



CHAPTER 10: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The I-70 East EIS has followed an extensive community and agency involvement process since the project began in July 2003 as the I-70 East Corridor EIS. After the separation of the highway and transit elements of the project in June 2006, the innovative public involvement techniques continued as part of the I-70 East EIS. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used and procedures followed to engage the community, stakeholders, and agencies involved, and to solicit input during the entire EIS process.

Since the Supplemental Draft EIS was published in August 2014, additional analyses and content review have been performed for many of the resources discussed in this document. These updates, along with changes resulting from the comments received on the Supplemental Draft EIS, have been incorporated into this Final EIS. In this chapter, the updates include the following items:

- Information from the 2008 Draft EIS was included to provide a more inclusive description of the outreach process.
- Outreach methods used during the development of the Final EIS are discussed.
- The section discussing future planned outreach was updated.

10.1 What are the objectives of community outreach and agency involvement?

Per the CDOT *NEPA Manual*, “Public involvement is a process by which the influence of various stakeholders is organized in relationship to decision making ...” The overall goal of the community outreach and agency involvement process is to solicit input through a transparent, open, and dynamic process that includes community members, businesses, agencies, stakeholders, and community groups within the project area. This process helps the project team identify and document any issues, suggestions, comments, or concerns and incorporate them in the planning and decision-making process.

This chapter describes the entire I-70 East agency and public involvement process, which has essentially gone through five phases since the beginning of the project:

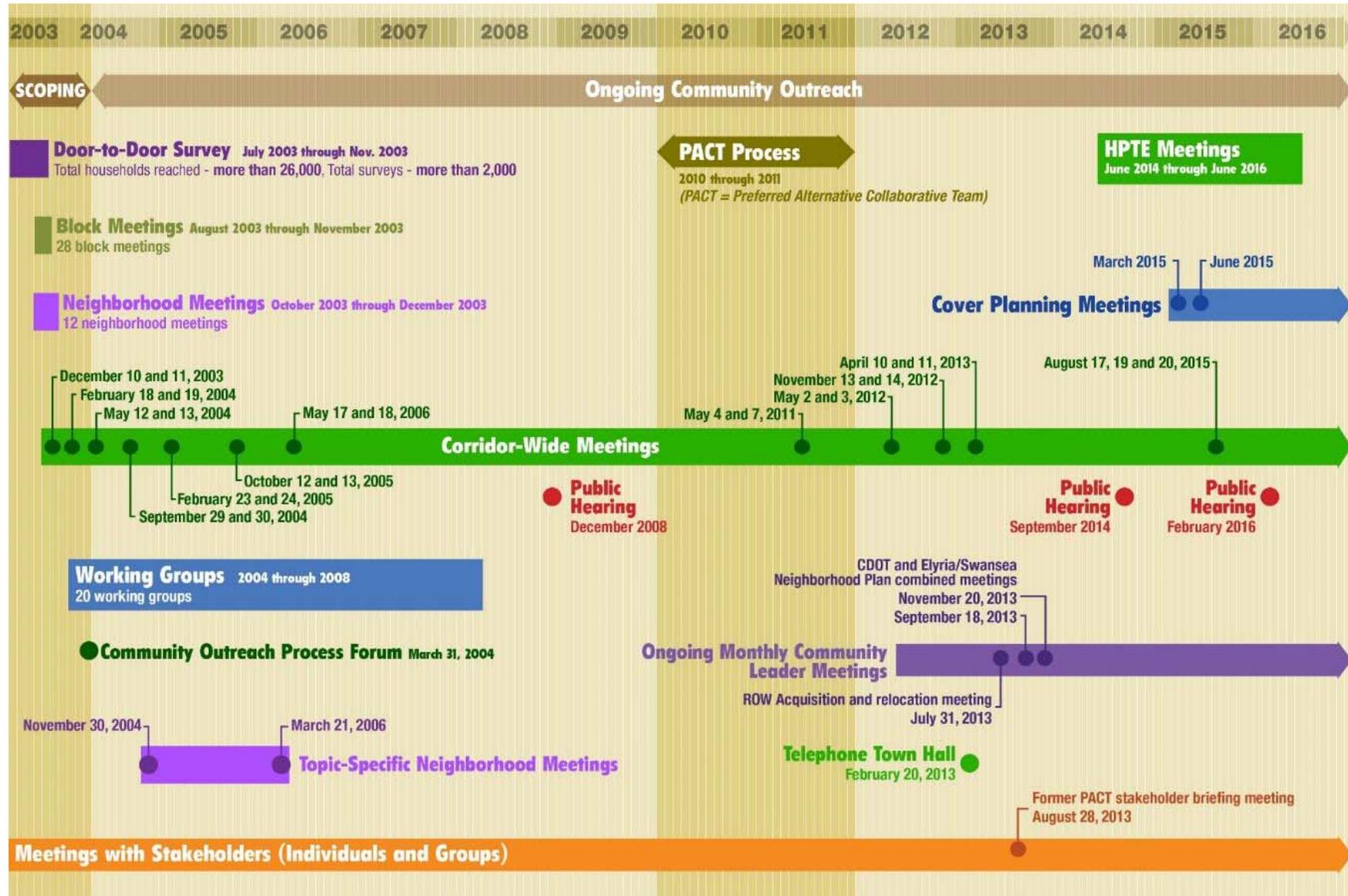
- Project Scoping
- Draft EIS
- Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team (PACT)
- Supplemental Draft EIS
- Final EIS

Each phase consists of two elements used to maximize community input: agency coordination and community outreach. As the project focus and needs have changed throughout the phases, the agency involvement and community outreach methods have evolved to solicit the most meaningful input for the issues and tasks at hand. **Exhibit 10-1** shows a summary of community outreach activities for this project since it began in 2003.

10.2 What is project scoping and what was the result?

Scoping is a formal coordination process used to gain input on the extent of a project and the major issues that need to be addressed. This initial outreach phase provides an opportunity for the community and government agencies to identify the range of concerns and possible solutions that need to be addressed in a project.

Exhibit 10-1 Community Outreach Process



In accordance with NEPA, scoping was initiated early in the combined transit/highway EIS process. All meetings and communication with participating agencies and the community were documented through meeting notes, contact reports, and an outreach database. Through scoping with the community, stakeholders, and numerous governmental agencies, issues were identified that helped define the project purpose and need. Objectives of the scoping process included:

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

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

10.2.1 Agency scoping

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

- The lead agencies for the I-70 East project are FHWA and CDOT, which are responsible for ensuring that NEPA requirements are met, initiating the project, and identifying and evaluating alternatives.
- Cooperating agencies are those with a vested interest in the project for which the EIS is being prepared. These agencies may administer properties within the project boundary, have permitting authority, or have expertise in an impacted element of the environment. The USACE, EPA, FTA, RTD, and CDPHE serve as cooperating agencies.



