (3)
31:25;46:10;52:15
served (1)
39:17
serves (3)
34:16;55:13;67:1
service (2)
18:1;65:9
services (4)
22:1,2,3;34:22
sessions (1)
10:18
set (1)
30:19
sets (1)
22:21
Seven (1)
24:22
Seventh (2)
20:9;54:23
several (1)
35:5
shake (1)
63:16
sham (1)
56:3
shape (1)
28:8
Shapiro (2)
59:10,11
share (3)
28:2;55:7;75:18
sheet (1)
10:2
sheets (2)
27:18;76:10
sheriff (1)
51:4
Sherry (2)
41:24;74:22
Shift (1)
66:15
shoppers (2)
52:17,18
shored (1)
34:13
short (2)
23:7;30:16
shorter (1)
22:6
shortly (2)
7:14;26:12
shoulder (2)
20:7;52:3
shove (1)
6:18
shoved (1)
8:14
show (2)
33:13;47:4
showing (1)
43:10
shown (3)
44:7;52:17,18
shows (1)
18:11
side (12)
18:6;20:11;31:19;42:22;44:15;48:18,19;61:9;62:1,6,11,12
sidewalks (1)
29:21
sign (2)
10:3;11:20
signage (1)
19:24
signal (2)
35:23;64:16
signed (5)
10:5;28:5;40:19;41:18;70:5
signs (2)
35:24;64:13
sign-up (1)
10:2
Silt (1)
67:2
simple (2)
7:11;45:6
simpler (1)
19:24
simplicity (1)
34:9
simplify (1)
19:21
simply (2)
38:6,11
single (3)
46:12,17;67:3
sit (5)
5:9;6:21;52:14,15;64:17
site (3)
21:24;44:23;66:17
sitting (1)
39:7
situation (1)
68:13
Sixth (12)
17:19,19,19;19:21,25;22:13;45:18;57:23,23;58:1;72:16,19
size (3)
29:23;35:21,21
ski (2)
7:5,7
Skip (1)
41:20
slide (4)
16:2;21:11;27:8,20
slides (1)
23:23
slow (3)
5:16;32:13,14
small (3)
34:3,4;43:3
smaller (1)
68:19
small-town (1)
34:25
smell (1)
72:10
smooth (1)
39:19
Snow (2)
34:19;74:2
sold (1)
68:12
solution (14)
50:7,12;51:14;56:2,10,14;57:19;67:5,9;68:5,24;73:24,24;74:17
solutions (1)
60:11
solve (4)
4:1;9:7;37:7,17
solving (2)
7:16;36:7
somehow (1)
68:18
Someone (2)
64:12,22
someplace (1)
5:6
somewhere (1)
71:12
sorry (1)
61:19
sound (2)
32:15;52:15
sounds (2)
32:15;60:20
source (1)
13:13

