

E. Agency and Public Coordination

1. Introduction

This section describes agency and public coordination activities conducted during the development of the DCE. These activities were specifically conducted to be open and inclusive, and were ongoing throughout the preparation of this DCE. See **Appendix C**, Public Involvement, for documentation of public involvement activities.

2. Agency Coordination

In addition to coordination with the City, Routt County, and CDOT, coordination occurred with other local, state, and federal agencies throughout the study to ensure compliance with agency policies and procedures, transportation planning requirements, NEPA requirements, and accurate resource identification and impact evaluation. Agency coordination was conducted through formal and informal means of communication. **Table 26** highlights coordination with other state and federal agencies for specific environmental resources.

| Environmental Resource | Agency (or Agencies) | Reason |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Historical Properties | State Historic Preservation Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coordination on the Area of Potential Effect ▶ Concurrence on eligibility of, and effects to, historical properties |
| Threatened and Endangered Species | Colorado Natural Heritage Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Confirmation on species status ▶ Discussion of effects |
| Farmlands | Natural Resources Conservation Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Confirmation of effects |
| Hazardous Materials | Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discussion of hazardous materials |

Extensive coordination took place with CDOT Region 3, FHWA, and different departments within the City and Routt County governments. CDOT and FHWA provided NEPA guidance throughout the study (see Section E.3, Project Working Group). Local government staff provided information on land use, transit, housing, bicycle and pedestrian trails, natural resources, and water quality requirements.

3. Project Working Group

The study team formed a Project Working Group (PWG) of representatives from the City, CDOT Region 3, FHWA, Routt County, and the consulting team. PWG meetings were held throughout the study to review the study's progress and to provide

direction. The dates of each of the PWG meetings are listed in **Table 27**, along with the issues discussed at each meeting.

| Table 27: Project Working Group Meetings | |
|---|---|
| Meeting Date | Topics Covered |
| November 19, 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kicked-off the project (including project needs and project approach) ▶ Discussed expectations, roles and responsibilities ▶ Discussed ongoing projects and studies |
| December 4, 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewed Purpose and Need ▶ Reviewed project goals ▶ Presented methods for traffic forecasting ▶ Provided an overview of environmental constraints ▶ Presented initial alternatives |
| January 8, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewed environmental and transportation planning tasks ▶ Discussed Level 1 alternatives screening ▶ Discussed public meeting preparation |
| January 22, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shared information about public involvement efforts with other ongoing projects ▶ Debriefed about the public open house ▶ Discussed Level 2 alternatives development and screening |
| February 13, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discussed the traffic forecasts and modeling ▶ Presented and discussed the range of Level 2 alternatives, including cross-section, intersection, and transit elements |
| March 5, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Updated attendees on the public involvement, environmental and project design fronts ▶ Discussed Level 2 alternatives, including cross-section, bike/ped section, intersection, and transit elements ▶ Reviewed traffic and land use projection |
| March 19, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Introduced new intersection elements at Elk Creek Road and 13th Street ▶ Discussed proposed cross-section elements for incorporation into Level 3 Screening ▶ Updated the attendees about schedule implications of City land use discussions |
| April 8, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continued discussion of the implications of City land use decision ▶ Updated attendees on Level 3 screening elements ▶ Discussed Environmental Justice outreach |
| April 16, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recommended a preferred transit alternative ▶ Presented a Level 3 evaluation report |
| May 7, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewed Level 3 evaluation and screening ▶ Reviewed preferred transit alternative choices ▶ Prepared for the next public meeting |
| May 21, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discussed upcoming right-of-entry for environmental surveying ▶ Discussed the Preferred Alternative ▶ Debriefed about the public open house |
| August 6, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conducted a pre-preliminary design field review ▶ Discussed the priorities for phasing segments of the project |



Table 27: Project Working Group Meetings

| Meeting Date | Topics Covered |
|------------------|---|
| October 29, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Updated attendees on the historic parks coordination▶ Reported delays to the schedule▶ Updated attendees on the status of the NEPA technical reports▶ Discussed proposed noise impact mitigation▶ Discussed the traffic technical reports |

4. Public Involvement Activities

The objectives of the public involvement program were:

- ▶ To provide opportunities for timely public comment and input to project decision makers.
- ▶ To communicate information and ideas clearly, in order to obtain knowledgeable comments.
- ▶ To be responsive to input and demonstrate that ideas and opinions were heard, considered, and incorporated when necessary.