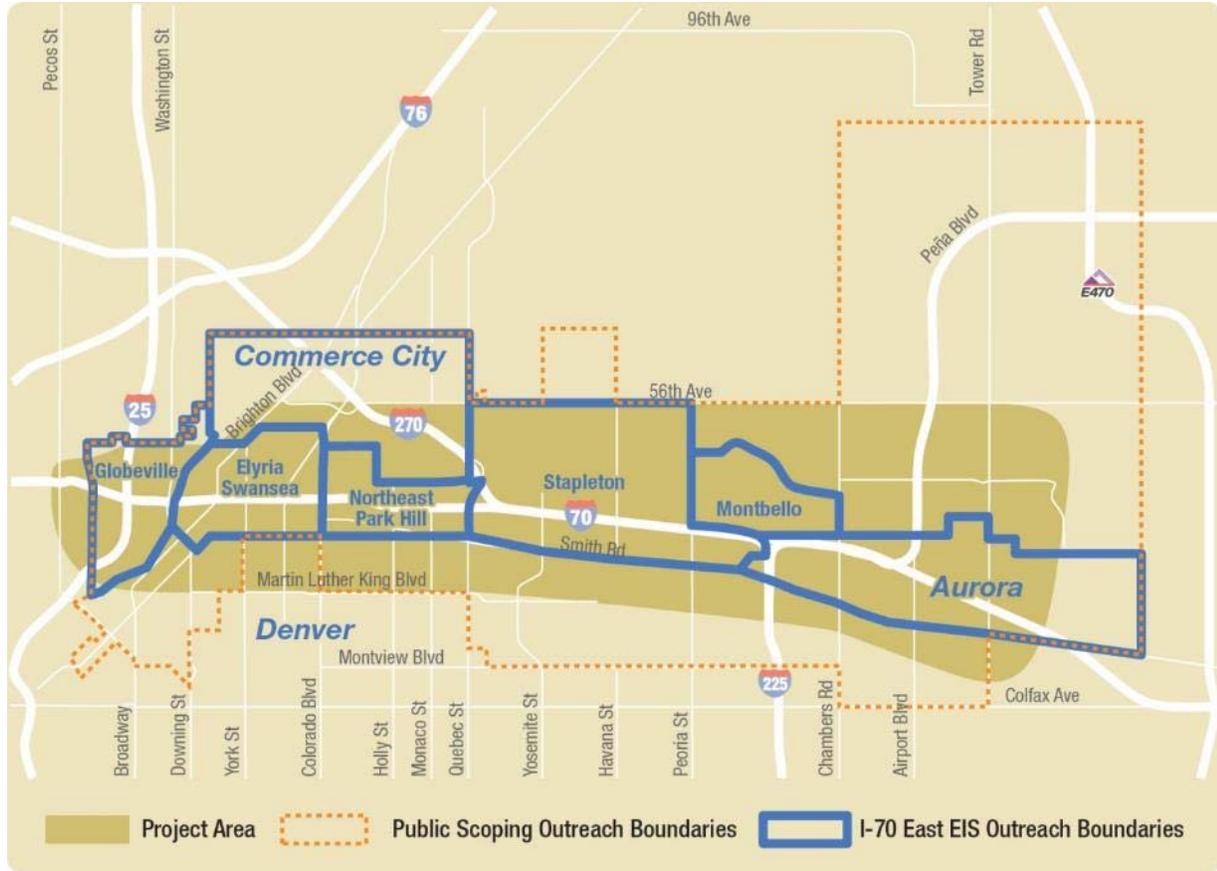
To gather input and respond to individual agency issues, four scoping meetings were held with various agencies, including but not limited to CDPHE, CPW, Colorado Historical Society, SHPO, USACE, USFWS, Denver, and DIA. The agency issues included potential environmental and construction effects, mitigation measures, alternative development, design constraints, analysis methodologies, and reporting requirements. The meetings were held between October 2003 and February 2004. Additional information on the agency scoping meetings can be found in the *I-70 East Corridor EIS Scoping Report* (CDOT, 2004).

10.2.2 Public scoping

The public scoping process began with an analysis of the neighborhoods and businesses within the project area in an effort to develop a logical community outreach boundary. A comprehensive public scoping process was developed that ensured every neighborhood within the project area had ample opportunities to provide input to the study. Several techniques were used during the public scoping process conducted from July to December 2003, including door-to-door outreach to more than 26,000 households, followed by 28 block meetings, 12 neighborhood meetings, eight business meetings, 12 stakeholder meetings, and two corridor-wide meetings. Total attendance at the public scoping meetings exceeded 1,000. **Exhibit 10-2** shows the scoping outreach boundaries that were followed, as well as the outreach boundaries and project area.

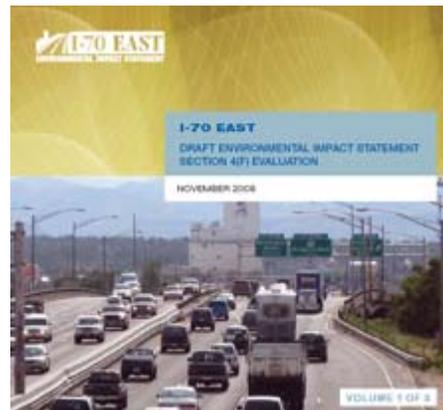
Issues identified by the public in the scoping process included health and safety, availability of funding for construction, toll roads, noise, congestion, bus routes, alternate routes, environmental justice, construction timing and impacts, interchanges, accommodating growth and local plans, and drainage on highways and existing bridges. Additional information on the public scoping can be found in the *I-70 East Corridor EIS Scoping Report* (CDOT, 2004).

Exhibit 10-2 Community Outreach Boundaries and Project Area



10.3 What was the outreach completed at the beginning of the project and during the development of the 2008 Draft EIS?

The goal of the outreach effort was to develop a process that created an atmosphere of openness and trust with the public and various agency stakeholders. The outreach methods used prior to the development of the 2008 Draft EIS are summarized below.



10.3.1 Agency coordination

The I-70 East EIS agency coordination provided a framework for involvement by interested federal, state, and local agencies. The specific committees and their roles and responsibilities, membership, and meeting logistics are described in the following subsections.

Executive Oversight Committee

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

Project Management Committee

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

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

Project Management Team

The PMT began during the I-70 East Draft EIS process. It consisted of CDOT management, FHWA liaison, and the consultant team. The PMT met on a regular basis to discuss upcoming project milestones and provide insight on issues. The PMT prepared recommendations for the EOC based on the project knowledge to facilitate policy-related decisions.

Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee

The Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee (ICCC) provided technical guidance and support with respect to the members' respective agencies, regulations, and areas of expertise. The ICCC consisted of staff from various agencies in the project area and provided an opportunity for staff to understand and work toward balancing the conflicting needs and desires from a corridor-wide perspective. The ICCC reviewed the Project Management and Public Involvement Plans, reviewed the study process relative to respective agency policies, reviewed and provided insights on alternative analysis, provided project updates to respective senior management and peers, and evaluated analysis and recommendations of the various

working groups that did not have corresponding compliance committees. The ICC was comprised of representatives from Adams County, Aurora, CDOT, Commerce City, Denver, DIA, DRCOG, EPA, Federal Aviation Administration, FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration, FTA, the Public Utilities Commission, and RTD.

Environmental Justice Compliance Committee

The Environmental Justice Compliance Committee (EJCC) provided technical input into environmental justice analysis. The EJCC was comprised of regulatory agency experts from CDOT, Denver, DRCOG, EPA, FHWA, and FTA with support from consultant team experts both locally and nationally to provide a broad perspective. The EJCC identified major issues for analysis and ensured compliance with NEPA and federal directives.

Air Quality Compliance Committee

The Air Quality Compliance Committee (AQCC) provided technical input into the air quality analysis. The intent of the committee was to provide experts in air quality analysis and a strong understanding of the federal and state processes to provide guidance and oversight. The AQCC was comprised of a combination of consultant and regulatory agency experts from CDPHE, Denver, DIA, EPA, and the National Jewish Medical Research Center, both locally and nationally to provide a broad perspective. Based on requests from the community, three health experts were added to the AQCC. The AQCC played a key role in determining the methodology for initial air quality analysis, provided relevant information about other air quality studies in the area, and ensured compliance with NEPA and federal directives.

Intergovernmental Forum

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

Resource Agency Coordination

Coordination activities with federal and state resource agencies included phone calls, emails, letters, and meetings to provide study information to these agencies and to gain necessary support through the planning and environmental process. Attachment B, *Agency Coordination*, of the 2008 Draft EIS contains correspondence with the various resource agencies.

10.3.2 Community outreach

The community outreach process continued after project scoping. The process was executed in way to reach as many community members as possible to gather input on the many alternatives that were proposed. Each outreach activity was customized to address the individual characteristics of the neighborhood.

Specific community outreach techniques were used to establish a level of trust in neighborhoods, beginning with developing an understanding of the community's culture. These techniques are discussed in further detail in the following subsections. All the public meetings held by CDOT and FHWA included childcare, food, and Spanish translations/translators to encourage participation by as many community members as possible. Additional special needs were addressed upon request. The following section describes the various types of meetings that were held leading up to the preparation of the 2008 Draft EIS.

Community awareness

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

- Providing food and child care at public meetings to encourage public participation
- Placing meeting announcements in church bulletins and attending church services to address their congregations

- Providing Spanish translators at all public meetings to address the needs of the LEP population in the area
- Providing a comment period at the beginning and end of every committee meeting

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

Outreach specialists and training

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

Door-to-door survey

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



Door-to-door outreach during project scoping

Block meetings

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



Residents attend one of many project block meetings.

Neighborhood meetings

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

Community Outreach Process Forum

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

Corridor-wide meetings

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



Project team members answer questions at a corridor-wide meeting.

The traditional audience-style format with informational boards, presentation, and question-and-answer period was used for the corridor-wide meetings during the scoping process. The format of subsequent community outreach meetings was modified by substituting the formal presentation and question-and-answer period with small, topic-specific discussion groups, moderated by technical consultants. Each discussion group had a scribe who recorded comments and questions. Comments received during the open house were recorded and posted on comment boards to be reviewed by all participants. Overall summaries of the meetings were prepared and posted on the project website along with all of the meeting exhibits and handouts.



Draft EIS

The input obtained during corridor-wide meetings helped identify the needs of highway travelers, business owners, and residents living near the highway, and played an important role in the development and screening of alternatives.

Working groups

After the scoping phase, six working groups were established to provide an opportunity for residents, businesses, stakeholders, and property owners to continue their participation and learn more about how the scientists, engineers, and planners would evaluate specific resources:

- Alternate routes
- Bicycle/pedestrian/open space
- Community impacts
- Economic development
- Interchanges
- Trucking/motor carriers

Working groups were comprised of members of the community that expressed interest in joining the groups at neighborhood and corridor-wide meetings or signed up on the project website.

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

understanding of alternative packaging, and an exercise designed to help participants understand how the various alternatives would be screened by comparing the process to buying a car. Issues from each working group were then communicated back to the PMC (see Section 10.3.1) and compliance committees to be resolved.

Topic-specific neighborhood meetings

During the development of alternatives and analysis of impacts, additional neighborhood meetings were conducted to focus on issues that affected sub-areas of the project area. Meetings were held in Globeville, Elyria and Swansea, and Commerce City focusing on gathering input on the various highway alternatives.

Stakeholder meetings

Individual meetings were conducted with elected officials and established community groups throughout the development of the 2008 Draft EIS. The meetings were used to answer questions, solicit input, provide information about the EIS process and the need for meaningful involvement, establish a dialogue with individuals and groups who live and work in specific neighborhoods, obtain input on the outreach methodology, and solicit their support early to help lend credibility to the process. Prior to major project decisions, the project team met with elected officials to brief them on project recommendations.

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

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

10.4 What was the Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team process?

With the assistance of a neutral facilitator, the PACT was formed in July 2010 after release of the 2008 Draft EIS to identify a preferred alternative for the I-70 East EIS. The PACT was made up of a group of stakeholders who represented federal and state agencies, local governments, and community and business interests.