south (9)
4:15,16;19:1;20:11;
31:4;39:3;48:2,18;
57:16
southbound (1)
34:7
space (1)
60:7
spalling (1)
11:18
speak (16)
10:1,6,8;27:14;28:5,
25;29:3;53:3;58:6;
60:18;61:7;64:2;67:24;
70:6;71:19;73:10
speaker (1)
30:20
special (1)
24:1
species (2)
24:1,1
Speck (3)
32:2,3,3
speculate (1)
46:3
speed (6)
5:20,22,24;35:20;
36:23;64:3
speeding (1)
64:24
speeds (1)
32:14
spell (1)
72:1
spelling (3)
28:18;70:7;73:20
spend (6)
4:6;7:14,19;47:16;
66:22;69:24
spending (2)
23:18;66:21
spent (6)
3:8,18;24:7;35:16;
47:19;68:3
Speranza (1)
41:23
spoken (1)
33:25
spread (1)
45:10
spring (2)
15:1;27:5
Springs (59)
3:11,13,20,22;4:5;
6:7,21,22;7:10;8:18;
9:1;11:3,4,6,7;16:20;
17:18;23:15;29:10;
30:3,8;34:3,23;35:18;
37:1,2,14;40:22;41:1;
42:9;43:4;45:8;47:21;
48:19,20;49:8;53:1;
54:1,9;55:17,22;56:9,
17;61:20;66:24;69:15;
70:16,23;71:2,6,11,25;
72:5;73:7,7;74:6,23,
24;75:17
spry (1)
64:23
Stabenou (1)
41:23
staff (4)
38:10,10;55:9;73:11
stairs (1)
20:12
Stakeholder (1)
16:15
stamp (1)
8:2
Stan (2)
32:2,3
stand (3)
27:14;30:5;43:23
standard (2)
11:16;30:19
standards (1)
14:2
standing (1)
70:25
Stark (2)
70:9,9
start (8)
9:18;10:10;26:21,22;
27:23;42:21;57:2;
64:17
started (4)
14:6,8;18:12;34:8
starting (1)
2:19
starts (1)
5:17
state (20)
4:21;5:21;7:3;13:15,
17,17;14:1;17:20;
19:12;25:2,23;28:17;
34:16;35:3;41:1,4,17;
44:4;66:22;71:8
stated (2)
48:17,22
statement (4)
4:13;33:9;42:18,20
statements (1)
42:6
states (1)
7:25
statewide (1)
34:16
stay (3)
43:11;71:15;73:11
staying (2)
30:19;47:5
steadily (1)
33:1
steady (1)
32:13
steel (2)
11:19,21
Steve (1)
41:24
Stewart (2)
38:20,21
still (8)
3:4,5;5:2;6:9;13:22;
31:4;72:10,14
stone (1)
58:19
stood (1)
47:4
stop (9)
3:24;4:11;30:14;
47:24;64:25;69:6,16;
70:12;72:15
stoplights (2)
72:15;73:3
stopped (2)
36:6;70:14
stopping (1)
36:2
stops (2)
36:1;72:22
stores (4)
51:8,8;52:18;73:3
straight (1)
2:5
Strawberry (1)
17:5
Street (30)
4:17,17,18,18;17:19;
20:4,9;24:22;31:17,19,
20,21;37:8;48:2,3;
50:25;51:5,20,22;52:8,
16;54:23;57:23,23,24;
58:1;59:1;63:4;64:8;
69:10
streets (4)
17:22;44:15;62:11,
12
strict (1)
10:7
stroller (1)
64:22
strollers (1)
44:21
strongly (1)
39:24
structural (3)
11:9,11,23
structure (3)
11:14,15;61:1
studies (5)
49:4;52:18;55:11;
68:3,4
study (9)
4:22;30:15;33:9;
46:4,7;48:24;49:1,7;
61:17
stuff (5)
21:5;26:5,19;27:1;
43:14
stupid (2)
4:8;7:22
Sturges (2)
58:5,6
style (1)
20:20
submit (1)
76:9
substandard (1)
11:15
successful (1)
41:8
sudden (1)
49:21
sufficient (1)
53:8
suggest (1)
43:7
summarize (1)
9:15
summer (1)
5:10
Summit (1)
6:16
Sundin (2)
45:2,3
super (1)
59:15
superior (1)
52:19
support (2)
35:3;74:18
suppose (2)
4:4;68:18
supposed (2)
47:9;75:1
supposedly (1)
44:15
sure (12)
14:1,2;16:10;19:7;
27:11;28:16;38:18;
42:25;44:7;51:4;71:21;
75:20
survey (1)
47:12
sustainable (1)
35:1
Suzanne (1)
38:20
Swiss (1)
56:13
sympathetic (1)
51:24

T

table (1)
22:23
talk (20)
2:24,24,24,24;5:11;
6:3,9,13;9:6;13:11;
39:8;42:4;43:13,16;
47:6;61:22;65:5,18;
74:3;75:19
talked (14)
12:20;14:12;15:2;
26:4;50:13,13,14,23;
60:20;62:8,9;68:10;
69:2;75:19
talking (4)
2:24;39:10;65:17;
74:1
talks (2)
60:19;61:17
Task (7)
16:22,22;20:18,22;
21:3,7;39:18
tax (4)
49:17,25;54:13;
55:25
taxpayers (1)
7:3
team (5)
9:21;39:18;58:14,17,
17
team's (1)
59:6
tearing (3)
7:2;22:8;24:19
teased (1)
65:17
technical (1)
62:17
Teddy (1)
31:10
telling (1)
74:5
tells (1)
6:4
temporary (3)
21:17;50:7;59:3
ten (2)
41:21;71:16
Teri (1)
10:2
term (1)
23:7
terms (4)
26:3;57:10,20,21
Terry (1)
70:9
thanking (1)
27:24
Thanks (3)
43:10;46:24;70:22
them's (1)
72:16
there'll (3)
26:12,17,19
thin (1)
38:11
thinking (2)
34:9;64:1
Thirdly (1)
54:15
thirty (1)
28:21

