

# Comments and Coordination

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## 5.1 Public Involvement

The project team provided a number of avenues for public involvement during project development, including:

- Five public meetings, open houses, and workshops (detailed below)
- Two newsletters (fall and summer 2002)
- A telephone hotline
- A booth at the 2002 “Sand and Sage Roundup” Prowers County Fair
- Numerous one-on-one and small group meetings with individuals, including property owners, community leaders, and others, during 2002 and 2003
- Presentation at the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Northern Summit Meeting in November 2003
- Various meetings with the Department of Revenue/Port of Entry
- A presentation to a joint meeting of the Lamar City Council and Prowers County Commissioners in April 2010

Planning and project development activities included five public meetings held as open houses and small group workshops. The events were conducted to inform community residents about project developments, and obtain their comments and ideas about the need for the new alignment and what features should be incorporated. The meetings were held during evening hours in public venues, and were advertised in advance by direct mailings and advertisements in English and Spanish in the Lamar *Daily News*. The meetings are summarized in Table 5-1.

Changing regional priorities resulted in a long time span between the early project public involvement activities and the publication of this EA. CDOT contacted affected property owners adjacent to the proposed reliever route alignment to notify them of the publication of EA and invite them to the public hearing. Any additional communication between affected property owners and CDOT occurring after the publication of this EA will be documented in the decision document.

**TABLE 5-1**  
Public Meeting Summary

Meeting Forum	Date and Location	Purpose
Open house	4:00-7:00 p.m. - August 20, 2002 Lamar Community Center	Announce project, conduct public scoping, obtain comments from residents on the need for the new alignment and its features
Open house, presentation, small group workshop	4:30-8:30 p.m. – November 14, 2002 Lamar Community Center	Identify preliminary alternative corridor alignments, discuss evaluation criteria, obtain comments
Open house, presentation, small group workshop	5:30-8:30 p.m. – December 14, 2002 Lamar Community Center	Describe proposed corridor alignment, identify preliminary interchange design alternatives, discuss interchange evaluation criteria, obtain comments
Open house, presentation, small group workshop	5:30-8:30 p.m. – March 25, 2003 Lamar Christian Church	Describe proposed interchange configurations, obtain comments
Open house	6:00-8:00 p.m. – May 22, 2003 Lamar Community Center	Describe the Proposed Action and preliminary findings on environmental impacts, obtain comments

The project team published two newsletters early in project development. The newsletters announced project progress and preceded public meetings. The project team hosted a telephone hotline in 2002 and 2003 to provide community residents with another avenue to contact the project team with ideas and comments. The line was discontinued due to lack of use.

Comments provided to CDOT about the project at the open houses hosted in 2002 and 2003 focused on the following issues:

- Desire for an alternate route to accommodate increased truck traffic from the Ports-to-Plains project.
- Concern that commercial establishments in Lamar will go out of business and jobs will be eliminated because traffic will use the bypass and not enter Lamar.
- Desire for a bypass to increase safety for residents in town.
- Concern about ability of cattle to cross the reliever route.
- Preference for a bypass on Crystal Street rather than north across the Arkansas River because traffic would remain closer to town and businesses in town would likely see more traffic.
- Preference for the southern interchange to be at the intersection of CR CC and U.S. 287.
- Desire for future access points to the proposed corridor for a Crystal Street connection, and for access to the Prowers Medical Center.
- Preference for a trumpet interchange on south end of reliever route to provide higher design speed, separation from U.S. 287, free flow movement, and ease of navigation.

- Preference for a diamond interchange at the eastern location for the U.S. 287, U.S. 50, and Olive Street connections to provide free flow operations.
- Preference for a diamond with loop interchange or standard diamond interchange on north end of reliever route to avoid commercial relocations along U.S. 50, avoid left turns from Main Street to U.S. 50, and provide free flow movements at U.S. 287/CR 196/Main Street.

CDOT will host a public hearing during the public review period for the EA to provide information about the EA and receive public and agency comments on the document. An effort will be made to include environmental justice populations in the public hearing process by posting notices in schools and grocery stores, and providing a Spanish translator upon request at the public hearing.

## 5.2 Agency Involvement

CDOT and FHWA held numerous meetings and conversations with federal, state, and local agency staff regarding the project, including field trips to Lamar to visit the project site. The meetings allowed agency representatives to share concerns and ideas, comment on potential environmental impacts, and contribute to developing mitigation strategies. The agencies with which the project team met are listed below.

- NRCS
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- EPA
- USFWS
- Colorado Department of Revenue
- CPW
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Historical Society
- Colorado State Land Board
- Prowers County
- City of Lamar
- Arkansas River Power Authority
- Lower Arkansas Water Management Association
- Lamar Community College
- Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development, Inc.
- Prowers County Floodplain Administrator
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad
- Colorado Motor Carriers Association
- Ports-to-Plains Alliance
- Lamar Chamber of Commerce

Agency input led to refinements to the Proposed Action and provided information on existing conditions and resources in the study area, considerations for impacts analyses, and mitigation recommendations for unavoidable impacts.

## 5.3 Tribal Coordination

FHWA and CDOT consulted with Native American tribes during project development to determine their interest in the project. The results of these efforts were previously summarized in Section 3.6.4, *Native American Consultation*. Coordination was conducted with representatives of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma and the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, both of which elected to participate as consulting tribes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Cheyenne indicated the occurrence of previously discovered burial sites. Each consulting tribe has received information about the project as it became available and will be invited to the public hearing.