

5.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the agency and public involvement activities undertaken for this Environmental Assessment (EA). Appendix D *Agency Coordination* and Appendix E *Public Involvement* contain copies of agency correspondence and public involvement and coordination materials.

The SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge EA process involved an extensive public and agency involvement program that was consistent with the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) guidelines established as part of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS process, as discussed in Section 1.2.

5.2 Objectives

The *SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge Environmental Assessment Public Involvement Plan* prepared for the project (CDOT, 2011) identified three objectives for the public and agency involvement process:

- ❖ **Legitimate.** CDOT and the study team facilitating the process should be seen as legitimate (i.e., the proper organization to conduct the project) and the project itself should be seen as the responsible way to solve the problem. People should feel that CDOT is trying to fairly solve the problem by acting completely within its proper powers, and that the approach to the problem is appropriate, reasonable, and sensible.
- ❖ **Responsive.** The process should be responsive to all affected interests by being open to receive and take full advantage of every possible constructive idea, including those that come from potential opponents; by demonstrating it sincerely considered the viewpoints of all affected parties, and not just special interests; and by fairly and equitably evaluating the numerous trade-offs of the alternatives considered.
- ❖ **Effective.** The process should be effective and should get the job done. All of the stakeholders should feel the facts presented are indeed true and that information is not being withheld; there should be demonstrated and effective two-way communication between CDOT/study team and the stakeholders; and to the greatest extent possible, polarization between interests should not keep CDOT from accomplishing the project goals.

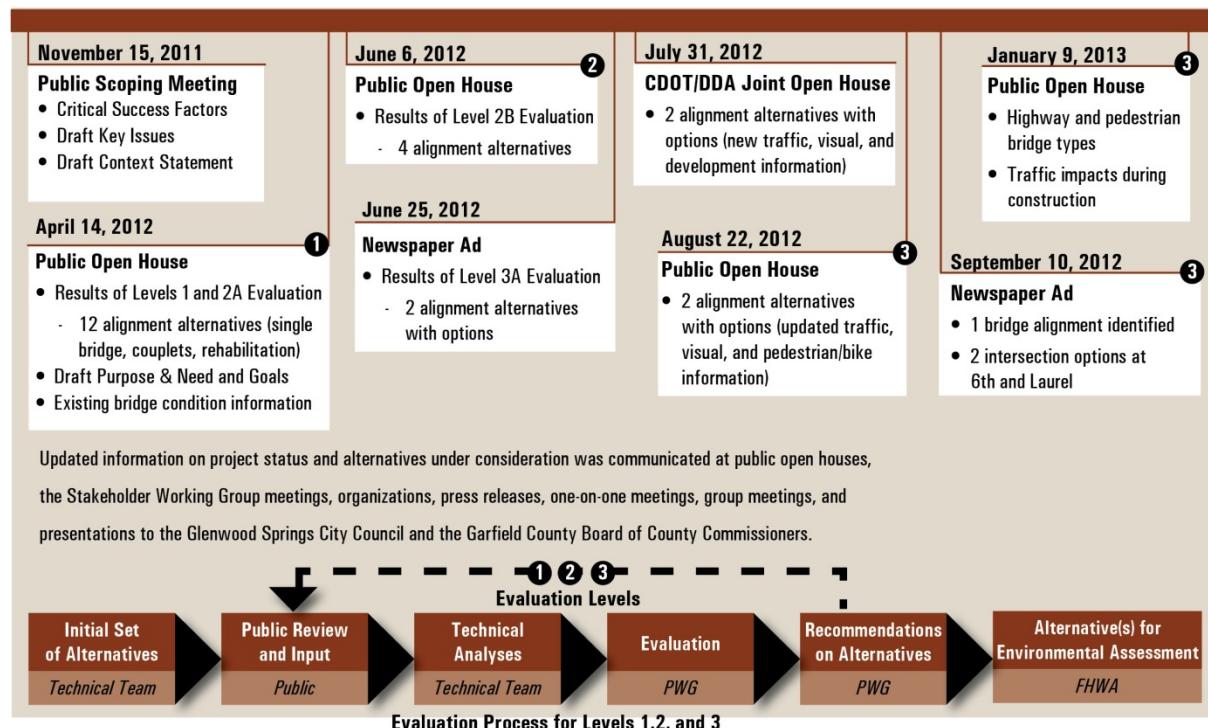
Because of the many stakeholders and interest groups in the Glenwood Springs community, the public involvement process evolved over the course of the EA to include a wide variety of outreach and information techniques. There were many opportunities for participation, contribution, and education. The study team worked with all interests to develop an understanding of the challenges and to build support for

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the process and recommendations through an open and informative public involvement process. The comments and input received as part of this outreach helped shape the alternatives and resource evaluation used in this EA.

Figure 5-1 illustrates key public events and their role in the alternatives evaluation process through January 2013. More details about the alternatives and options evaluated at each level of screening are discussed in Appendix A, *The Process, Identification, and Evaluation of Alternatives*.

FIGURE 5-1. COMMUNICATION OF ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION PROCESS THROUGH JANUARY 2013



5.3 Project Groups

The following project groups helped guide and provide input into the study:

- ❖ **Project Leadership Team (PLT).** This group was formed by CDOT to champion the CSS process. The PLT had representatives from CDOT; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); City of Glenwood Springs; Colorado Bridge Enterprise; Garfield, Pitkin and Eagle Counties; the Glenwood Hot Springs; the Glenwood Chamber of Commerce; the Historic Preservation Commission; and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The PLT was not a decision-making body. Its primary charge was to make sure the study team followed a CSS process to complete

the study. The PLT met monthly or at key milestones to identify actions and decisions to establish goals, implement steps needed to resolve issues, and facilitate formal actions required by councils or boards.

- ❖ **Project Working Group (PWG).** This was a technical team of representatives from CDOT, FHWA, City of Glenwood Springs, and the consultant team that executed the process. The PWG group met regularly to address technical issues like the bridge condition, traffic analysis, and environmental analysis. The PWG worked with the consultant team to develop the alternatives screening criteria and make recommendations for the development, evaluation, and screening of alternatives.
- ❖ **Stakeholder Working Group (SWG).** This is a citizen participation group that was an outcome of the Visioning Workshop held in early December 2011. It was made up of a diverse group of representatives of the community, businesses, and local agencies chosen based on input from the PLT. A primary function of this group was to provide input prior to project development milestones relating to such items as the alternatives screening and bridge design concepts. This was not a technical group, and it did not make decisions about the project. Rather, group members provided feedback to the PWG on the community values that were used to refine and screen bridge alternatives.
- ❖ **Issue Task Forces.** Issue Task Forces were formed as specific issues were identified through stakeholder, public, and agency outreach. An Issue Task Force had a focused topic and worked from a plan that outlines the actions needed to make a recommendation within a given timeframe. The Issue Task Force was responsible for documenting the process and making recommendations.

