



I-25/Arapahoe Interchange

Environmental Assessment



Revised Final Coordination Plan

August 2011

Coordination Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Coordination Plan

In accordance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU 6002), a transportation project's lead agencies are required to establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation during the NEPA environmental process. While SAFETEA-LU 6002 applies to projects for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared, requirements of 6002 may also be applied to projects being advanced through Environmental Assessments (EAs) at the discretion of the project's lead federal agencies. For the I-25/Arapahoe Road Environmental Assessment (EA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have determined that SAFETEA-LU 6002 requirements are applicable.

The purposes of this coordination plan are a) to facilitate and document Arapahoe County's interaction with the public and other agencies throughout the EA process, and b) to inform the public and other agencies of how the coordination plan will be accomplished. The plan is intended to promote an efficient and streamlined NEPA process through coordination, communication, scheduling and early resolution of issues.

1.2 Project Background

The proposed interchange improvement project is located in the southern portion of the Denver metropolitan area in Arapahoe County and the cities of Greenwood Village and Centennial. The purpose of the project, as currently defined, is to reduce congestion and to improve functional deficiencies and operational and safety elements for the traveling public within the I-25 and Arapahoe Road interchange complex. The project is needed due to an outdated interchange design that no longer safely accommodates traffic demands, which have increased substantially over the past 30 years since the original interchange was constructed.

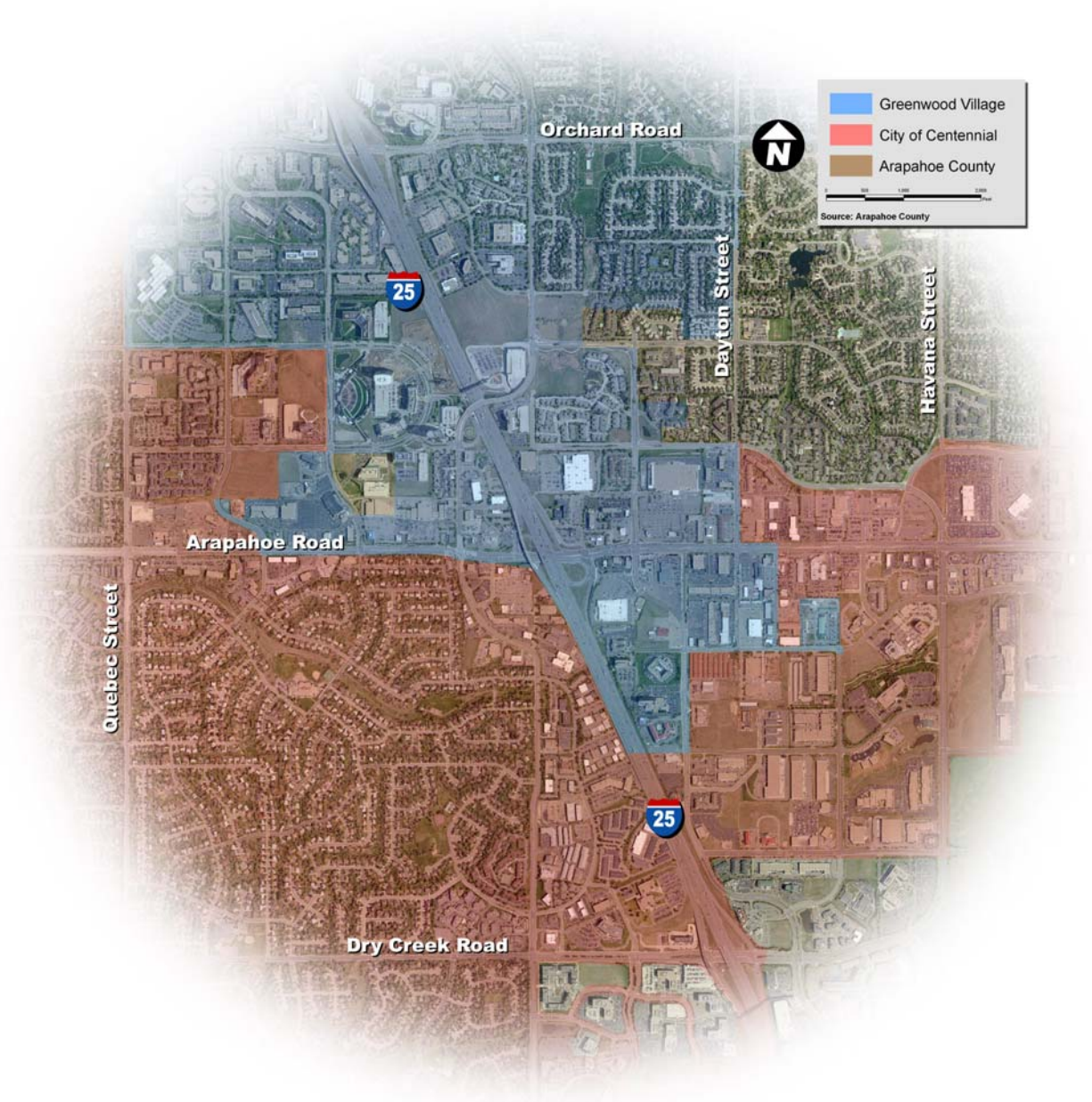
Arapahoe County, in cooperation with CDOT, FHWA, the City of Centennial and the City of Greenwood Village has prepared the following coordination plan for the I-25/Arapahoe Road Interchange EA.