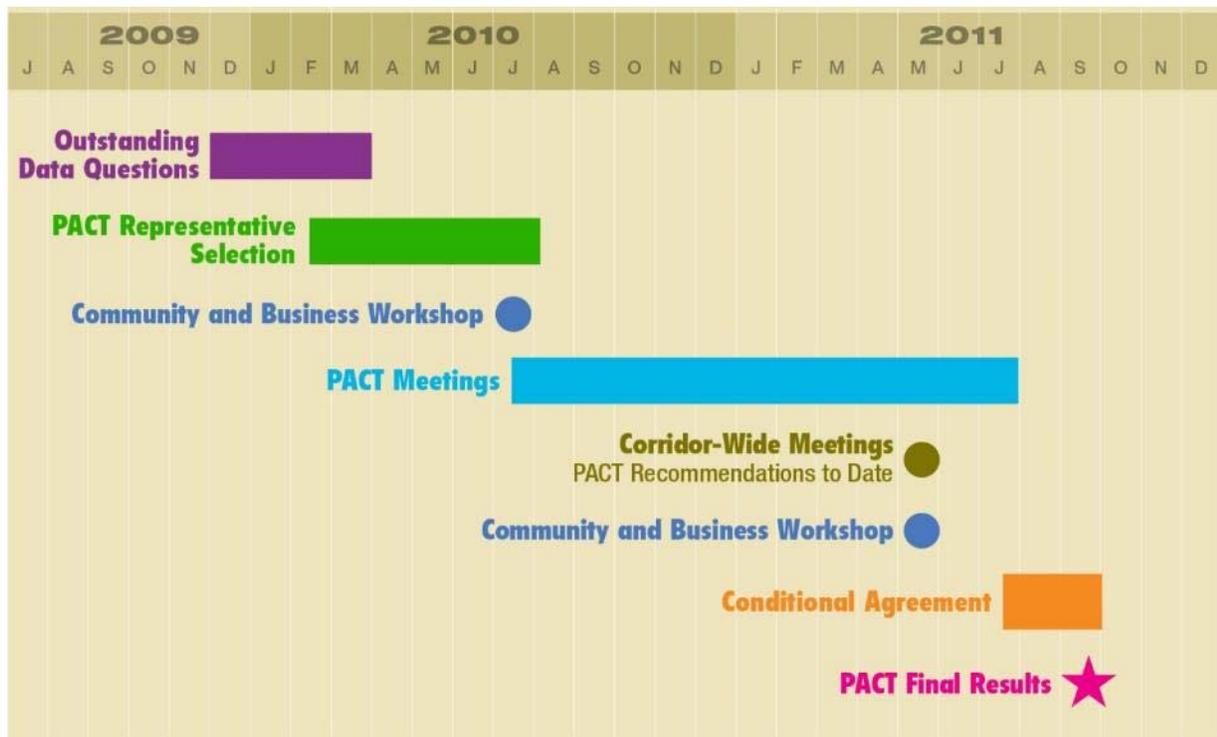
The PACT’s goal was to build mutual understanding of all interests, data, and concerns about the alternatives evaluated in the 2008 Draft EIS, and to agree upon and identify a preferred alternative that will meet the purpose and need of the project and best address all concerns.

Exhibit 10-3 summarizes the PACT process.



Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team

Exhibit 10-3 PACT Process



The first step in the PACT process was to develop a collaborative team comprised of state and federal agencies, advocacy groups, and stakeholders from Adams County, Aurora, Commerce City, and Denver. The selected committee had a total of 27 members representing 23 different agencies and organizations. For a list of the selected PACT members with their respective affiliations, see the *Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team Summary Report* included in Attachment D of the Supplemental Draft EIS, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report*.

After PACT members were selected, they agreed to meet on the second Thursday of every month. As a result, 13 facilitated PACT meetings were held from July 2010 to July 2011 to reach a consensus to identify a preferred alternative. All meetings were open to the public and time was dedicated for the public to comment at each meeting. The PACT conducted five additional meetings of the full PACT or subcommittees to address additional concerns. Attachment D in the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report*, includes a full summary of the PACT process and meetings.

During the PACT process, two corridor-wide meetings were held to present the PACT results and recommendations to date. These meetings were held on May 4 and 7, 2011, at the Commerce City Recreation Center and Swansea Recreation Center. More than 100 community members and stakeholders attended these corridor-wide meetings collectively.

10.4.1 How were the community members involved in the PACT process?

Seven representatives from the impacted communities were selected to be part of the PACT. Aside from the PACT community representatives, PACT meetings were open to the public to give the community an opportunity to comment and voice their opinion.

PACT Representatives

Federal, state, and local agency representatives

- FHWA (2)
- CDOT (2)
- USACE (1)
- CDPHE (1)
- RTD (1)
- SHPO (1)
- EPA (1)
- Adams County (1)
- Aurora (1)
- Commerce City (1)
- Denver (2)
- Sand Creek
Greenway (1)

Seven community representatives:

- Denver (Elyria/
Globeville) (1)
- Denver (Swansea)
(1)
- Denver (1)
- Commerce City (2)
- Adams County (1)
- Aurora (1)

Five business representatives:

- Denver
(Swansea/Elyria/
Globeville) (1)
- Commerce City (1)
- Adams County/
Aurora (1)
- National Western
Stock Show (1)
- Colorado Motor
Carriers (1)

10.4.2 Did PACT members identify a preferred alternative?

The PACT members were unable to reach agreement on a preferred alternative at the final PACT meeting. Although the PACT members did come to consensus on the Current Alignment Alternative, in the end there was no consensus on the north or south option. An official conclusion was published on October 12, 2011, on the project website and via an e-mail blast to announce that there was no consensus on a preferred alternative by PACT, and that CDOT and FHWA would identify a preferred alternative based on the best available data. The PACT process and its conclusions are discussed in more detail in the *PACT Summary Report* in Attachment D in the Supplemental Draft EIS.



PACT members at a facilitated meeting

10.4.3 What happened after the PACT process?

After the conclusion of the PACT process, Denver initiated an outreach effort with several of the community working groups. More than 90 community members participated in these working group sessions, which resulted in the development of a list of neighborhood goals and expectations to be integrated in the I-70 East EIS. Relocation of the Swansea Elementary School was discussed with the community members at that time; however, a site suitable to the community and in the proximity of the existing school could not be found. This led to re-examination of the project alternatives. More details on these work groups and the meeting summaries are available in Attachment D in the Supplemental Draft EIS.

After failing to reach a consensus on a preferred alternative and because of lack of public support for the 2008 Draft EIS alternatives, CDOT and FHWA re-examined the previously eliminated alternatives. The additional analysis resulted in development of a new alternative that is a hybrid of the below-grade and the tunnel alternatives previously considered during the project. The new alternative, called the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative, met the project's purpose and need and also addressed the public and agency comments. The new option is explained in more detail in Chapter 3, Summary of Project Alternatives.

10.5 How were communities and agencies involved following the completion of the PACT process and during the development of the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS?

The outreach process continued after the PACT process to keep the public and agencies updated on the project's progress. The outreach methods used prior to the development of the Supplemental Draft EIS are summarized below in the following subsections.

10.5.1 Agency coordination

The project team continued coordination with local government agencies, including Denver, Aurora, Commerce City, and Denver Public Schools, to ensure the I-70 East EIS plans complied with local plans. Denver and Denver Public Schools were contacted on a regular basis to remain updated on the project progress and to collect their input on various issues in the study area and develop mitigation measures.

Executive Oversight Committee

The EOC continued to provide guidance, insight, and input to the project team throughout the development of the Supplemental Draft EIS. As mentioned previously, the EOC was comprised of executives from CDOT and FHWA and served as a decision-making group for major policy-related decisions.

Agency Coordination Committee

The Agency Coordination Committee (ACC) was formed to provide guidance, insight, and input to the project team through the identification of the preferred alternative. The ACC was comprised of representatives from CDOT, FHWA, and Denver.