5.4 Agency Coordination

5.4.1 Lead Agency and Project Sponsor

FHWA is the federal lead agency for this project and is responsible for supervising the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. CDOT, as the project sponsor and co-lead agency, prepared the environmental analysis and documentation. The City of Glenwood Springs serves as a cooperating agency.

FHWA and CDOT conducted agency coordination throughout the process to ensure a timely flow of project information among the federal, state, and local agencies involved in the EA.

5.4.2 Agency Scoping Meeting

As part of the NEPA process, a project scoping meeting was held with resource agencies on November 15, 2011. The purpose was to identify agency concerns or areas of analysis that would require special consideration, define the important environmental issues,



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identify any additional requirements, and identify the resources that should be evaluated for cumulative effects.

Agency representatives who could not attend the scoping meeting were asked to identify any concerns related to the project and communicate them to the study team. These comments were received via U.S. mail, e-mail, and telephone conversations.

Attendees at the meeting were representatives from the CDOT, FHWA, City of Glenwood Springs, the Glenwood Springs Fire Department, Garfield County, Frontier Historical Society, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority. Additional comments were received from the Public Utilities Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A copy of the invitee list, scoping letters, and comments received can be found in Appendix D.

5.4.3 Individual Resource Agency Coordination

Coordination with various resource agencies was conducted throughout the study to address specific issues that had been identified.

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

The SHPO and historic consulting parties were consulted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in the determination of eligibility and effects to historic resources. More information on Section 106 consultation is located in Section 3.15 *Historic Preservation*.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP)

The CNHP provided a list of special-status plants and animals, known as element occurrences, potentially found within two miles of the study area.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)

Two meetings were held with CPW to obtain input from CPW and recommendations regarding construction timing in regard to wildlife fisheries and other wildlife of concern.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The study team consulted with the USFWS Colorado Ecological Services Field Office to determine the potential for impacts to federally protected species.

5.4.4 City Staff and Emergency Providers

The study team met with the City of Glenwood Springs Planning Department, Fire Department, and Police Department to discuss issues and concerns they had with the various alternatives.

5.5 Stakeholder Involvement Activities

There was a high level of interest in the EA, which resulted in numerous opportunities for public participation and input to the EA process. Since November 2011, members of the study team have had one-on-one contact with approximately 3,000 stakeholders through an array of outreach activities, including, but not limited to:

- ❖ Five SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge Public Open Houses (an average of 90 attended each).
- ❖ Ten SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge Stakeholder Working Group Workshops (an average of 30 attended each).
- ❖ Two open houses held jointly with the DDA and CDOT.
- ❖ Two open forums hosted by the Glenwood Springs Chamber.
- ❖ Meetings with more than 30 business owners in the study area.
- ❖ One-on-one meetings with more than 35 individual stakeholders.
- ❖ Thirty meetings and workshops with elected and public officials.
- ❖ Eight event displays, plus 2012 and 2013 Strawberry Days and weekly Downtown Farmers Markets.
- ❖ Twenty civic and community group meetings.
- ❖ Thirteen meetings with City of Glenwood Springs staff and emergency service providers.

5.5.1 Visioning Session

The Visioning Session was part of the scoping process for the EA. The purpose was to clarify the context for the bridge, explore the community and stakeholder values that would shape the plans for the future bridge, and document the principles and desired outcomes that would be considered as the study moved forward. All of the input received during this scoping workshop was used to develop the project's Purpose and Need Statement, the Project Goals, and the criteria for alternatives evaluation and screening.



A timeline was compiled to set the Grand Avenue Bridge in historical context of the community.

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The PLT helped plan the workshop and assisted the study team in compiling an attendee list of individuals having interest in and knowledge about the project. Care was taken to assemble a wide range of interests and opinions that would contribute to productive discussions. A letter and emails inviting participation in the workshop were sent to 48 individuals and organizations, as well as to the members of the PLT and PWG.

Approximately 32 people attended the two-day workshop that was held on December 7, 2011, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and December 8, 2011, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

After an overview of the project and a presentation of how the Grand Avenue Bridge fit into the historic context of Glenwood Springs, the attendees discussed trends in the area, what they valued about the community and the bridge, the pros and cons of replacing or rehabilitating the bridge, and construction issues. The outcome of the workshop was a list of common values and criteria used by the study team to develop and evaluate alternatives.

5.5.2 Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)

The participants in the Visioning Workshop suggested and agreed to be part of a group that would meet periodically to give input to the study team on the alternatives that were to be developed. This group became the Stakeholder Working Group.

Over the course of the EA, the SWG met eight times. An average of 30 people attended each workshop. The workshops typically were held in the same timeframe as the Public Open Houses. They provided an opportunity for focused discussions on the alternatives and options that were also presented to the general public. The meeting dates and purpose of the workshops are included in Table 5.1.



Discussion group comments at the SWG workshops were recorded on flip charts and incorporated into the alternatives evaluation process.

TABLE 5-1. SWG WORKSHOPS

Meeting Date	Purpose of Workshop
February 13, 2012	Review the full range of alignment and cross section alternatives under initial screening.
April 4, 2012	Review couplet and one bridge alignment options, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, north side landing, and downtown parking.
June 6, 2012	Review tradeoffs and community values related to Grand Avenue Bridge alignment options, including single bridge or couplet alternatives, and where the bridge would land on the north side.
August 22, 2012	Provide input on Grand Avenue Bridge alignment options and tradeoffs for each related to visual/urban design, pedestrian/bicycle connections, and traffic operations.
November 14, 2012	Provide information on bridge type, constructability, traffic impacts, and construction impacts.