If an identified Preferred Alternative resulting from this EA process does not cause unavoidable significant adverse impacts, Arapahoe County may pursue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that would clear the project for subsequent federal funding and construction. However, full funding has not been identified, and there is no firm schedule for project construction, since it would be dependent upon the recommended solution and associated costs. Prior to construction, Arapahoe County anticipates other state, federal and local permits will be required.

1.3 Project Vicinity

The project study area extends from approximately Havana Street on the east to Quebec Street on the west, and from Orchard Road on the north to Dry Creek Road on the south (Figure 1 Project Study Area). Depending on the type of resource to be analyzed, the study area may be adjusted to reflect a larger or smaller area.

Figure 1. Project Study Area



2 Agency Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Project Team Members

The success of the I-25/Arapahoe Road Interchange EA process is contingent upon the project team members working in a collaborative manner with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Under SAFETEA-LU, there are several formally designated roles for agencies within the NEPA process, including the lead and joint lead agencies, cooperating agencies and participating agencies. Agencies that have agreed to act in the capacity of a particular role are listed in **Table 1** along with their primary responsibilities. Two committees have also been formed to facilitate team communication. These project members include the following:

Table 1. Summary of Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Agency Name	Responsibilities
Role: Lead Federal Agency	
Federal Highway Administration	Oversight of NEPA process; participation in EA alternatives process; review of EA document and deliverables.
Role: Joint Lead Agency	
Colorado Department of Transportation	Oversight of NEPA process; participation in EA alternatives process; review of EA document and deliverables.
Role: Cooperating and Participating Agencies	
Arapahoe County	Contract with consultant to prepare EA; coordinate public and agency process; coordinate design plan development. Manage EA process, including public and agency coordination.
City of Centennial	Input into EA alternatives; review EA document and deliverables; participate in public and agency coordination.
City of Greenwood Village	Input into EA alternatives; review EA document and deliverables; participate in public and agency coordination.
Other Interested Agencies and Organizations	
DRCOG	Input, review and approval of travel forecasting process and alternatives analysis; coordination of federal funds within the Region; review air quality conformity findings.
Regional Transportation District	Coordination regarding light rail along I-25.
EPA	Review EA per MOU with CDOT.
Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)	Review and comment on EA (Purpose and Need, alternatives, mitigation) for wildlife issues.
Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE)	Review and comment on EA (Purpose and Need, alternatives, mitigation) for hazardous materials, air quality and water resources issues.

Agency Name	Responsibilities
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE)	Review and comment on EA (Purpose and Need, alternatives, mitigation) for waters of the U.S. and wetlands; issue 404 permit after completion of NEPA.
Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer	Review and comment on EA for findings relating to historic resources; coordinate with CDOT on Section 106 consultation if required.

Lead Agencies

Because the Federal Highway Administration is expected to provide funding for this project, FHWA serves as the lead agency for the project. CDOT, as the direct recipient of Federal funds for the project, is the joint lead agency. The responsibilities of these agencies is to manage the 6002 process, prepare the EA, and provide opportunities for public and participating/cooperating agency involvement.

Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating Agencies are those governmental agencies specifically requested by the lead agency to participate during the environmental evaluation process for the project. Federal agencies with jurisdiction by law (with permitting or land transfer authority) or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative are invited to be cooperating agencies. A State or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on lands of tribal interest, a Native American tribe may, by agreement with the lead agencies, also become a cooperating agency. A cooperating agency may, on request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information for NEPA documents for which the agency has specific expertise. The cooperating agency may also adopt the NEPA document without recirculation or preparation of a new NEPA document for the purpose of issuing a related environmental permit such as a Section 404 permit by the US Army Corps of Engineers. A cooperating agency by definition is also a participating agency.

Participating Agencies

A participating agency is a Federal, State, Tribal, regional, or local agency (not a non-governmental organization or private entity) with an interest in the project, but which does not necessarily have a special expertise nor anticipates adopting a NEPA document. These agencies also participate in the NEPA process, including scoping, the development of the Purpose and Need statement, range of alternatives, methodologies and level of detail for analysis of alternatives.

The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have a higher level of authority, responsibility and involvement in the environmental review process.