thoroughfare (1)
68:1
though (1)
71:7
thought (7)
2:9;3:15;18:13,17;
34:10;39:8;52:20
thoughtful (1)
69:24
thoughts (2)
28:2;65:7
three (14)
5:11;7:12;10:6,16;
15:3;23:23;28:22;29:2;
58:14;69:21;72:14,14;
74:1,9
three-lane (1)
7:9
thrive (1)
36:13
throat (2)
6:19;8:14
throats (1)
69:25
throughout (3)
42:15,23;68:23
thrown (1)
60:12
timekeeper (1)
28:21
timeline (1)
4:4
timelines (1)
4:3
times (6)
16:13,14,17;22:12;
36:4;40:19
tiny (1)
34:23
tires (1)
32:14
today (8)
3:5;5:10;7:1,10,17;
9:7;58:19;65:18
today's (1)
7:16
together (7)
8:7;26:3;48:7;56:3;
62:13;66:16;67:4
told (2)
3:1;68:16
Tom (2)
28:20;47:2
tonight (17)
10:2,13;27:14,16;
28:9;38:16;58:23;64:2;
71:20;73:15,17,19;
74:15;75:16,20,23;
76:11
tonight's (1)
9:18
Tony (1)
38:25
top (4)
15:16;22:7;42:5;
53:23
total (3)
26:1;30:14;46:13
totally (3)
36:2,16;37:14
touch (1)
43:11
tough (1)
58:24
tourism (1)
34:21
town (36)
2:6,13,21;4:15;8:23;
30:25;31:7,12,20,25;
32:16;35:20,20,21;
37:7,8,13;39:12,14;
40:3;43:24;44:5,13;
54:21;57:15,16,21;
62:4,6,8,9,22;66:5,10;
74:10;75:5
towns (1)
72:6
town's (1)
57:22
track (2)
44:14;59:21
tractor-trailer (1)
11:12
traffic (67)
3:11;4:1;5:3,7,12,15,
19,22,23;6:1;9:1,2;
19:18;21:9,12,20;22:9,
10;27:2,6;31:1,16;
32:7,10;33:1,6,11,13;
35:19,25;36:2,3,23,23;
37:7,10,12;43:21,24,
25;45:10,20,25,25;
49:1,14;50:10;51:9;
53:12,25;54:21,25;
56:16,20;57:25;61:15;
63:4,10,15,19;64:3;
66:6;67:2;71:2;72:6,
15,20
traffic's (1)
72:21
trailers (1)
29:24
transit (1)
21:25
translates (1)
61:21
Transportation (11)
19:5;35:2;37:16,18,
19;41:2;42:7;46:10,18;
55:19;68:24
transportational (1)
42:19
transporting (1)
34:18
travel (1)
42:16
traveling (1)
5:23
trees (14)
39:4;51:19,21,22,23;
52:6,9,11,13,15,17,18;
55:10;62:14
tribes (1)
25:6
tried (3)
6:8;58:20;74:3
truck (1)
63:24
trucks (4)
5:8;56:19;63:15;
69:14
trusses (1)
2:8
try (10)
5:10;12:16;13:24;
15:24;19:15;21:20;
22:2;58:15;59:6;62:18
trying (7)
6:18;7:22;8:10,15;
37:7;64:9;73:10
tune (1)
34:11
tunnel (9)
56:10,11,12,15;60:1,
1;66:18,19;67:11
tunnels (2)
7:9,13
turn (3)
33:23;69:13;72:18
turned (4)
2:3,4;26:9;29:22
turning (1)
37:6
twin (1)
56:15
two (25)
4:25;5:2;11:5,12;
18:8;19:12;23:17;
29:22,23,23;32:11,13;
33:21;36:16;39:11;
43:21;44:6;45:12;
51:11;53:18;64:17;
66:24;69:18;70:23;
74:1
two-lane (4)
2:3;5:6;11:13;39:3
two-year (2)
26:23;40:2