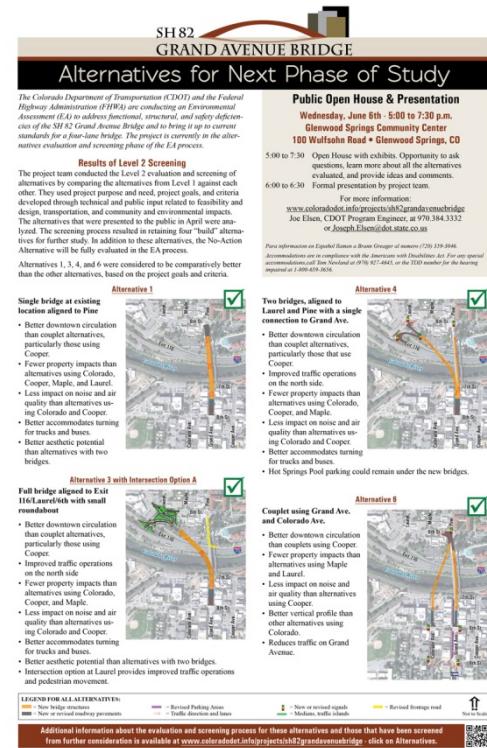
TABLE 5-1. SWG WORKSHOPS

Meeting Date	Purpose of Workshop
May 30, 2013	Provide input on pedestrian bridge types, aesthetic elements for the highway bridge, and how to create a gateway on the north entry to Glenwood Springs.
November 21, 2013	Provide a project update and obtain input on the design process.
March 13, 2014 (two workshops)	Provide project update and obtain input on the landscaping and urban design/aesthetic options at specific locations in the Build Alternative.
April 10, 2014	Present refined options based on input from the SWG, Design Elements Issue Task Force, and City Council; request the participants' concurrence with the options presented; and present some new concepts for consideration.

5.5.3 Public Meetings

Five public meetings were held during the course of the EA. Several means of announcing and encouraging attendance were used.

- ❖ At least two weeks prior to the date, and one or two days before the date:
 - ◆ Display advertisements (ads) placed in the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* and the *Aspen Times*.
 - ◆ Press releases and media briefings the week before.
 - ◆ Announcements distributed through CDOT's GovDelivery, Twitter, and Facebook venues coinciding with display ads and press releases.
 - ◆ Email blasts to project groups and project contact lists.
 - ◆ Mailings to individuals on the project contact lists without an email address.
- ❖ Radio/television interviews prior to the date.
- ❖ Flyers in downtown businesses.
- ❖ Full-page ads placed in the Glenwood Springs Post Independent and the Aspen Times with:
 - ◆ Date, time, and purpose of the meeting.
 - ◆ Update on the study process and status.



Full-page ads published just prior to the Public Open Houses generated interest in attending. An average of 90 people attended the Public Open Houses—the January 2013 meeting had 160 attendees.

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- ◆ Type of input that would be requested.
- ◆ Graphics/visuals of what would be displayed.
- ◆ Contact information, which included a contact number for Spanish-speaking individuals, and website address.

Based on the type of input needed, meeting formats varied and included an open house format without presentations, conversation circle format, and formal presentation with time for questions and answers. Comment sheets were provided at each meeting that solicited input on specifics related to the alternatives and options presented at the meetings. Study team members were on hand to take comments, answer questions, and address concerns. The information presented at the public meetings was posted on the project website immediately after the meeting occurred.



Traffic simulations used at Public Open Houses and SWG workshops showed how traffic and pedestrians would move through the 6th and Laurel intersection options. Drive-through simulations were an effective way to gain comments on alignment alternatives.

The dates of the public meetings, along with purpose of the meeting and number of attendees, are included in Table 5-2.

TABLE 5-2. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Meeting Date	Purpose of Meeting	# of Attendees
November 15, 2011 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Glenwood Springs Community Center	Public Scoping meeting to introduce the proposed project and listen to and gather the public's concerns, issues, and ideas that might affect the scope, as well as to answer questions about the project.	70
April 4, 2012 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Glenwood Springs Community Center	Introduce the project and the process. This included the Purpose and Need; an explanation of the EA and evaluation processes; an explanation of the issues with the bridge; explanation of the Level 1 Fatal Flaw screening, including the criteria used; description of the Level 2 alignment alternatives; and explanation on how the public can be involved in the process.	91

TABLE 5-2. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Meeting Date	Purpose of Meeting	# of Attendees
June 6, 2012 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Glenwood Springs Community Center	Provide background information; present criteria for and results of Level 2 alternatives evaluation and screening; and provide new information on construction phasing, downtown circulation options, and a Travel Survey conducted for the study	86
August 22, 2012 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Glenwood Springs Community Center	Provide updated information on the evaluation process and how the criteria were used to comparatively evaluate the alternatives; updated information on alignment Alternatives 1 and 3 and options at the 6th and Laurel intersection, including bicycle/ pedestrian connections; and information about the Independent Peer Review held June 26 to 28, 2012. Also started the discussion about pedestrian options on the south side.	90
January 9, 2013 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Glenwood Springs Community Center	Review activities since the August 22 Public Open House, Grand Avenue Bridge and new pedestrian bridge type options under consideration, construction traffic impacts, and pedestrian and bicycle connections (north and south sides). Information was also available on CDOT's SH 82 Access Control Plan, a separate but related project.	162

5.5.4 One-on-One Meetings

CDOT and the study team held numerous one-on-one meetings with interested citizens and stakeholders either in person or on the phone. The meetings typically were held at the request of the stakeholders; topics varied depending on the status of the process and alternatives/options under consideration. Some meetings were with individuals who had detailed ideas and drawings about alignments and bridge types. Others were initiated with individuals who had written letters to the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* about the project. Follow-up to conversations included sending requested project information and further discussion, if needed.

5.5.5 Issue Task Forces

The PLT formed two Issue Task Forces to address specific issues. The Pedestrian Bridge Access Issue Task Force reviewed the large volume of information that had been generated by different parties and the different variations on the ramp and elevator options. The members consolidated the information in a packet that was submitted to the City Council to facilitate its decision-making process about the options. The Design Elements Issue Task Force was formed to assist the design team in evaluating landscaping and urban design/aesthetic options at specific locations in the Build Alternative.

5.5.6 Interested Organizations

Study team members and CDOT presented study updates to several groups, some of them more than once during the process. These included the Rotary Club, Glenwood Hot Springs Pool Board, Chamber of Commerce Board, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Club Rotario, Colorado Mountain College, Downtown Partnership Board, Garfield County Library, Colorado Municipal League, and the Colorado Contractors Association. In



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addition, project information was provided to the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority and the Elected Officials Transportation Committee representing Pitkin County, the City of Aspen, the Town of Snowmass Village, and the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority.

5.5.7 Business Owner Meetings

Specific outreach was conducted to business owners in the study area. In addition to the meetings summarized in Table 5-3, the study team interviewed business owners specifically about economic impacts. That information is included in Section 3.6 *Economic Conditions* and in the *Economic Conditions Technical Report SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge Environmental Assessment* (Arland, 2014).

