

CHAPTER 5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Public and agency coordination is an essential element of the NEPA process. It is critical that stakeholders with an interest in the outcome of the transportation decision making process be informed of the proposed improvements and have an opportunity to inform the decision makers about how the improvements would affect the resources within their jurisdiction.

5.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public and agency involvement for the C-470 Express Lanes project has occurred in several parts over time:

- 2003-2006 - Extensive public and agency involvement throughout development of the 2006 EA
- 2012 – Public meetings and telephone town hall events to solicit input on project funding alternatives

- 2014 – Public meetings and telephone town hall events to share preliminary findings of the Revised EA
- 2015 – Follow-up small group meetings with various groups; a formal public hearing is planned during the final Revised EA public review period.

5.2.1 Public Involvement for the 2006 EA

The public involvement efforts undertaken for the 2006 EA were reported in Chapter 4 of that document. They included 17 public open house meetings as well as a formal public hearing after the EA was approved.

As these efforts took place roughly a decade ago, they are not being recounted in detail here. They are mentioned for the purpose of demonstrating that the NEPA process was carried out in accordance with FHWA and CDOT requirements.



Subsequently, some of the decisions and findings from the 2006 EA were carried forward and used in this Revised EA.

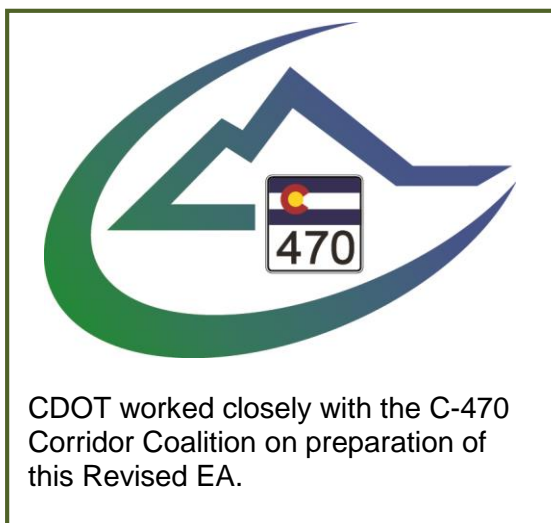
5.2.2 Public Involvement in 2012

In February 2011, about five years after the 2006 EA was completed, the counties and cities along the C-470 corridor formed the C-470 Corridor Coalition. CDOT is an affiliate, non-voting member of this local government group.

The group's adopted Charter consists of three "overarching" goals for the C-470 corridor:

- Develop and evaluate options for the C-470 Corridor which are cost effective;
- Reach consensus on technical solution(s) for the C-470 Corridor; and
- Develop a strategic plan for phased implementation.

Working together, CDOT and the C-470 Corridor Coalition conducted a set of five telephone town hall events that reached over 21,000 local residents in July and August 2012. These were followed by four Public Open House Meetings in the fall and a public opinion survey in November. The purpose of these efforts was to obtain public input on funding options, including not just tolls but also sales tax and property tax



increases. Road tolls were the approach that received the most public support.

5.2.3 Public Involvement in 2014

Another set of three telephone town hall events and four open house public meetings was held in September 2014 for the purpose of reporting Revised EA progress to date, including announcement that the coalition in February 2013 unanimously agreed on tolling as the recommended funding option.

In the telephone town halls, residences in the project area were called automatically to invite them to participate. Citizens were invited to submit questions that were then answered by project technical staff and local elected officials. The telephone town halls were also used to announce the upcoming open house meetings, where detailed questions could be answered in greater depth.

5.2.4 Public Involvement in 2015

Preliminary environmental findings presented in the 2014 public meetings did not include the results of traffic noise analysis, but when these became available, additional Open House Public Meetings were scheduled for this topic in February 2015. CDOT participated in additional presentations on this topic to community organizations and other interested groups.

Information presented at some of the C-470 public meetings is available online at the project website discussed in **Section 5.2.6**.

As practiced by CDOT and FHWA, the NEPA process for an EA normally provides an opportunity for a public hearing if one is desired, and a 30-day public review and comment period once the EA is completed. For the C-470 Express Lanes Project, a formal public hearing will be conducted and the public comment period will be extended to 45 days in response to a public request already received.

MAJOR PUBLIC MEETING EVENTS FOR THE C-470 REVISED EA

- Telephone Hall Meeting, July 31, 2012
- Telephone Hall Meeting, August 1, 2012
- Telephone Hall Meeting, August 2, 2012
- Public Open House meeting, September 24, 2012, Littleton
- Public Open House meeting, September 25, 2012, Highlands Ranch
- Public Open House meeting, September 26, 2012, Centennial
- Public Open House meeting, September 27, 2012, Lone Tree
- HPTe Public Open House meeting, August 19, 2014, Highlands Ranch
- Telephone Hall Meeting, September 9, 2014
- Telephone Hall Meeting, September 10, 2014
- Telephone Hall Meeting, September 11, 2014
- Public Open House meeting, September 25, 2014, Littleton
- Public Open House meeting, September 16, 2014, Highlands Ranch
- Public Open House meeting, September 17, 2014, Lone Tree
- Public Open House meeting, September 18, 2012, Centennial
- Public Open House Meetings on Noise Analysis Results, February 10 and 11, 2015, Highlands Ranch
- ANTICIPATED PUBLIC HEARING August 2015

In recognition of the identified cluster of households with limited English proficiency in the Dakota Station neighborhood a half

mile north of C-470 and east of Kipling Parkway, CDOT will prepare outreach materials in Spanish to distribute or post in that neighborhood in advance of the Public Hearing for the Revised EA. CDOT routinely publicizes the availability of resources to accommodate Spanish speakers at public hearings.

5.2.5 Traditional News Media

To provide timely and accurate press and broadcast media coverage of the C-470 Corridor Revised EA, calendar alerts, press releases, and media advisories were produced throughout the study when decision points were reached in advance of each public open house meeting. The study received media coverage in local news publications, including the *Denver Post*, *Highlands Ranch Herald*, *Denver Voice*, and on local broadcast television. Paid advertisements were also printed in local newspapers to promote public interest and participation in the planning and environmental process.

5.2.6 Project Website

The C-470 Corridor Coalition developed and maintained a website of project information for much of the Revised EA process, before later transferring this responsibility to CDOT. The current web address for project information is:

<https://www.codot.gov/projects/c470/ExpressLanes>.

5.3 AGENCY COORDINATION

The Revised EA process began with an environmental scoping meeting that was held on May 13, 2013. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Revised EA approach to affected stakeholder agencies and to solicit their early input regarding any key issues needing to be addressed. In addition to FHWA and CDOT, other agencies represented included the Denver Regional Council of Governments, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Coordination activities with federal and state resource agencies included phone calls, e-mails, letters, and meetings to provide study information to these agencies, and to gain necessary acceptance through the planning and environmental process. The agencies consulted are shown here:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- South Suburban Parks and Recreation District
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Chatfield State Park
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

In conjunction with the 2013 Agency Scoping Meeting, FHWA invited USACE to participate formally as a Cooperating Agency in the Revised EA. It was noted earlier in this Revised EA that for several miles between Wadsworth Boulevard and South Santa Fe Drive, C-470 is located on an easement granted to CDOT (formerly Colorado Department of Highways) by USACE.