U

unacceptable (3)
36:24;37:2,14
under (10)
13:21;18:7,21,24;
19:11;52:2;56:10;
59:13;66:19;68:17
underground (1)
8:11
underneath (3)
22:9,14;60:2
underpass (6)
18:6;19:11;44:7,9,
10,12
underpasses (3)
44:8,14,14
understands (1)
12:1
unfortunate (1)
68:22
unfortunately (1)
66:25
unhappy (1)
60:8
unhealthy (1)
37:3
uniquely (1)
41:5
unit (1)
61:20
unlike (1)
33:24
unsafe (3)
35:22;36:4;37:3
up (69)
2:8,16;3:12;5:16,17,
19;6:1;7:2,13;8:25;
10:5;11:12;13:8;15:24;
16:8,19,24;17:18;
20:19;21:16;24:5;
25:18;27:7,7,14;28:5,
16;30:5;31:16;32:8,16;
33:13;34:13;36:1;
37:15;40:15,16;42:16;
43:10;44:22;47:4,4,18;
48:4;50:11;53:22,25;
57:5;58:18;59:7,12,14;
63:8,12,14,24;64:13;
68:8;69:1;70:5,6,25;
71:3,4;72:7;73:12,15;
74:21,24
upon (2)
40:23;41:3
upper (4)
6:6;55:18;56:6;72:5
use (14)
5:8;13:6;18:11;
19:24;21:7;28:11,22;
30:21;32:13;38:17;
42:15;49:25;50:24;
53:3
used (7)
7:1;19:2;28:7;31:4,
5;37:21;71:25
using (1)
60:4
utilities (5)
17:25;25:19;51:24,
25;52:2
utility (1)
25:19

V

Vail (2)
7:5;40:22
Valley (21)
3:12,12;4:17;11:7;
32:11;35:2;36:9;40:19;
42:16;43:9;46:19;
53:24;54:1;55:18;61:6;
67:1,15;68:23;71:3,4;
72:5
valleys (1)
40:25
Valleywide (1)
41:2
valuable (1)
47:10
value (4)
10:18;34:10;51:21;
61:18
values (1)
62:8
variety (2)
13:4;45:5
various (3)
14:18;68:4;71:22
Vasquez (3)
49:10,11,11
vehicle (2)
32:6;34:8
vertically (1)
18:25
vibrancy (1)
40:8
vibrant (1)
40:6
Victorian (1)
62:13
view (5)
20:15;52:18;54:2;
61:18;62:23
views (4)
20:8,13,14;55:7
Village (2)
34:19;40:7
vision (1)
40:4
visit (1)
64:15
visited (1)
62:11
visitors (1)
64:12
visual (5)
24:2,3;61:17,17,25
visually (2)
24:6;57:14
vocal (1)
69:5
vociferous (1)
62:5
voice (1)

33:23
volume (3)
33:6;43:21,25
volumes (1)
45:20
vote (4)
3:14;41:10,12,17

W

Wagner (1)
6:15
wait (2)
31:17;44:2
waiting (2)
6:9;27:25
walk (6)
31:15,16;35:23;62:1;63:21;64:16
walkable (1)
40:5
walked (1)
63:18
walking (1)
63:18
walls (2)
58:19,20
wants (4)
4:15;67:25;68:1;73:10
warn (1)
11:20
warning (1)
11:20
Washington (3)
4:9;7:23,24
watch (1)
6:1
water (2)
11:25;52:6
way (32)
2:4,20;5:12,13;8:5,12;14:14;17:24;20:19;23:2;25:15,16;26:15,15;39:4;40:15;42:19,24;45:4;51:9;53:17;54:22;58:15;63:23;66:18;67:2;69:12;71:4,7,9;73:5;76:11
ways (5)
13:7,7;16:5;34:24;49:1
weakening (1)
55:17
week (1)
52:6
weigh (3)
15:20;33:19;40:25
Welcome (1)
10:13
weren't (1)
7:7
west (5)
3:6;18:6;56:15;72:16,17
westbound (1)
72:19
what's (8)
7:24;23:2;24:9;25:21;28:15;50:17;75:18,22
Whereupon (1)
76:19
wherever (1)
54:7
Whoa (1)
64:18
whole (16)
8:6;10:11,16;20:24;39:15;42:5;44:11;47:10;48:7;53:20,21;61:6,7;62:22,22;67:14
who's (5)
9:19;57:4,10;69:1;74:15
wide (1)
13:4
widen (1)
36:12
wider (1)
19:8
width (1)
20:6
wife (1)
54:19
wild (1)
60:3
wildlife (1)
24:1
willingness (2)
28:2;29:4
Winsor (2)
42:3,4
wish (1)
62:4
wishes (1)
65:6
within (6)
24:6;30:19;53:12;54:5;68:22;76:19
without (8)
19:18;31:10;36:2,15;37:12;46:4,14,16
wonderful (2)
66:25;68:18
woosh (1)
63:24
words (1)
46:15
work (19)
2:9;6:21;8:4;13:21,24;15:8;21:14,24;35:15,15;41:15;49:17;50:25;53:15;55:9;60:1;65:24;67:4;74:24
worked (5)
20:17;21:6,25;59:5;73:23
workers (2)
23:16;55:19
working (7)
10:4,18;16:15,18,18;21:24;22:4
works (1)
43:12
world (3)
34:17;42:7;57:24
worldwide (1)
34:22
worry (1)
21:9
worse (1)
64:20
worth (1)
23:15
wrap (1)
27:7
wrapping (1)
73:12
write (2)
14:16,23
writing (3)
43:6;57:6;76:10
written (6)
27:15,16;40:18;43:12;49:2;71:22
wrong (2)
31:22,23
wrought (1)
52:21