To address these objectives, public involvement activities included public open houses, small-group meetings, newspaper advertisements, household delivery of project handouts, mailings, a project Web site, and the inclusion of project information on the City Web site. Participants in the public involvement program included property owners, business owners and operators, and the general public.

5. Public Meetings

Two public meetings using the open house format (where no formal presentation was given) were conducted during the study. The open houses provided information to the public and solicited input at key milestones:

- ▶ **Open House No. 1.** Scoping/identification of project issues and alternatives to be evaluated.
- ▶ **Open House No. 2.** Identification of the Preferred Alternative and project impacts.

The open house format allowed attendees to review all the information regardless of the time they were able to attend the meeting. Newspaper advertisements, postcard mailings, and delivery of meeting handouts helped to notify the public of the upcoming open houses. Also, display boards were posted at public venues for viewing.



The information provided at the public meetings was posted on the project Web site immediately after the public meeting occurred. The following list provides dates on which public meetings were held, along with the issues presented:

Open House No. 1 - January 21, 2009

This public scoping meeting was held to identify specific issues of concern to be addressed in this DCE and in the development of project alternatives.

Forty-two members of the public signed in at the open house. Members of the study team, including representatives from the City and CDOT, were on hand to answer questions and discuss project issues with the public. The meeting began at 3:00 p.m. and ended at 6:00 p.m.

No formal presentation was given. Members of the public were invited to ask questions, provide input, and discuss concerns with project representatives. Fifteen comment sheets were received at the meeting; one was received via the project Web site after the meeting. Most comments expressed support for the project and concerns regarding reducing traffic in Steamboat Springs. No comments expressed opposition to the project.

Open House No. 2 - May 20, 2009

The purpose of the second public open house was to provide background information on the proposed project and to present the results of the alternatives screening, including the Preferred Alternative.

Forty-one members of the public attended the second open house. The meeting was held from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Steamboat Springs Community Center. Members of the study team, including representatives from the City and CDOT, were on hand to answer questions and discuss project issues with the public.

Similar to the first open house, there was no formal presentation. Thirteen written comment sheets were received at the meeting. Additional verbal comments, written comments on roll-plotted maps, and comments from the City planning staff were also received. Overall, the comments showed support for the project and the Preferred Alternative. Many of the comments were complimentary and appreciative of the public involvement efforts. Some expressed interest in how soon construction of the project could begin and some had specific concern over project impacts.

Small Group Meeting (focused on community outreach)

For the two public open houses discussed above, the study team conducted specialized outreach to involve EJ populations in the decision-making process. This outreach involved providing project and contact information in Spanish, posting



meeting notices in locations targeting these populations, and publishing public notices in the *Steamboat Pilot* in both English and Spanish. In addition, postcards and notices included a note in Spanish offering translation services and providing a phone number to a Spanish-speaking team member. No calls were received.

In order to more specifically focus on EJ populations, the City hired a local non-profit organization, CIIC, in an effort to extend public outreach to minority communities residing along US 40 within the study area. The CIIC representative had suggested a small group meeting may be more effective than the larger open house, citing the fact that their Hispanic clients are not accustomed to a culture of seeking input ahead of future projects. For more information on minority and low-income communities within the study area, see Section C.17, Socioeconomic Conditions and Environmental Justice.