Each agency included in the committee appointed a representative who could speak with authority for the agency and who could speak about their agency's interests, coordinate internally, make decisions, and bring their agency's views/approval to the ACC.

Project Management Team

The PMT was carried over from the I-70 Draft EIS process. It still consisted of CDOT management, FHWA liaison, and the consultant team. The PMT continued to meet on a

regular basis to discuss upcoming project milestones and provide insight on issues.

Resource Agency Coordination

Coordination activities with federal and state resource agencies continued after the release of the 2008 Draft EIS and the PACT process. As the project evolved, the project team maintained, ceased, or began coordination with agencies to provide necessary input and help stay on top of any project issues. Attachment B, *Agency Coordination*, of the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS contains correspondence with the various resource agencies.

10.5.2 Community outreach

Much of the community outreach methods used prior to the release of the 2008 Draft EIS were continued through the development of the Supplemental Draft EIS. Information gathered from community input had great influence on the alternatives that were analyzed in the updated study.

Each meeting still included childcare, food, and Spanish translations/translators to encourage participation by as many community members as possible. The following section describes the various types of meetings that were held leading up to the preparation of the Supplemental Draft EIS.



Supplemental Draft EIS

Public hearings

After the public release of the Draft EIS in November 2008, three open houses/public hearings were held to provide an update of recent study developments, summarize the 2008 Draft EIS findings, and provide an opportunity for public comment on the document. The date, location of each meeting, and the number of attendees are presented in **Exhibit 10-4**.

Exhibit 10-4 Public Hearings for 2008 Draft EIS

Date	Location	Number of Attendees
December 9, 2008	Sable Elementary School, Aurora	15
December 10, 2008	Commerce City Recreation Center	65
December 11, 2008	Bruce Randolph Middle School, Denver	70
Total		150

The 45-day public review period was scheduled to end on December 31, 2008. Because of multiple requests for additional time, the review period was extended to January 31, 2009, and then again to March 31, 2009. More than 300 individual submissions, some with multiple comments were received from the public, stakeholders, and agencies during the public comment period.

Typically, comments from a Draft EIS are formally addressed in the Final EIS. Because a Supplemental Draft EIS was prepared in 2014, all comments received on the 2008 Draft EIS were considered and addressed where appropriate in the Supplemental Draft EIS, but a comment-by-comment response was not provided. The comments received on the 2008 Draft EIS are available in Attachment D of the Supplemental Draft EIS, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report*.

The following list briefly describes the major topics covered by the comments received on the 2008 Draft EIS:

- **Realignment.** Several comments from the public and agencies opposed the Realignment Alternatives because they will not solve the existing I-70 issues and will divert through-traffic to local streets, causing safety concerns for the adjacent communities.
- **Tunnel.** Comments were received asking for further consideration of this alternative for the project. Although it was eliminated early in the screening process, elements of this neighborhood-proposed concept were used to design the new Partial Cover Lowered Alternative.
- **Traffic.** The majority of the traffic comments, which were mostly from the affected agencies, asked for more clarification of the analysis documentation and an extension for the horizon year to 2035. These comments have been addressed in the Supplemental Draft EIS (see Chapter 4, Transportation Impacts and Mitigation Measures).
- **Air quality.** Concerns about air pollution have been voiced in several comments received on the 2008 Draft EIS. Impacts to air quality resulting from the proposed project have been analyzed and documented in Section 5.10, Air Quality, of the Supplemental Draft EIS. The air quality analysis performed for this document is well above regulatory requirements to supply information to the public in response to the

comments. The air quality analysis shows that the project will not cause substantial air quality impacts, and that future emissions will stay within levels that are considered to be acceptable under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards.

- **Health.** Concerns were expressed about current and recent health conditions within and near the project area. Studies do indicate that residents living next to highways experience higher levels of air pollution and have a higher risk of developing illnesses related to air pollution (CDPHE, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c). Regional air quality regulations address air pollution at regional levels, but not at the micro-level for populations living within several hundred feet of highways. These studies have been included in the Supplemental Draft EIS (see Section 5.2, Social and Economic Conditions).
- **Environmental justice.** Environmental justice comments included concerns about neighborhood cohesion and lack of sufficient mitigation measures to address the issue. A new alternative was developed to address neighborhood cohesion more specifically. It is evaluated in this document. Additional mitigation measures also have been identified for the proposed Preferred Alternative to address these concerns.
- **Neighborhood cohesion.** Concerns about neighborhood cohesion were raised. Highway improvements will improve mobility and connectivity, support and encourage population and economic growth, and reduce cut-through traffic on local streets. A new alternative was developed to address neighborhood cohesion more specifically. It is evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIS.
- **Funding.** Comments on the available funding to pay for construction of the project were received. Available funding is identified and an anticipated construction schedule is discussed in Chapter 3 of the Supplemental Draft EIS, Summary of Project Alternatives, along with a brief discussion on how the project construction will be phased.
- **Tolling.** There were questions about the fairness of the value-pricing aspect of managed lanes and whether toll pricing affects the financial ability to access these facilities by low-income drivers. This

issue, and how the low-income population can benefit from toll lanes, is discussed in Section 5.3, Environmental Justice of the Supplemental Draft EIS, in more detail.

During the public comment period, CDOT and FHWA committed to identify the project's Preferred Alternative in partnership with the corridor communities and stakeholders; however, the public comments received on the document showed no strong support for any of the 2008 Draft EIS alternatives. Due to this lack of endorsement, CDOT and FHWA initiated PACT, which is discussed in more detail in the previous sections.

Corridor-wide meetings

The project team held corridor-wide meetings to provide opportunities for the community to interact with the project team to discuss project issues and recommendations. The meetings were conducted at major project milestones to present changes to alternatives and project progress. The goal of these meetings was to solicit input from the public on the I-70 East project.

Monthly community leader meetings

In June 2012, the project team started a monthly meeting with community leaders in the study area to keep the community updated on the progress of the project. The community members who volunteered to be community leaders at the May 2012 corridor-wide meetings were specifically invited to these meetings by phone and bilingual e-mails. An e-mail blast also was sent to the project e-mail list and flyers were placed at major community resource centers before these meetings to notify the community members.

These meetings were held at Focus Points Family Resource Center or Swansea Elementary School, both accessible locations in the study area, as open-house/open-discussion meetings. Walk-ins were welcome at any time to talk to project team members, ask questions, express concerns, and provide comments. Each month, the meeting's focus was on a different subject based on the project's progress and available data to share with the public. Attachment D in the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report*, lists the community leader meetings, highlighting the topic that was discussed at each meeting and the number of attendees. The community

leaders meetings will continue until the completion of the environmental documentation.