Other Interested Agencies and Organizations

Other agencies and organizations may be identified as having an interest in the project through the public involvement process or for permit, approval, certification, or

concurrence purposes. For example, an agency may have information on a particular resource within the project area that would be useful to the project team. Meetings with these agencies and organizations may occur to discuss topical information, but their overall role is expected to be minimal. The PMT will inform these agencies of major decisions and solicit them for information as necessary.

Project Leadership Team

As required by NEPA and SAFETEA-LU, the FHWA is the designated lead federal agency for the EA because of their oversight and funding responsibilities for an interchange on the federal highway system. The FHWA has delegated authority to CDOT for NEPA and design oversight. Arapahoe County will contract for preparation of the EA, coordinate public and agency participation in the NEPA process and provide oversight of roadway and interchange design plans.

The majority of funding for the previous Arapahoe Road Corridor Study and for this EA has been provided by Arapahoe County, and Arapahoe County is providing lead staff and consultant support for the preparation of the EA. Arapahoe County has contracted with the engineering and planning firm of David Evans and Associates, Inc. to lead a consultant team for the EA process.

Executive Committee

An Executive Committee (EC) has been formed that includes elected officials (Mayors and Commissioners) from each oversight agency. The EC is composed of elected or appointed officials from Arapahoe County, the City of Centennial, the City of Greenwood Village, CDOT and FHWA. The EC will review and discuss findings at each key step of the EA process, and will be asked to provide input on project elements including the range of reasonable alternatives, evaluation and identification of the preferred alternative. The EC is anticipated to meet approximately six times over the 30-month project duration. There will be no public notification of the schedule for EC meetings. (Open meetings with public notification are only required if more than three council members are in attendance from a single jurisdiction.) Due to budget limitations, there will be no audio recording of meetings or release of transcripts.

Technical Committee

A Technical Committee (TC) has been formed to provide technical expertise to the project leadership team from local jurisdictions and agencies with particular expertise or oversight authority. The TC is composed of members from CDOT, FHWA, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the City of Greenwood Village, Arapahoe County and the City of Centennial and will provide input on project elements including the range of reasonable alternatives, alternatives evaluation, identification and refinement of the preferred alternative, and review of technical data. The TC is anticipated to meet approximately six times over the 30-month project duration. There will be no public notification of the schedule for TC meetings. Due to budget limitations, there will be no audio recording of meetings or release of transcripts.

Public Attendance at Executive and Technical Committee Meetings

Despite the fact that there was no public notification of the TC or EC meetings by the project team, meetings held earlier in the project were attended by members of the public. In the event that members of the public attend future TC or EC meetings, the following procedures for meeting conduct will be adhered to.

Index cards (3"x 5") will be handed out to audience members at the beginning of the meeting. During introductions, the audience will be requested to write questions about clarifications pertaining to that particular meeting's proceedings on the cards. A member of the project team will gather these cards at the end of the meeting and answer as many audience questions from the cards as possible. This clarification time will specifically be called out on the agenda, and noted as lasting 10 minutes maximum.

There will be no back and forth debate concerning the clarifications provided, and no opportunity for audience comment. TC and EC meetings are technical and administrative in nature and not a public forum. An extensive public input process exists for community input on this project, outside of TC and EC meetings. The intent of allowing audience questions at the TC and EC meetings is to allow for clarification and answer questions to avoid any confusion or misinterpretations of meeting discussion.

3 Coordination Points, Information Requirements and Responsibilities

Several key coordination points occur during the EA process, leading to the identification of a Preferred Alternative if appropriate. The primary means of communicating and obtaining input on these coordination points will be through the TC and EC meetings and through the three public meetings held during the process (see Section 4 - Project Schedule). These coordination points and the methods of distribution and receipt of information are shown in **Table 2** below.