On Sunday, June 7, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at the Steamboat Springs Community Center, a representative from CIIC conducted a presentation in Spanish about the project. The City and CIIC offered both food and childcare at the meeting. Spanish advertisements for the small group meeting had been distributed to specific residential areas that were identified by CIIC. Of the 55 flyers distributed, 40 were handed directly to residents.

Nine participants, representing four neighborhoods, attended the presentation. Overall, attendees expressed support for the project and expressed appreciation for the City's inclusion of immigrant communities' participation in the input process. Comments received at the meeting included concerns about access and bus transit. Two residents who could not attend the meeting later submitted comments expressing concern for noise, safety, and encroachment on their property.

Other Small Group Meetings

The study team conducted other small group meetings to discuss project issues and receive input. These included meetings with, and presentations to, the following groups:

- ▶ Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce--Transportation Solutions Group
- ▶ Steamboat 700 (annexation for this development was voted down in March 2010)
- ▶ 360 Village
- ▶ City of Steamboat Springs City Council
- ▶ Routt County Board of Commissioners
- ▶ Northwest Transportation Planning Region



Public Hearing

A joint City Council and Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing was held on June 22, 2009, allowing public input on the project and the Preferred Alternative recommendation. Approximately eight residents living along the western part of the corridor spoke regarding concern for increased highway noise, safety, and travel speeds. The study team committed to considering these elements as part of the DCE evaluation and preliminary design activities.