Y

year (2)
26:22;50:5
years (24)
2:14;8:19,24;10:17;11:13;23:17;29:9;31:13;36:13;37:3;39:16;41:6;51:11;54:20;58:14;62:11;63:3,3;66:12;67:20;70:23;71:25;74:1,25
yesterday's (1)
7:16
York (1)
59:12
young (1)
64:21

Z

zoning (1)
38:13

1

10 (2)
22:12;47:6
10- (1)
3:7
10,000 (1)
39:13
10:00 (1)
6:10
11 (1)
22:24
110- (1)
3:5
114 (1)
21:15
116 (2)
17:18;59:18
11-foot (1)
5:15
11th (1)
63:4
12 (4)
16:13;22:12;40:19;41:18
120 (1)
3:5
12-foot (1)
11:16
13 (2)
22:24;62:11
14 (3)
16:14;51:22,23
14th (2)
4:18;48:3
15 (2)
3:7;63:3
17 (2)
22:24;56:12
19 (1)
40:19
1953 (1)
4:25
1960s (1)
7:7
1961 (1)
29:22
1971 (1)
66:4
1979 (1)
8:21
1st (1)
14:22

2

2 (1)
60:19
2.11 (1)
48:17
20 (2)
10:5;56:12
20- (1)
5:7
200 (1)
48:21
2000 (1)
34:3
2011 (1)
14:7
2015 (1)
26:21
2017 (1)
27:5
2030 (1)
4:3
2035 (1)
4:3
2040 (3)
4:4,4,8
25 (2)
67:20;74:25
25-miles-an-hour (1)
5:22
27 (1)
28:5
27th (1)
73:5

3

3,000 (1)
16:25
3,500 (1)
39:12
30 (6)
5:23,24;38:17;73:14;75:10,13
30,000 (1)
5:7
30-day (1)
38:5
35 (2)
5:23,24
36 (1)
8:6

4

4,200 (4)
3:19,23;47:20,22
40 (1)
5:23
45 (1)
29:9

5

5.5 (1)
50:25
5:00 (1)
43:25
50 (2)
45:25;66:12
54 (1)
61:16
59 (1)
25:12

27:3
6
90-day (2)
21:11;58:23
90-degree (1)
69:13
90s (2)
12:7;66:15
945-6493 (1)
43:15
60 (4)
11:13;25:10;39:15;
41:6
600 (2)
3:24;47:23
60s (1)
11:14
61-year-old (1)
36:8
65 (1)
5:16
7
7,500 (1)
74:10
70 (1)
59:18
700 (4)
3:24;47:22,23;51:19
73 (1)
48:25
8
8 (1)
43:24
8,500 (1)
37:7
8:00 (3)
71:16,16;73:12
8:20 (1)
76:20
800 (1)
50:19
809 (1)
70:10
82 (13)
3:10;17:20;19:12;
33:10;41:1,7,17;44:10;
55:20;66:10;72:24;
74:25;75:1
82-I-70 (1)
45:5
82-year-old (1)
64:23
86th (1)
24:22
9
9,000 (1)
39:13
9.5 (1)
44:18
9:00 (1)
47:9
9:30 (1)
6:9
90 (1)