CDOT and Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood Plan combined meetings

CDOT and Denver planned a series of meetings to gather ideas on how to improve the communities surrounding the I-70 East project. The first meeting was held on September 18, 2013, and focused on the community space on the highway cover, the connection to Swansea Elementary School, the frontage roads, and the Steele Street/Vasquez Boulevard interchange. A subsequent meeting was held on November 20, 2013, to solicit further input on the topics.

Telephone town hall

A telephone town hall meeting is an innovative approach to outreach through mass personal communication. Using the telephone town hall conference, project team members can interact with hundreds or thousands of participants in a single live telephone conference. A large number of phone numbers are rapidly dialed and the targeted audience receives a prerecorded message from the speaker inviting them to remain on the line if they wish to join the conference. The audience has the opportunity to ask questions when the presentation is over by being placed in a question queue.

A telephone town hall meeting was conducted on February 20, 2013, which included two separate sessions, one in English and one in Spanish. More than 38,000 phone numbers were contacted and more than 2,600 participants joined the conference. Polling questions were designed to solicit specific input on various subjects by having the audience press a number on their phone to select an answer. The result of the polling questions and more information about this meeting is available in Attachment D in the Supplemental Draft EIS, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report*.

Elected officials outreach

Individual meetings were conducted with elected officials and established community groups after the PACT process. The meetings were conducted to answer questions, request input, and provide information and updates on the project. Before making major project decisions, the project team would meet with elected officials on a regular basis to brief them on project recommendations.

10.6 How have communities and agencies been involved during the development of the Final EIS?

During the development of the Final EIS, the agency involvement and community outreach efforts continued to identify the community's needs and refine the identified Preferred Alternative to better address these needs. The agency involvement and community outreach opportunities provided are described in the following subsections.

10.6.1 Agency coordination

Agency coordination continues to be an important focus for the project team as project design evolves. Local government agencies, including Denver, Aurora, Commerce City, and Denver Public Schools are contacted regularly to get input on the facilities and issues that may arise associated with the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative.

Since the Supplemental Draft EIS, agency coordination has been modified for efficiency to include those agency members that have the ability to give meaningful input and make major project decisions. The committees that were active during the development of the Final EIS are discussed below.

Executive Oversight Committee

The EOC has been active since the 2008 Draft EIS. The group consists of executives from CDOT and FHWA and was formed to provide guidance, insight, and input to the project team throughout the study. They continue to serve as a decision-making group for major policy-related decisions.

Agency Coordination Committee

The ACC was formed prior to the Supplemental Draft EIS. The group includes high-level members from CDOT, FHWA, and Denver to provide guidance, insight, and input to the project team. Agency representatives included in the committee have the authority to discuss their agency's interests, coordinate internally, make decisions, and bring their agency's views/approval to the ACC.

Project Management Team

The PMT has been ongoing since the initiation of the project and remains active. It consists of CDOT management, FHWA liaison, and the consultant team. The PMT meets on a regular basis to discuss upcoming project milestones and

provide insight on issues. The PMT prepares recommendations for the EOC based on the project knowledge to facilitate policy-related decisions.

10.6.2 Community outreach

The outreach process during the preparation of the Final EIS specifically focused on giving the public the opportunity to provide input on the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative, along with other issues. A number of the meetings held were topic specific focusing on decision making for associated project facilities such as the cover near Swansea Elementary School. This section describes the community outreach process during the preparation of the Final EIS.

Public hearings

The project team conducted three open houses/public hearings on September 23, 24, and 25, 2014, after the release of the Supplemental Draft EIS, as part of the ongoing community outreach process. The primary purpose of the public hearings was to provide an update of recent study developments, summarize the Supplemental Draft EIS document available for public review, and provide an opportunity for public comment. The date, location of each meeting, and the number of attendees are presented in **Exhibit 10-5**.

Exhibit 10-5 Public Hearings for Supplemental Draft EIS

Date	Location	Number of Attendees
September 23, 2014	Sable Elementary School, Aurora	28
September 24, 2014	Kearney Middle School, Commerce City	47
September 25, 2014	Bruce Randolph Middle School, Denver	187
Total		262

The 45-day public review period, which began on August 29, 2014, was scheduled to end on October 13, 2014. Because of multiple requests for additional time, the review period was extended to October 31, 2014. During the comment period, nearly 900 individual submissions—many containing multiple comments—were received from the public, stakeholders, and agencies.

Attachment D, *Community Outreach and Agency Involvement Technical Report Addendum*, provides more detail on the comments received, including a map showing the location of the addresses and their relation to the project area in Appendix A. The majority of comments came from around the metro Denver area with 125 from neighborhoods most directly impacted by the project.

The following list briefly describes the major topics covered by the comments received on the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS:

- **Alternatives.** A large number of comments requested the project take a look at alternatives that remove I-70 from its current location and move it north. The project considered a number of alternatives that accomplished this during the 2008 Draft EIS process. The purpose of this project is to implement a transportation solution that improves safety, access, and mobility and addresses congestion on I-70 in the project area. Moving the alignment north does not fit the need of the project and would defeat the purpose. All “reroute” alternatives were eliminated as a result of them not meeting the project purpose and need.
- **Air Quality.** Concerns about air pollution have been voiced in several comments received on the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS focusing on the dust from excavation of the lowered section during construction and the increase of emissions from the traffic using the added capacity during operation. Impacts to air quality resulting from the proposed project have been analyzed and documented in Section 5.10, Air Quality. The air quality analysis performed for this document is above regulatory requirements to supply information to the public in response to the comments. The air quality analysis shows that the project will not cause substantial air quality impacts, and that future emissions will stay within levels that are considered to be acceptable under EPA standards.

Public comments

In December 2007, the CEQ published *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard*. This resource states: “It is important to understand that commenting on a proposal is not a ‘vote’ on whether the proposed action should take place.” (CEQ, 2007, p. 12)

Dust from construction will be suppressed using approved BMPs. More information on this is also provided in Section 5.10, Air Quality.