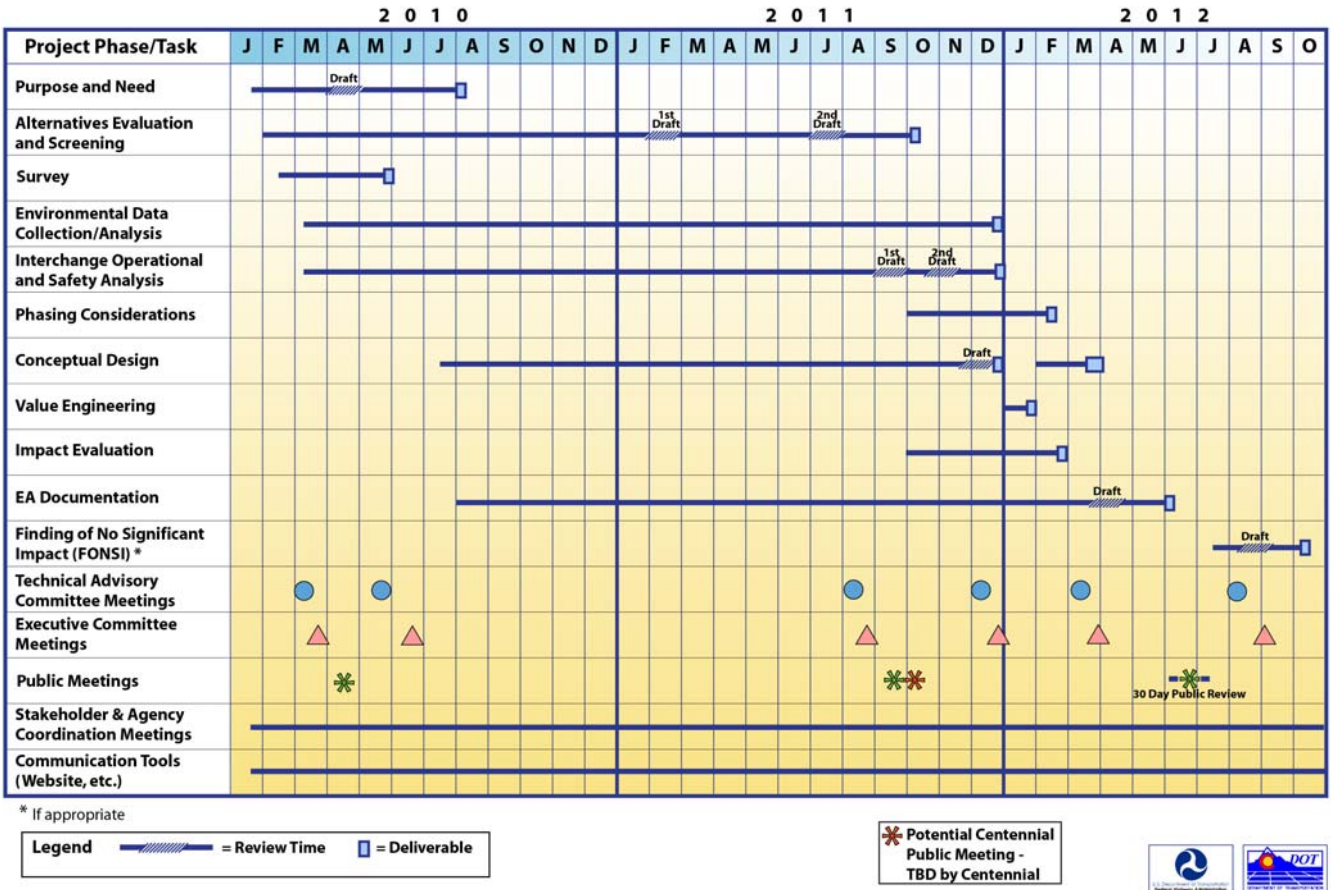
Table 2. Coordination Points and Responsibilities

Coordination Point	Information Distribution	Agency Responsible	Information Received
Purpose and Need (P&N)	Distribute draft P&N to TC, EC and provide any subsequent iterations; hold public scoping meeting; hold small group meetings in the community; post P&N on project website.	Technical Committee (TC), Executive Committee (EC)	Comments on P&N from public meeting and agencies
Range of Alternatives	Show and discuss at public scoping meeting; discuss screening criteria with TC; discuss findings with TC and EC; show and discuss refined range of alternatives at public meeting #2.	Technical Committee (TC), Executive Committee (EC), public input at meeting #2.	Input at TC/EC meetings; public comments from public meeting and small group meetings; input from website.
Impact Assessment Methodologies	Hold scoping meetings and/or mail informational letter to affected agencies.	CDPHE, DRCOG, CDOW, SHPO, USCOE	Written and verbal input from agencies.
Preferred Alternative	Provide materials for review by TC and EC; hold combined TC/EC meeting to discuss. CDOT and FHWA make the final decision per NEPA and SAFETEA-LU. Hold public meeting #3 to present findings.	Technical Committee (TC), Executive Committee (EC), public input at meeting #3.	Input at TC/EC meetings; public comments from public meeting and small group meetings; input from website.

4 Project Schedule

The EA project schedule is shown in **Figure 2**. This schedule is contingent upon finalizing Level 1 and Level 2 analysis of newly suggested alternatives within the timeframe shown. The TC and EC are anticipated to meet approximately six times during the process, and the meetings may be held separately or combined. Three public meetings will be held at key points during the EA process. The total anticipated timeframe for the EA is 34 months, with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) expected in late-2012 if appropriate.

Figure 2. Project Schedule



5 Coordination Plan Revision History

If changes are made to this Coordination Plan, a record of the change including the date and a description of the change will be listed in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Coordination Plan Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Revision
Revised Final	August 1, 2011	Clarification on the definitions of agency roles and a section regarding public attendance at EC and TC meetings were added. Project schedule was updated.