

## South Downtown Rail Underpass Reconstruction Project

Community Advisory Committee – Meeting # 4  
Wednesday, August 28, 2024

### Introduction

The City of Colorado Springs invited community stakeholders to the fourth Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the South Downtown Rail Underpass Reconstruction (SDRUR) Project.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide an update on the preliminary design progress since the March CAC.
- Ensure everyone understands the environmental review process, what information is being gathered for various built and natural environmental analyses, and what to expect moving forward.
- Preview and involve the CAC in preparation for the September Community Office Hours.

The meeting began with introductions and a review of the agenda, meeting purpose, and meeting guidelines. Gayle Sturdivant (City of Colorado Springs) welcomed CAC members, thanked them for their time and dedication to the project, and provided an overview of the meeting's agenda.

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West), the meeting facilitator, invited participants to introduce themselves with their names and organizations and what concerns or questions they have been hearing in the community/from their constituents. CAC members shared the following:

- That anxiety regarding property acquisition still exists within the project area, especially for property owners
- Safety concerns continue to arise around railroad crossings and aging bridge infrastructure
- There is a desire to learn more about mobility and connectivity goals related to the Legacy Loop connection and concurrent projects, like the BNSF Tejon Bridge Replacement and the Union Pacific Las Vegas St./Royer railroad crossing relocation.

### Preliminary Engineering Updates

Lance Sweenhart (HDR) presented the Build Alternative Graphic (the Preferred Alternative Graphic) to help center the discussion around the upcoming environmental review process. Lance described how the design process works with the environmental analysis to understand how this build alternative will impact the project area.

The technical team is working on the 10% design concept submittal, which went to Union Pacific and BNSF for their review. The continued coordination with the railroads will allow all parties to have a shared understanding and agreement on the engineering path forward. The plan is to progress the preliminary designs by Spring 2025.

As the design progresses, the technical team still needs to collect additional field information for project analyses. The City and project team are working to update the Right of Entry (ROE) forms to create a project-specific form and eliminate confusion within the community. The project team will also closely coordinate with Mill St. Neighborhood Association (MSNA) to ensure the letters are understandable for the community.

Lance then handed it over to Zach Stone (City of Colorado Springs) to provide a BNSF Tejon Street Bridge Replacement update. Zach recognized that the bridge replacement is a topic of interest for CAC members and for the City. The City has remained in contact with BNSF but does not have an updated construction schedule. The City is happy to pass along an updated schedule or updates from BNSF once they are made available. If stakeholders have additional questions, Zach recommended they contact Andy Williams, the BNSF Executive Director of Public Affairs, at [andy.williams@bnsf.com](mailto:andy.williams@bnsf.com) or 817-867-6369.

### Discussion

Question	Answer
While there is no schedule for the BNSF bridge update, do we know the proposed bridge specifications? Does the City have to contribute funding towards the replacement to get the bridge to the correct specifications?	<p>The BNSF bridge replacement will not match the vertical clearance requirements but will allow for incremental improvements in the project area. The City does not have to contribute funding for the BNSF bridge replacement.</p> <p>The SDRUR project will continue because while replacing the Tejon Street Bridge will create some improvement, it will not fully address the needs outlined in the draft SDRUR Purpose &amp; Need statement.</p>

## Environmental Review Updates

Kevin Maddoux (Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU)) provided the CAC members with an update on the environmental review process, including the work done to date and what committee members can expect going forward. The City and project team have been coordinating with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) while performing baseline existing condition surveys to evaluate and understand the potential impacts and necessary mitigation strategies of the build alternative and no-build scenario.

To start the formal environmental review process, ongoing FRA coordination is required to officially confirm the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) class of action. There are three types of action, which include the following:

- Categorical Exclusion Determination (CATEX) – is typically used for an FRA project with a relatively low risk of environmental impacts.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) – is used for larger, complex projects that compare two scenarios (a build or no-build option).

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – is a relatively rare environmental action, but it analyzes impacts on large projects that have undergone an alternatives analysis. An EIS is done when a project or action is anticipated to have many environmental impacts.