TABLE 5-3. BUSINESS OWNER MEETINGS

Meeting Date	Activity	Who Attended
November 11, 2011	Postcards left at downtown businesses announcing the November 15, 2011 Public Scoping Meeting	Not applicable.
March 5, 2012	Door-to-door invite to business owners along 6th Street for Open House on March 7, informational packets	Met with six business owners and employees about schedule and alternatives. Concerns were maintaining visibility of businesses, timing of construction, access, and right-of-way takes.
March 7, 2012	Open meeting for 6th Street Business Owners (west of Laurel, east of 6th Street)	Representatives from two hotels attended. General questions and concerns about potential widening of US 6 and mobility improvements.
June 27, 2012	Meeting with business owners on US 6 west of Laurel	Met with two business owners about 6th and Laurel intersection, one representing views of multiple businesses. Concerns were visibility, sight distance, access, accommodating pedestrians, opportunity for aesthetic improvements, and increased noise.
August 16, 2012	Meeting with businesses between 7th and 8th and along 7th Street	Met with 13 business representatives. Concerns centered on pedestrian safety at or near the existing pedestrian bridge ramp, 8th Street crossing, the Grand Avenue wing street, height and width of bridge, traffic speed, access to businesses, and parking.
October 23, 2012	One-on-one meetings with business owners between 7th and 8th Streets	Met with three business owners. Concerns about economic impacts during construction, width of bridge, and pedestrian access.
February 26, 2013	Door-to-door walkaround between 7th and 10th Streets and along 7th Street	Talked to several business owners and employees and left informational flyer at 75 businesses about project and upcoming story poling event. Concerns were length of bridge closure, pedestrian access, increased traffic speeds, noise, and the SH 82 Access Control Plan.
March 7, 2013	Story poling events between 7th and 8th Streets	Described in Section 5.5.11 Story Poling Events.

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Q. Will a wider bridge mean that the traffic speeds through downtown will increase?

A. No.

Traffic speeds through downtown are influenced by a mix of factors, including physical attributes (condition) of the roadway, congestion levels, traffic signal timing/spacing, lane width, parking, land uses, crossing pedestrians, and enforcement of the posted speed limit. The width and condition of Grand Avenue will change only on the bridge to bring it to current and safe design standards; Grand Avenue will not be widened south of 8th Street. The other factors will not change enough to significantly influence traffic speeds.

There are no plans to increase the speed limit on Grand Avenue through downtown from the currently posted 25 mph. Current speeds are estimated at 15-20 mph during the day and 10-15 mph during the evening. Most vehicles travel at 30 mph or less during downtown during uncongested times (e.g., 10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.) for most vehicles are actually in the 30 mph to 35 mph range, even with the 25 mph posted speed limit. It is expected that traffic volumes will stay the same or increase over time, making it difficult for traffic to move much faster than it does now, even on a widened bridge. Therefore, it is not anticipated that traffic speeds through downtown will increase after the new bridge is in place.

A proposal being considered by the SH 82 Access Control Plan would remove the traffic signal at 8th Street, which could result in increased average speeds at 8th Street. However, this proposal would also narrow Grand Avenue in this area by removing the southbound left turn lane and adding raised medians to prevent left turns, which could decrease speeds during peak hours. The end result would most likely not change traffic speeds in this area.

Q. Where will the bridge touch down in downtown?

A. The bridge will touch down just north of 8th Street.

The abutment supporting the bridge will be approximately 65 feet further south than it is now, which will result in a larger open area beneath the bridge and allow a pedestrian crosswalk under the bridge that connects the alleys.

Q. Will tourists and residents be able to get to downtown businesses during construction?

A. Yes.

During the estimated two-month or less full closure of the Grand Avenue Bridge, SH 82 through traffic will be directed

to use the Midland Avenue detour route. Local travelers can continue to use all routes into the downtown area. Construction will require closing only those streets directly affected by the construction, such as Winy Street and the bridge itself, or parking under the bridge. Local residents and tourists will be able to park on 7th, 8th, Colorado, Cooper, or other streets and walk to businesses on 7th Street and Grand Avenue – very similar to what they do now. Pedestrian access across the river from the Hot Springs Pool area will be maintained throughout construction. Construction traffic control plans will ensure pedestrian access to downtown businesses is maintained by using traffic signal timing, one-way streets, short-term closures, and a comprehensive signing plan.

Q. How does the SH 82 Access Control Plan relate to the Grand Avenue Bridge project?

A. The SH 82 Access Control Plan recommends a number of changes along Grand Avenue in the context of a larger plan for SH 82 through Glenwood Springs.

While these are two separate projects, the Grand Avenue Bridge project will be affected by what the Glenwood Springs City Council approves in the SH 82 Access Control Plan (ACP) at the Grand Avenue and 8th Street intersection. Upon an approval of the ACP, any access changes identified in the ACP will be implemented only as future development occurs or as public projects are constructed along SH 82. Because it is a public project connecting to the 8th Street intersection, the Grand Avenue Bridge project will then be responsible for implementation of the approved plan for access at 8th Street.

- If the approved ACP keeps the existing full movement signalized intersection at 8th Street, the Grand Avenue Bridge project will provide ADA access from the new pedestrian bridge to 7th Street with a new, separate ramp structure. An elevator is also being considered.

- If the approved ACP includes changing the 8th Street intersection to right-in/right-out only, the southbound left turn lane from Grand to 8th Street would be eliminated. The Grand Avenue Bridge project design would change and attach the ADA ramp to the new Grand Avenue Bridge, rather than building the separate ADA ramp described above. An elevator is also being considered.



A flyer was prepared specifically to inform downtown business owners about the project.

5.5.8 Public Officials Briefings

The study team briefed public officials at regular intervals during the study about the status of the process and gathered input to aid in decision-making.

- ❖ City of Glenwood Springs City Council (17 workshops and meetings; two story poling workshops [see Section 5.5.11 Story Poling Events])
- ❖ Garfield County Board of County Commissioners (eight meetings)
- ❖ Pitkin County (two meetings)
- ❖ Transportation Commission (nine meetings total – one joint meeting with River Commission)
- ❖ River Commission (two meetings total – one joint meeting with Transportation Commission)
- ❖ Planning and Zoning Commission (two meetings)
- ❖ RE-1 School District Board (one meeting)



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5.5.9 PLT Meetings

PLT meetings occurred almost monthly so that the members could provide feedback on the study team's process and provide input on specific issues. The PLT meetings held are listed in Table 5-4.