- **Noise.** Existing noise levels are already a concern among the residents of the neighborhoods adjacent to I-70. Many of the comments received regarding noise showed concern for increases in noise levels once construction is complete and the added capacity of the highway draws more vehicles. Others were concerned about construction noise levels and disruptions it might cause to the nearby Swansea Elementary School. Noise impacts from the project and mitigation have been analyzed and documented in Section 5.12, Noise. The impacts and mitigation were analyzed in accordance with CDOT's *Noise Analysis and Abatement Guidelines (2015)*. Thorough analysis was conducted for each neighborhood and each alternative. Mitigation analyzed optimal noise wall placement and height for all impact receptors. The analysis then determined if the optimal noise wall were feasible and reasonable per CDOT's standards. During construction, the project will abide by any city codes as they pertain to construction noise.
- **Environmental Justice.** Comments regarding Environmental Justice expressed concerns about past impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods, the property impacts to residents and businesses, and the potential increase in pollution leading to greater health impacts. Furthermore, the commenters believed that the current mitigation measures for impacts to these communities was not enough. The benefits of the project with the Preferred Alternative are fairly distributed in the study area. The project has avoided some impacts, minimized others, and mitigated all impacts that could not be avoided or minimized. The alternative will not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations, in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23A.
- **Swansea Elementary School.** The comments had concerns that the existing Swansea Elementary School would be too close to the highway once construction is completed, and that a new location

should be identified within the neighborhood further from I-70. Other commenters were worried about the noise and air impacts to the school that could potentially affect the students and staff. The project team researched other locations for the construction of a new school further from I-70, but a suitable site could not be identified within the existing neighborhood. CDOT will continue to work with the school and Denver Public Schools to ensure construction impacts are minimized and unavoidable impacts are mitigated for.

- **Traffic Modeling.** Many comments were concerned that the traffic demand modeling used in the future traffic forecasts did not account for current trends; therefore, the proposed width of the Preferred Alternative is not necessary. Many believe that the “millennial” generation prefer to use public transportation rather than own a car. Also, with the completion of the RTD East Corridor scheduled to begin operations in 2016, the demand along I-70 will decrease. The traffic model analysis used the most recent traffic modeling tool available from DRCOG, which included household and employment data from the region and includes programmed projects including East Corridor. The needed capacity along I-70 for this project was adjusted based on the forecasted traffic demand volumes.
- **Project Limits.** Some comments showed concern about the western termini of the project limits and how widening the road would create a bottleneck to motorists traveling west on I-70 past I-25. The majority assumed that the bottleneck would lead to another I-70 widening project that would impact the adjacent neighborhoods west of I-25 along I-70. I-25 was chosen as the projects western termini because of the high diversion of traffic from I-70 to both northbound and southbound I-25. Between 40 and 50 percent of the traffic traveling westbound on I-70 diverts onto I-25.
- **Health Impacts.** The comments associated with human health were split between construction impacts from fugitive dust affecting air quality and increase in emissions from vehicles after I-70 is widened. Health concerns were expressed for the residents adjacent to I-70 and the students and staff

at Swansea Elementary School. Fugitive dust during construction activities will be monitored closely. Mitigation measures have been proposed to minimize the impacts, including dust suppression, portable air conditioning units and financial assistance for higher utility costs for residents close to the highway construction, and a new HVAC system, doors, and windows for Swansea Elementary School. Air Quality monitoring will be conducted in the area during and after construction to evaluate the mitigation measures used. An air quality analysis was performed to forecast air quality levels once construction is complete. The analysis showed that pollutant levels are expected to be lower in 2035 for all alternatives compared to the existing conditions. This Final EIS includes information on Human Health Conditions in Section 5.20.

- **Property Impacts.** In order to widen the highway, the project will have impacts to properties adjacent to the highway. Comments regarding property impacts had questions about how many properties would be impacted and how CDOT would assist the displaced residents. The Preferred Alternative will require the acquisition of property that will result in the relocation of 56 residential units, 18 businesses (including 1 non-profit entity). CDOT will provide comparable replacement housing that is Decent, Safe, and Sanitary under federal regulations. Any acquisition of real property or displacements of persons for public use must ensure “just compensation” under the Uniform Act and the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. CDOT requires any project to comply with the Uniform Act, regardless of funding source.
- **Connectivity.** A number of comments wondered how the project would improve neighborhood connectivity, including walkability and bicycle routes, especially near interchanges and along the north-south street connections. The Partial Cover Lowered Alternative was developed in response to the community’s concerns to reconnect the Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood by removing the viaduct and placing the highway below ground level. The cover over the highway in the lowered section will have a park or urban landscape that can draw in residents from both the north side and the south side of the highway,

creating a seamless connection across the highway and providing additional connectivity within the neighborhood. Bicycle and pedestrian experience will be improved by providing safe crossings over the highway with upgraded sidewalks and lighting following Denver standards.

- **Lowered Section.** Concerns about the lowered section, proposed as part of the Preferred Alternative, involve conveyance of stormwater year round and potential freezing conditions in the winter. Additionally, there are concerns that the stormwater runoff will be highly contaminated from the typical highway pollutants. The Preferred Alternative proposes an on-site and offsite drainage system that will flow down gradient to the South Platte River. The drainage systems are designed to capture and convey up to 100-year stormwater events. Stormwater quality from highway runoff is regulated by the NPDES and the EPA, which delegates this responsibility to the CDPHE in Colorado. The NPDES has strict requirements for stormwater discharge to waters of the U.S and the project will be following these requirements. An NPDES permit will be acquired and permanent BMPs will be installed to meet stormwater discharge quality standards.

Each comment received on the Supplemental Draft EIS was reviewed and responses have been provided. The comments and comment responses are provided in Attachment Q of the I-70 East Final EIS and on the project website at www.i-70east.com.

The project team developed frequently received comments and responses based on the input received during the Supplemental Draft EIS comment period. Many of them go in to further detail about the topics discussed above. The Frequently Received Comments and Responses are provided in Part 1 of Attachment Q of this document.

Corridor-wide meetings

During the preparation of the Final EIS, the project team continued to hold corridor-wide meetings to solicit input on any outstanding topics, such as aesthetics and design guidelines of the project. The meetings were held at major project milestones to present project progress, gather ideas for project facilities, and discuss issues.

Community leader meetings

Community leader meetings were continued through the Final EIS process. These meetings were held at Swansea Elementary School and provide an opportunity for community members to interact with project team members, ask questions, and express their concerns or support. Each meeting has a specific focus to provide an update on the progress of the project on a specific topic.

Community planning workshops for the highway cover

CDOT and Denver organized these meetings together to gather ideas and explore possibilities of different outdoor uses for the cover. The proposed cover, part of the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative, will be located over the highway near Swansea Elementary School. A presentation and group workshops were used to solicit the best input from the meeting attendees. A community workshop was held on March 4, 2015, at the Swansea Recreation Center as part of this effort. A second workshop was held on June 9, 2015, also at Swansea Recreation Center, to select a final preferred alternative for the design of the cover. Further opportunities for the public to provide input on the cover planning are intended for the future.



Final EIS

10.7 What is HPTE's transparency policy and public engagement process?

CDOT, together with the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE), has undergone a public process to determine how the I-70 East project will be financed and delivered, including the possibility of public-private partnership. The Governor's Executive Order D 2014-010 along with HPTE's own *Colorado High Performance Transportation Enterprise Transparency Relating to Public-Private Partnerships* require an extensive outreach process to engage the public in reviewing and commenting on financing options.