While the formal process has not begun, the City and team have been making progress. FRA reviewed the submitted technical reports in July of 2024, and the City worked to incorporate their feedback. As part of the technical report process, the environmental review team has been collecting information on a variety of environmental resources, including the following:

- Land use
- Cultural resources
- Parks, open space, trails, and Section 4(f) and Section 6(f)
- Transportation
- Noise and vibration
- Air quality
- Hazardous Materials
- Communities and environmental justice
- Wetlands
- Floodplains/water quality
- Biological resources
- Public safety

Kevin previewed the upcoming environmental review schedule, involving a public scoping meeting in early 2025. Once the FRA has determined the class of action, the following steps will require the environmental review team, in coordination with the public involvement and technical team, to validate the preferred alternative, refine the preliminary design, and work to develop the draft environmental review documents.

## Outreach & Engagement Updates

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) provided a summary of engagement activities since the last community advisory committee meeting, which included a public e-blast, ongoing website updates, and a listening session with MSNA. Angela invited Jen Cecil (MSNA representative) to share her reflections. Jen expressed appreciation for the City and project team for listening and providing an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation with the community.

As late summer and early fall approaches, the City will engage the broader community to promptly provide updated materials through website updates, e-blasts, and direct mailers. Additionally, the City will look to continue scheduling CAC meetings and coordinate with agencies. Lastly, the City seeks to engage with the community through a round of upcoming Community Office Hours.

There are several goals for these upcoming office hours, including the opportunity to sit down and meet directly with the community to inform them of the current process while also taking the time to listen to the community. The City will host a virtual Community Office Hour on Tuesday, September 24, and in-person Community Office Hours on Wednesday, September 25, from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., 1-2 p.m., and 3-4 p.m. at The Independence Center Bowe Blank room. The City will utilize digital and print formats to promote the upcoming office hours, including a promotional toolkit for CAC members. CAC members were encouraged to contact the team if there are additional formats or promotional channels the City should consider when promoting these events.

*Discussion*

Question	Answer
Will you utilize popular social media channels and sites?	Yes, we will utilize social media, but also encourage CAC members to promote these events on their social media or NextDoor groups.
Where do the Community Office Hours fit into the larger environmental review process?	<p>Community office hours are not currently required for the formal environmental review. Still, the City is hosting them before the environmental review process officially begins to ensure people are informed of the upcoming milestone and to offer an opportunity to listen to community concerns and questions.</p> <p>For those unable to make the Community Office Hours, the City will develop an updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to ensure everyone can access the same information.</p>

**Next Steps**

Zach Stone (City of Colorado Springs) concluded the meeting with a schedule update. The SDRUR project will continue to advance the preliminary engineering and environmental review processes. The project team will continue coordinating with FRA to determine the environmental review class of action, moving the project into the official environmental review process.

Zach Stone closed by thanking all CAC members for attending the fourth meeting and encouraged those concerned about the Legacy Loop or multimodal connections on Tejon Street to reach out to the project team to schedule an individual meeting.

## Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Name	Organization
Jerry White	Bike Colorado Springs
Michelle Talarico	Colorado Springs City Council, District 3
Kevin Binkley	Colorado Springs Utilities
Sarah Bedell	Concrete Couch
Chelsea Gondeck	Downtown Partnership
June Waller	Hillside Neighborhood Association
Tim Boddington	Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs
Jennifer Cecil	Mill Street Neighborhood Association
Jim Godfrey	Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority Citizens Advisory Committee
Travis Williams	Springs Rescue Mission
Allen Beauchamp	Trails and Open Space Coalition

### Additional CAC Members:

Name	Organization
Devin Camacho	Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC
Steve Smith	Colorado Springs Fire Department
Chad Wright	Colorado Springs Housing Authority
Sid Santos	Colorado Springs Police Department
Sara Vaas	CONO
Toby Gannett	Draper Commons
Gary Feffer	Fountain Colony Real Estate
Josh Gainey	Hillside Community Center
Chris Rudnick	Hillside Neighborhood Association
Sam Friesema	Hillside Neighborhood Association
Jeff Finn	Norwood Development
Jody Barker	Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments – Area Agency on Aging
Cindy Aubrey	Pikes Peak United Way
Paul Spotts	The Independence Center
Steve Lind	U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Museum

### Project Team

Name	Organization
Gayle Sturdivant	City of Colorado Springs
Zach Stone	City of Colorado Springs
Kevin Maddoux	FHU
Lance Sweenhart	HDR
Angela Jo Woolcott	Kearns & West
Caitlin Sheridan	Kearns & West
Zach Barr	Kearns & West