TABLE 5-4. PLT MEETINGS

Meeting Date	Purpose
April 6, 2011 PLT Meeting #1	Introduce project.
August 4, 2011 PLT Meeting #2	Introduce consultant team and outline project.
September 30, 2011 PLT Meeting #3	Conduct chartering Session.
November 16, 2011 PLT Meeting #4	Summarize results of Public Scoping meeting on 11/15/2011, give input to Visioning Workshop Agenda and invitees, and provide NEPA 101 overview.
December 15, 2011 PLT Meeting #5	Provide Visioning Workshop Update, Planning, Engineering, and Environmental.
January 12, 2012 PLT Meeting #6	Conduct screening process and alternatives.
February 9, 2012 PLT Meeting #7	Review alignment and cross section alternatives under initial screening.
March 8, 2012 PLT Meeting #8	Continue Level 2 Screening, draft Public Open House content.
April 5, 2012 PLT Meeting #9 Combined Meeting with PWG	Provide debrief on Public Open House and other meetings (SWG, Transportation Commission, River Commission, CDOT Maintenance); talk about how to proceed with alternatives screening.
May 10, 2012 PLT Meeting #10	Review Level 2B Screening; Level 2B Alternatives.
June 7, 2012 PLT Meeting #11 Combined Meeting with PWG	Provide debrief of Public Open House.
June 15, 2012 PLT Meeting #12	Review Level 3A Evaluation Results – Alternatives 4 and 6 screened out.
July 12, 2012 PLT Meeting #13	Review Independent Peer Review recommendations, review evaluation of public alternatives, refinements to options for Alternatives 1 and 3 options, planning for Joint Open House with DDA, public involvement planning.
August 10, 2012 PLT Meeting #14	Provide project updates, debrief on joint open house with DDA, Colorado Bridge Enterprise overview.
August 23, 2012 PLT #15 Meeting Combined with PWG	Provide debrief of Stakeholder Working Group meeting and Public Open House.
October 12, 2012 PLT #16 Meeting Combined with PWG	Provide updates on pedestrian and highway bridge options.
January 10, 2013 PLT Meeting #17 Combined with PWG	Provide debrief on Public Open House.
March 6, 2013 PLT Meeting #18	Provide project update on Alignment 3E and 6th and Laurel signalized intersection, pedestrian bridge design workshop, south end and north end connection options.
May 30, 2013 PLT Meeting #19	Introduce Construction Manager/General Contractor team, provide update on 6th and Laurel roundabout intersection, Access Control Plan related to Grand Avenue/8th Street connection.
November 22, 2013 PLT Meeting #20	Provide project update on recent recommendations.

TABLE 5-4. PLT MEETINGS

Meeting Date	Purpose
April 30, 2013 PLT Meeting #21	Provide update on input received at the March and April Design Elements Issue Task Force, SWG, and City Council meetings on design elements; recommendations incorporated into the design; and the project schedule.
July 23, 2014 PLT Meeting #22	Provide an update on the project, including funding, scope, and schedule.

5.5.10 Community Events

The study team took advantage of different opportunities to reach the general public. Summaries of the events follow.

Strawberry Days

This community event is held the last weekend in June. The study team had a booth in 2012 and 2013. During 2012, posters with the alternatives and other project information were exhibited. During 2013, the physical model with the Build Alternative provided an additional way for members of the public to understand the Grand Avenue Bridge project.

Approximately 400 people stopped by the booth in 2012; 865 in 2013. If contact information was provided, it was added to the study's interested citizens email and mail lists.



Exhibits at Strawberry Days reached more than 1,200 people at the 2012 and 2013 event.

Downtown Market

This market is held weekly in the summer months (June through September) on 9th Street between Grand and Cooper. Study information was available at a booth during the 2012 and 2013 summer months. "Business cards" with CDOT's project website address were handed out.

During 2012, posters with the alternatives and other project information were exhibited. During 2013, the physical model with the Build Alternative provided an additional way for the public to understand the Build Alternative and pedestrian bridge options. The physical model is described in Section 5.6 *Public Information Tools*. An estimated 1,500 people stopped by the booth each year. Contact information was added to the study's interested citizen email and mail lists.

Other Open Houses/Exhibits

Project exhibits, business cards, and handouts were provided at the following locations:

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- ❖ 2012 Regional Trails, Biking, Walking Summit: April 20, 2012 in Aspen, Colorado
- ❖ City of Aspen Transportation Open House: June 26, 2012 in Aspen, Colorado
- ❖ City Hall, City of Glenwood Springs: April/May 2012, April/June 2013, and summer of 2013 in Glenwood Springs
- ❖ Colorado Mountain College: April 5, 2012 downtown; May 1-10, 2012 Blake Street
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce Bizopoly: October 25-26, 2013, in Glenwood Springs

5.5.11 Story Poling Events

Grand Avenue Bridge between 7th Street and 8th Street

Throughout the alternatives evaluation process, businesses, the City Council, and the general public showed a strong interest in how high and how wide the new bridge would be between 7th and 8th Streets. The discussions regarding bridge dimensions also related to the concurrent SH 82 Access Control Plan, which was considering several options for the 8th Street and Grand Avenue intersection.

A story poling exercise was held on Thursday, March 7, 2013, to physically illustrate the potential width and heights of four options for the new bridge for the intersection options:

- ❖ Full movement intersection at 8th Street, no sidewalk.
- ❖ Right-in/right-out at 8th Street, no sidewalk.
- ❖ Full movement intersection at 8th Street, 6-foot sidewalk.
- ❖ Right-in/right-out at 8th Street, 8-foot sidewalk.



Story poling illustrated how the height and width of the bridge would vary under four different options.

To illustrate the various options, which are described in Chapter 2.0 *Alternatives* and in Appendix A *The Process, Identification, and Evaluation of Alternatives*, “story poles” were placed on both sides of the existing bridge at 50-foot intervals showing the heights of the new driving surface, bottom of the bridge, the top of the railing, and the horizontal location of the edge of the bridge. Each of the four options was color coded. Exhibits with renderings of the four options from four different locations were also available for viewing.

Approximately 70 people attended an 11:00 a.m. session. The City Council had a separate viewing session at 12:00 p.m., which members of the public also attended. Approximately 40 people attended both the 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. sessions. There

were several questions that the study team took into consideration for future public information materials and in consideration of the alternatives.

ADA-Accessible Facility from Pedestrian Bridge to 7th Street

The Build Alternative would include an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible facility for pedestrians coming off of the new pedestrian bridge down to 7th Street on the south end of the bridge. In addition to a wide staircase and an elevator, several ramp options had been considered during the alternatives development process. There had been concern from several stakeholder groups about some of the options blocking views from 7th Street across the Colorado River to the historic buildings on the north side and about taking up space along 7th Street that could potentially be used as a plaza or expanded pedestrian area. To assist the public in visualizing how one of the options would look, a story poling event was conducted on Wednesday, October 16, 2013, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. along the north side of 7th Street between Grand Avenue and Cooper Street.