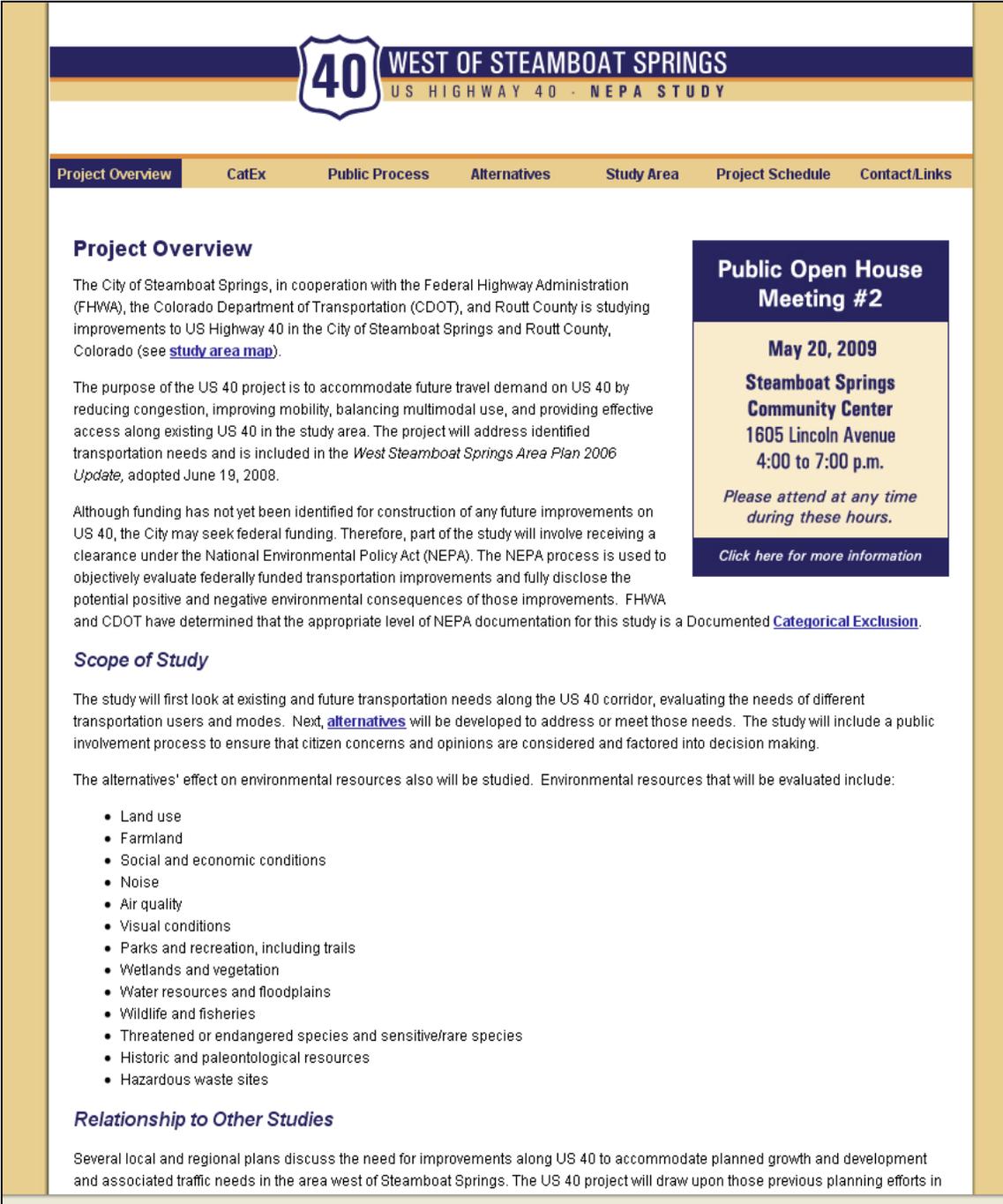
6. Project Web Site

A project Web site (www.us40west.com) was created and made accessible to the public (see **Figure 28**). In addition to general project information, it included updated project materials, public meeting materials, a summary of comments received from the open houses, and contact information for project representatives. It also provided a means to provide comments on the project.

7. Conclusion

The coordination strategies discussed above helped the study team to attain the project's public and agency involvement objectives. These activities were the means to inform the public and provided a way for the public to contribute input for the project. Further, they have helped garner public support for the project, as demonstrated by the public comments received (public comments are included in **Appendix C**).

Figure 28: US 40 NEPA Study Web site



40 WEST OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS
US HIGHWAY 40 - NEPA STUDY

Project Overview CatEx Public Process Alternatives Study Area Project Schedule Contact/Links

Project Overview

The City of Steamboat Springs, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and Routt County is studying improvements to US Highway 40 in the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County, Colorado (see [study area map](#)).

The purpose of the US 40 project is to accommodate future travel demand on US 40 by reducing congestion, improving mobility, balancing multimodal use, and providing effective access along existing US 40 in the study area. The project will address identified transportation needs and is included in the *West Steamboat Springs Area Plan 2006 Update*, adopted June 19, 2008.

Although funding has not yet been identified for construction of any future improvements on US 40, the City may seek federal funding. Therefore, part of the study will involve receiving a clearance under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process is used to objectively evaluate federally funded transportation improvements and fully disclose the potential positive and negative environmental consequences of those improvements. FHWA and CDOT have determined that the appropriate level of NEPA documentation for this study is a Documented [Categorical Exclusion](#).

Public Open House Meeting #2

May 20, 2009
Steamboat Springs Community Center
1605 Lincoln Avenue
4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Please attend at any time during these hours.

[Click here for more information](#)

Scope of Study

The study will first look at existing and future transportation needs along the US 40 corridor, evaluating the needs of different transportation users and modes. Next, [alternatives](#) will be developed to address or meet those needs. The study will include a public involvement process to ensure that citizen concerns and opinions are considered and factored into decision making.

The alternatives' effect on environmental resources also will be studied. Environmental resources that will be evaluated include:

- Land use
- Farmland
- Social and economic conditions
- Noise
- Air quality
- Visual conditions
- Parks and recreation, including trails
- Wetlands and vegetation
- Water resources and floodplains
- Wildlife and fisheries
- Threatened or endangered species and sensitive/rare species
- Historic and paleontological resources
- Hazardous waste sites

Relationship to Other Studies

Several local and regional plans discuss the need for improvements along US 40 to accommodate planned growth and development and associated traffic needs in the area west of Steamboat Springs. The US 40 project will draw upon those previous planning efforts in