CDOT and HPTE began a series of public meetings in June 2014 on this topic and will continue these meetings and other outreach activities throughout the procurement process. Following a public workshop in February 2015, the Transportation Commission decided to pursue a Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain public-private partnership to deliver the I-70 East project. **Exhibit 10-6** lists the meetings that have been held to date. More information can be found at www.coloradohpte.com.

What is HPTE?

The Colorado High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) was formed to pursue innovative ways to finance, construct, or operate and maintain transportation projects.

Innovative financing is needed to offset the limited transportation funding available. The HPTE operates as a government-owned business within CDOT.

Exhibit 10-6 HPTE I-70 East Events

Date	Meeting
June 25, 2014	I-70 East Telephone Town Hall
July 8, 2014	Town Hall Open House
October 16, 2014	I-70 East Telephone Town Hall
November 5, 2014	I-70 East Town Hall Meeting
February 5, 2015	Special HPTE/Transportation Commission Workshop
March 11-12, 2015	I-70 East Industry Forum
August 17, 18, 19, and 20, 2015	I-70 East Telephone Town Hall and Corridor-wide Meetings

10.8 What tools have been used to provide the public with project information

Throughout the community outreach for the I-70 East project, a number of tools have been used to relay information to the public and agency stakeholders. These tools are discussed in the following subsections.

10.8.1 Door-to-door outreach

One of the most effective ways of communicating the latest status of the project, or other updates, is by engaging in person-to-person conversations with the communities that will be most affected by the project. Door-to-door outreach was used at various times throughout the project to provide an opportunity for community members to put a face to an issue and work through any reservations or challenges right then and there. A Spanish translator was involved in the outreach to assist members of the Spanish-speaking public.

After publishing the Supplemental Draft EIS, the I-70 East project team conducted door-to-door outreach for the homes between 45th Avenue and 47th Avenue from Brighton Boulevard to Colorado Boulevard to raise awareness of the project and invite the community to attend the public hearings and provide comments on the project.



Door-to-door outreach

In October 2015, prior to the release of the Final EIS, door-to-door outreach was conducted in the same area to provide an update on the mitigation that will be provided with the project and allow residents to have the chance to ask questions or voice concerns.

10.8.2 Community functions

As part of the outreach effort, the project team reserved tables and attended community functions, providing information and answering questions. These community functions varied from community picnics to church festivals and school fairs.



Swansea Elementary School Fair

10.8.3 Flyers, posters, and mailers

Flyers are distributed door-to-door prior to most community meetings. Typically, they are distributed one to two days prior to the meeting, and are printed both in Spanish and in English. Additional bilingual posters advertising public meetings are placed throughout the corridor to invite those not reachable through existing community groups, the project's mailing list, or e-mail distribution list. The posters also are placed in libraries, community centers, businesses, recreation centers, barbershops, beauty salons, and neighborhood economic centers. More than 20,000 bilingual mailers also are sent to the project's mailing list two weeks prior to the meetings.

10.8.4 Newsletters

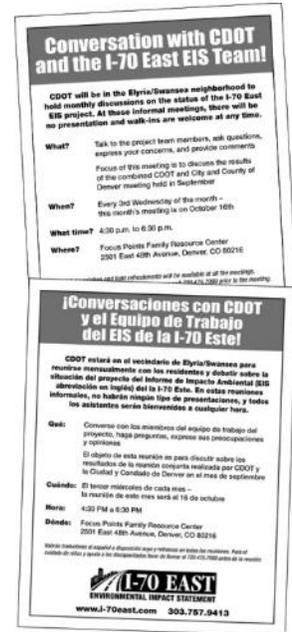
Newsletters provided status updates and information throughout the project and were one of the primary sources for meeting notification. Newsletters were mailed to property owners, businesses, interested parties, and those who requested to be contacted via mail. Newsletters also were distributed to all corridor residents. Newsletters were published in English and Spanish, and included contact information for the project team and a section on how to stay involved. The newsletters, like the rest of the project information, also could be found on the project website.

10.8.5 Advertising and media outreach

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

10.8.6 E-mail and telephone notification

Members of the public who specified that they wanted to be informed of project activities through e-mail were sent regular information. The notifications covered new information on the website, upcoming public meetings, and any other relevant information. People who preferred to be notified of public meetings by telephone were called within one week of the public meetings.



10.8.7 Project-specific hotline and e-mail address

To ensure that the public had access to project information, a telephone hotline and a project-specific e-mail address were established at the beginning of the outreach process and have been maintained. The phone number and e-mail address were included on all public information materials in the English and Spanish versions. The phone greeting for the project hotline is recorded in both English and Spanish, providing opportunities for the public to leave voicemails in either language. The voicemails and e-mails are checked daily and phone calls returned within one business day.

10.8.8 Project website

A project website (www.i-70east.com) was developed to publicize information and provide a schedule of events. The site offers English and Spanish options and includes features such as an online feedback form, an automatic e-mail distribution for when new information is posted, technical documents, meeting materials, and meeting summaries.

The website is updated whenever new information is available, such as meeting announcements and the availability of meeting materials. The website has been heavily used since the 2008 Draft EIS was published. The website visits grow when the corridor-wide meetings are advertised and when the meeting materials are available for review.

Because “smartphones” have become more popular, a quick response (QR) code was developed for the project website. The QR code can be scanned by any smartphone with the appropriate application and will take the user directly to the project website.



Project website's home page in English and Spanish

10.8.9 Project kiosk

A project kiosk is located outside of the Swansea Elementary School building facing Columbine Street and 47th Avenue. The kiosk provides contact information and project announcements, including upcoming meetings for the general public.



Project website's QR code

10.8.10 Project office

At the initiation of the I-70 East Corridor EIS, the project team established a project office within the corridor.

Managers and key project staff from RTD, CDOT, and the consultant team were co-located in this office and day-to-day project management activities were conducted from there. After the separation of the two projects, the office remained available for many of the working group and compliance committee meetings. The office was open to the public to drop-in and meet with CDOT staff during regular business hours.

After publishing the Supplemental Draft EIS, the I-70 East project team opened another project office for the duration of the public review period. Office hours were 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. A Spanish translator was available during office hours to assist members of the Spanish-speaking public.

After the completion of the Supplemental Draft EIS public review period, the office remained open for right of way coordination purposes until September 2015. CDOT is planning to maintain a project office within close proximity to the project area during construction of the project.

10.9 What future public and agency involvement opportunities will be provided?

Agency coordination and community outreach will continue through the remainder of the NEPA process and during construction. After the release of the Final EIS, corridor-wide open houses/public hearings are scheduled to be held during February 2016. The hearings will be held during a 30-day public review period that will allow the public, stakeholders, and agencies an opportunity to provide comments on the Final EIS.

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