The purpose of the display was to visually represent what an ADA ramp could look like along 7th Street. The visual feel of the ramp was replicated by erecting story poles and hanging material on them that simulated the ramp, banister, and top rail of the structure. The display showed the south-facing façade of the ramps in full scale and at the location they would be placed on the existing sidewalk and plaza area. There were also renderings at the site showing the ADA options of an elevator only, a short ADA ramp, and three options were considered for ADA access – all with stairs to the new pedestrian bridge the long ADA ramp that was represented by the story poles.

The display was announced in a *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* article on Tuesday, October 15, 2013, and members of the City Council, the PLT, the SWG, and interested citizens were also notified of the display. Approximately 82 people viewed the display.

5.5.12 Coordination with CDOT's SH 82 Access Control Plan

During the course of the study, CDOT was concurrently conducting the SH 82 Access Control Plan (ACP) study. Several alternatives under consideration in the ACP at the 8th Street and Grand Avenue intersection would have changed the assumptions the study team had made for the Grand Avenue Bridge project's configuration at that intersection. In addition, it was difficult for the general public to separate the ACP and the Grand Avenue Bridge project processes because of the location of the intersection.



Photorealistic renderings depicted how the 8th Street and Grand Avenue intersection would appear to pedestrians.

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Members of the study team attended two open houses held for the ACP. The first one was May 23, 2012, where there were study exhibits, website “business cards,” and team members available to answer questions. For the February 12, 2013, open house, the study team provided technical assistance and graphic displays to show how the City Council’s decision would affect the options being considered for the Grand Avenue Bridge project.

5.5.13 Coordination with Glenwood Springs Downtown Development Authority

The DDA was represented in the PLT. As the alternatives were developed, the DDA realized the potential for redevelopment opportunities along 6th Street and between 7th and 8th Streets along Grand Avenue. At an open house held from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. on March 28, 2012, at the Loft of the Hotel Denver, the DDA showed the results of a design charrette that looked at future public space opportunities in the downtown core given the new bridge. Members of the study team attended with a small informational display at the open house. Grand Avenue Bridge exhibits included six posters showing the visual mass and height of the new bridge between 7th and 8th Streets, and a computerized traffic simulation of the 6th and Laurel intersection. Approximately 50 to 60 people attended the open house and at least half stopped by the Grand Avenue Bridge display, made comments, and asked questions.

CDOT and the DDA held a joint open house on July 28, 2012, where three concurrent projects had displays—Grand Avenue Bridge project, the SH 82 Access Control Plan, and the DDA’s Visioning Exercise related to the Grand Avenue Bridge project’s Alternatives 1 and 3. The Grand Avenue Bridge study team prepared the advertisement for the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent*; a press release and information for CDOT’s GovDelivery, Twitter, and Facebook venues; and emails and mailings to the study groups and study email and mail lists.

Grand Avenue Bridge exhibits included Alternatives 1, 3 (with 6th and Laurel intersection Option A), 4, and 6. The DDA presented renderings to illustrate what four of the Grand Avenue Bridge alternatives might look like. Attendees used “sticky notes” to comment on what they liked and didn’t like about each of the alternatives.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
Glenwood Springs Projects
Sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority and Colorado Department of Transportation

DOWNTOWN Development AUTHORITY of Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Tuesday, July 31, 2012
5:00 to 7:30 p.m.
The Hotel Denver • Loft Meeting Room (3rd Floor)
402 7th Street • Glenwood Springs

This workshop will present information on three separate but related projects: the SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge Environmental Assessment, the SH 82 Access Control Plan, and the Downtown Development Authority’s (DDA) Visioning Exercise.

project team members will be available to answer questions about the exhibits, which will include:

- Bridge Alternatives 1 and 3 The SH 82 Grand Avenue project team will have renderings of Alternatives 1 and 3 from different perspectives and some new traffic flow simulations of the various intersection options.
- Urban design and redevelopment opportunities The team will have sketches from a Visioning Exercise about what some of the downtown and north intersection areas might look like under bridge Alternatives 1 and 3.
- SH 82 plans to control and manage access The SH 82 Access Control Plan study team will be available to answer questions about the ongoing study and potential changes to access along SH 82.

Para informacion en Espanol llamen a Brian Greager al numero (720) 389-3048.

There will be opportunity for public comment, so we encourage you to attend.

For more information, contact:
Joe Eisen, CDOT • 970.345.7629 • Joseph.Eisen@dot.state.co.us or Leslie Bethel, DDA • 970.384.6446 • lbethel@sopris.net

Accommodations are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require an accommodation, call Tom Newland at (870) 927-4646, or the TDD number for the hearing impaired at 1-800-659-3656.

Public Open House Location
The Hotel Denver
Loft Meeting Room (3rd Floor)
402 7th Street

Collaboration with the DDA provided more opportunities to present alternatives to the public.

In addition, the study team held several coordination meetings with the DDA to develop design options for the ADA-accessible options at the south end of the new pedestrian bridge, which included stairs with a pedestrian ramp and/or elevator.

5.5.14 Participation in Sponsored Forums

Glenwood Springs Chamber “Issues and Answers” Night on “The Grand Avenue Bridge: Ask the Experts”

The Glenwood Springs Chamber hosted an “Issues and Answers” night on “The Grand Avenue Bridge: Ask the Experts” on January 10, 2013. It was an opportunity for the general public to hear answers to questions that had been submitted via the website and other venues prior to the event. A CDOT representative and one member of the study team, the DDA representative from the PLT, and the Chamber representative on the PLT were on the panel with a downtown Glenwood Springs business owner. The event was televised for Cable Channel 10 rebroadcast.

Glenwood Springs Chamber Town Forum

The Glenwood Springs Chamber held a second open public meeting on April 2, 2013, just prior to the City Council’s scheduled vote on the ACP. A CDOT representative participated in the forum with a transportation planning consultant working with the DDA. Questions had been developed in a focus group of 70 participants prior to the event.

5.5.15 On-Line Travel Survey

The study team conducted a travel survey to determine travel patterns of traffic traveling through and within Glenwood Springs. The survey was advertised in the newspaper and with variable message signs that were moved around Glenwood Springs. The study team also handed out business cards with the website address for the survey.

A prize incentive to complete the on-line travel survey boosted participation and supported local businesses. More than 1,000 people participated. Winners were chosen randomly; the prizes were gift certificates to local businesses.

5.6 Public Information Tools

Because of the high level of interest in the project, the study team used several means to communicate with the varied stakeholder groups. The outreach resulted in letters, emails, and phone calls with ideas, suggestions, and opinions about the process and the alternatives; several ideas have shaped the options and alternatives.

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Website

CDOT maintained a website for the project that was updated regularly with new and changed information (www.coloradodot.info/projects/sh82grandavenuebridge). The website included a link to sign up for project updates through CDOT's GovDelivery email system and an email link for the CDOT Program Engineer.

Frequently Asked Questions

The study team prepared answers to Frequently Asked Questions at various points in the process. Some of them were full documents that addressed general project issues, and some addressed specific topics. These documents were posted to the project website. In addition, individual questions and answers were published in the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* and the *Aspen Times* (at one point, published weekly). These addressed questions that had come up in the various outreach activities and issues that were prevalent in the community and evident in Letters to the Editor.

Project Briefs

Project briefs that described the process that led to the recommendation on some of the Build Alternative elements were posted on the CDOT website and distributed via email and mail to the PLT, PWG, SWG, and interested citizens who had signed up for project updates. Some of the topics were the 6th and Laurel intersection, the coordination regarding the development of the SH 82 detour during the full closure of the Grand Avenue Bridge, the location of the Grand Avenue Bridge piers between 7th and 8th Streets with underpass connecting Two Rivers Trail and 6th Street, and the elevator/pedestrian ramp.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How are the alternatives presented by stakeholders being considered?

A. The Project Working Group (PWG) is evaluating the alternatives using the project's established process.

Some of the alternatives are similar to those already evaluated during the project's fatal flaw and comparative evaluations; some are new and unique. The PWG is applying the project's evaluation criteria to the alternatives. For example, if they do not meet the Purpose and Need in terms of connectivity and fixing the structural and functional problems with the Grand Avenue Bridge, they will not be considered further.

The PWG may also look at incorporating some elements in existing alternatives if they add value and are appropriate. Other elements could be useful for future City planning projects.

When the details of these evaluations are complete, they will be available on the project website.

<http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/sh82grandavenuebridge/frequently-asked-questions.html>

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions published in two local newspapers provided timely information on current issues.

downtown, the pedestrian/bicycle trail with underpass connecting Two Rivers Trail and 6th Street, and the elevator/pedestrian ramp.

CDOT Information Venues

Press releases, study updates, and announcements for public events were distributed via CDOT's information venues. These included GovDelivery, Twitter, and Facebook. All press releases contained information on how to sign up for the GovDelivery updates.

Media Outreach and Event Announcements

CDOT sent press releases to the media outlets covering the Glenwood Springs and regional communities. Early in the study, CDOT and the study team met with the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* editorial staff to explain the study process and to establish points of contact and coordination procedures. The study team also held media briefings with the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* staff prior to most Public Open Houses.

Ads were placed in the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* and the *Aspen Times* to announce upcoming public events, including all five Public Open Houses, the joint open house with the DDA, and the Travel Survey. Additional media coverage included:

KSNO Radio	November 15, 2011
GJ TV5	June 1, 2012
KREX-TV	June 1, 2012
CBS Channel 4	June 2012
KREX-TV and KMTS Radio	August 22, 2012 (at Public Open House)
Aspen Public Radio	September 4 and September 10, 2012
KMTS Radio	September 10, 2012; January 7, 2013
Aspen Public Radio	April 14, 2014

The PLT prepared an "Open Letter to Glenwood Springs Visitors and Residents" in July 2012 that supported the project and the process.

The *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* published a "My Side" column submitted by the CDOT Region 3 Program Engineer that stated CDOT's position on the bypass or relocation of SH 82 and the Grand Avenue Bridge Project.

Contact Lists

The study team maintained contact lists to distribute announcements and reminders of public events and new study updates during times when open public events were not planned. The lists were for the PLT, the SWG, and interested citizens (from Public Open Houses, community events, and individuals requesting information). Email communication was preferred, but information was mailed to those individuals who did not provide email addresses.

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Project Displays

At various points in the study, exhibits were set up in public spaces for a limited amount of time. They typically displayed the alternatives and options under consideration at the time and provided the website address and a contact name and email for comments. Exhibits were displayed at the Colorado Mountain College and Glenwood Springs City Hall.

Business Cards

To direct the general public and interested stakeholders to a central source of information on the project—the project website—a business card was created that had the website address on it. This business card was handed out at public events and one-on-one meetings. A second business card was used to advertise the Glenwood Springs Travel Survey, directing individuals to the survey website.

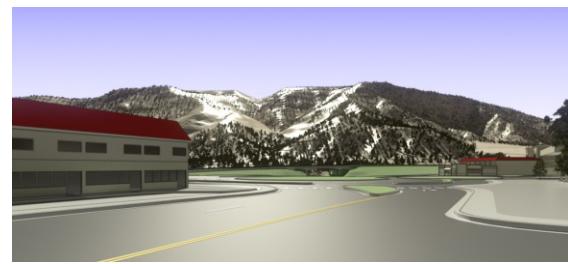


Business cards were handed out to direct the public to CDOT's website.

Visuals

Numerous visual aids were prepared throughout the EA process. They were:

- ❖ **Exhibit Boards.** Exhibit boards were prepared for Public Open Houses, special event displays, and displays in public venues.
- ❖ **Drive-through Simulations.** Created from the 3D computer model, these simulations illustrated the driver's and bird's eye viewpoints of alignment and intersection alternatives.
- ❖ **Traffic Simulations.** Based on traffic model volumes, these simulations illustrated traffic movements for intersection alternatives. Because of the high level of interest in pedestrian and bicycle options, the study team added pedestrian movements to the traffic simulations.
- ❖ **Photo Simulations.** Photo-realistic renderings illustrated the intersection options and the height, width, and depth of the new Grand Avenue Bridge.
- ❖ **Renderings.** Hand-drawn renderings illustrated pedestrian and highway bridge options.



One of 6th and Laurel intersection alternatives shown in 3D model.

- ❖ **3D Computer Model.** The 3D model was used to create the drive-through simulations and computer renderings of Grand Avenue Bridge type options.
- ❖ **Physical Model.** After the Build Alternative was determined, a physical model was “printed” from current design files. It was a conceptual, scale model that illustrated how the Grand Avenue Bridge fit into the context of Glenwood Springs. It showed the existing highway and pedestrian bridges, which were detachable and replaced with different bridge types being considered. The model was presented at a Public Open House, to the Glenwood Springs City Council, and at the project’s booths for the 2013 Strawberry Days and weekly Downtown Markets. The model was on display at the Glenwood Springs City Hall when not being used at presentations.



The physical model attracted 2013 Downtown Market attendees who provided feedback on the various bridge type alternatives.

5.6.1 Specialized Environmental Justice Outreach

The study team contacted several local-area Hispanic media organizations and groups from the project contact lists to receive press releases and notifications of study events. Ads for Public Open Houses offered a Spanish-speaking interpreter. Two presentations were made to the Club Rotario. In addition, Hispanic and Spanish-speaking individuals visited the project booth at the Strawberry Days Festivals (approximately 5 to 7 percent of overall visitors) and Downtown Markets (approximately 3 to 5 percent). Section 3.4 *Social Resources* has additional information on the Environmental Justice population in the study area.

5.7 Comments Received

The stakeholder and agency involvement activities described above generated many comments on the project. Comments were received through the following venues:

- ❖ Agency and Public Scoping Meetings
- ❖ Public Open House Comment Sheets and Survey Monkey
- ❖ Flip charts in discussion groups at the Visioning and SWG workshops
- ❖ Emails submitted through the website and sent directly to CDOT staff
- ❖ Letters sent to CDOT staff
- ❖ Drawings of alignment and bridge options



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- ❖ One-on-one meetings and telephone calls
- ❖ Group presentations

These comments were documented in meeting summaries and contact meeting notes that, along with emails and letters received, are part of the project record files. CDOT staff and study team members evaluated all alternatives submitted by the public. More information on the evaluation and screening of those alternatives is in Chapter 2.0 *Alternatives*. When warranted, CDOT staff and study team members responded to individual emails, answering questions, and/or sending requested information.

Public Comments Summary

The main areas of comments received are listed in Table 5-5.

TABLE 5-5. PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY

Subject	Comments/Issues
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desire that the Grand Avenue Bridge and pedestrian bridge fit into historic context of Glenwood Springs. ▪ Scale and function of bridges should not be out of context (e.g., 'like a big city'). ▪ Desire to create a gateway to Glenwood Springs. ▪ Bridge structure should be identifiable with Glenwood Springs.
Traffic and Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concern that new bridge will increase traffic speeds through downtown section. ▪ Concern about number of lanes on the bridge. ▪ Desire to maintain sufficient parking downtown during and after construction.
Construction Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length of complete bridge closure. ▪ Concern about noise during construction. ▪ Need for a viable detour route that will accommodate cars, trucks, and transit moving efficiently through Glenwood Springs.
Business Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic impacts during construction. ▪ Maintaining access to downtown businesses both during and after construction. ▪ Concern that height and width of bridge downtown would impact businesses between 7th and 8th Streets. ▪ Maintaining access and visibility of hotels and businesses on W. 6th Street.
Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desire to provide connections to existing and planned facilities. ▪ New pedestrian bridge needs to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles. ▪ Keep pedestrians and bicycles separate. ▪ Concern about pedestrian safety at intersections, especially the 6th and Laurel intersection. ▪ Preference for elevators over a pedestrian ramp for the ADA connection from new pedestrian bridge to 7th Street.
Bypass/ Alternate Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desire to take SH 82 traffic off of Grand Avenue and reroute on new facility.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concern about nesting pigeons and other birds. ▪ Maintain safety of river recreationists/avoid placement of bridge piers in river. ▪ Impacts to geothermal source for Glenwood Hot Springs. ▪ Noise and air quality from traffic on Grand Avenue Bridge. ▪ Maintain connectivity north and south sides of the river.
Land Use/ Redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supportive of opportunities to redevelop 6th Street. ▪ Desire to create new uses for the space under Grand Avenue Bridge south of 7th Street.

How Comments Were Incorporated Into the Build Alternative

The alternatives considered in the EA were developed, revised, and enhanced based on feedback received throughout the process. A summary is below:

- ❖ **Create a better pedestrian environment under the bridge at 7th Street.** The Build Alternative has higher clearance under a thinner bridge; a larger, better lit area under the structure; and incorporates a continuous walkway through the alley between 7th and 8th Streets.
- ❖ **Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections.** The Build Alternative provides connections to Two Rivers Park and downtown. It also includes a grade-separated pedestrian and bicyclist connection on the north side and other amenities. Section 2.3.2 *Build Alternative* and Section 3.18 *Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities* have details about these improvements.
- ❖ **Minimize and reduce impacts on businesses during construction.** One of the reasons for developing the Build Alternative as a bridge on a new alignment is that it allows much of the new bridge to be constructed off-line, thereby reducing impacts during construction. The construction schedule is also being developed such that impacts to existing traffic and businesses would occur during off-season periods.
- ❖ **Simplify 6th and Laurel intersection options.** Several options for this intersection were developed following concerns about its complexity. The roundabout concept included in the Build Alternative incorporates enhancements in this intersection to make it simpler, including better signing, better visibility, and reduced overall size.
- ❖ **Remove the existing pier in the Colorado River.** All bridge designs avoid a pier in the middle of the river. The existing Grand Avenue Bridge pier would be removed, thereby reducing this potential hazard to river rafters.
- ❖ **Build an aesthetically pleasing bridge.** A wide range of common bridge types were screened out largely for aesthetic reasons. Girder type bridges were eliminated due to the aesthetics of the undersides. Above-deck structures were vetted through public input, and only those with the most public support were retained. Historical elements to fit the context of Glenwood Springs have been incorporated into the bridge designs.
- ❖ **Reduce the width of the bridge downtown.** The width of the bridge was narrowed as it enters downtown. Lane and shoulder widths were reduced. Alternatives that included an attached sidewalk between 7th and 8th Street were vetted with City Council and at public meetings.
- ❖ **Maintain views across the Colorado River from the businesses on 7th Street.** The option of two elevators to provide ADA access from the new pedestrian bridge to 7th Street was preferred over a ramp. This option keeps the views from 7th Street



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open and is compatible with the City's plans to develop 7th Street as a more open plaza.

5.8 Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held during the 30-day public review period for the EA. The purpose of the hearing is to receive comments from the public on the EA and the Build Alternative identified in the EA. Prior to the hearing, copies of the EA will be made available for public review on the project website and at local community facilities. Display ads in local newspapers, news releases, email and U.S. mail notifications, and a postcard mailing will announce the availability of the EA for review and the date, time, and location of the public hearing.

CDOT will receive written comments on the EA through mail, fax, email, and the project website. Oral comments will be accepted and recorded only at the public hearing.

Viewing locations for this EA and addresses for submitting comments are listed at the front of this EA.