

# Fillmore Street Bridge Improvements and Trail Connections - I-25 to Monument Creek (Fillmore Bridge Project)

Stakeholder Working Group Meeting  
Wednesday, October 23, 2024, 1 – 3 p.m. MT

## Introduction

The City of Colorado Springs held the first meeting of the Fillmore Bridge Project Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) on Wednesday, October 23, 2024.

The meeting goals were to:

- Create a common understanding of the Fillmore Bridge Project and provide an overview of Phase I: Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL).
- Agree to the roles and responsibilities of the Stakeholder Working Group, including subcommittees.
- Preview and involve the Stakeholder Working Group in preparation for the upcoming public meeting.

This document summarizes the presentation delivered and the themes shared by meeting participants.

## Presentation

The meeting began with an introduction of the project team and participants, and a review of the agenda, meeting purpose, and meeting guidelines.

Gayle Sturdivant (City of Colorado Springs) welcomed SWG participants to the meeting and explained that the focus of the meeting was for participants to hear about the project and understand the PEL process, which is the project's first phase.

Participants shared their names, organizations, and one goal for the project. A table of participants is included in **Appendix A**.

The goals shared by participants include the following themes:

### *Multimodal Improvements*

- Enhance trail connectivity and create safe, comfortable and robust multimodal infrastructure for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists throughout the project area.
- Enhance transit connectivity in the area and connections from the north and south side of Fillmore Street to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail.

### *Construction Impacts*

- Minimize the closure of the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail during construction.
- Ensure first responders have access during construction to respond to emergencies in the area.
- Coordinate with School District 11 and Mountain Metropolitan Transit to minimize construction impacts to bus routes, area schools, and travel.

- Communicate with small businesses and businesses along the corridor throughout the process and communicate anticipated construction detours.

### *Process*

- Encourage cross coordination with active projects in the project area.
- Ensure the project is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and adjacent neighborhood plans.
- Coordination with community partners to share information and use the SWG as a sounding board for community concerns and questions.

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West), the meeting facilitator, provided the SWG members with an overview of the SWG's roles and responsibilities:

- Act as a representative of your community
- Share your organization's perspective, not your individual interests
- Act as a sounding board for the project team
- Vet information and deliverables
- Daylight issues and concerns
- Bring concerns back to the group
- Identify an alternate representative as needed for meetings you are not able to attend
- Stay committed to the entirety of the process

Angela also explained that future meetings of the SWG, participants will likely be divided into sub-groups to collect specific feedback related to business and development, neighborhood and social services, and environmental and recreational access. Plenary SWG meetings will be incorporated as needed.

All attending SWG members agreed to the roles and responsibilities and did not have additional questions.

## **Project Overview**

Jessica Bowser (City of Colorado Springs) explained that the Fillmore bridges have been identified for replacement due to their age and deteriorating condition. There are also deficiencies in the roadway configuration and trail connections.

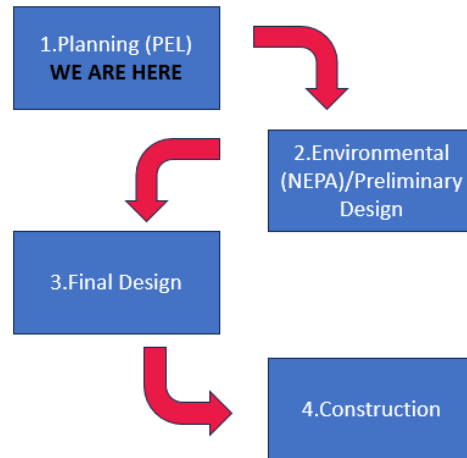
The Fillmore Bridge Project is being funded through local and federal funding. The project was initially identified as a Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority 3 A-List Project. The City of Colorado Springs has also obtained a Bridge Investment Program Planning Grant to complete a PEL Study.

Jessica explained that the project's first phase, a PEL Study, is being conducted before bridge replacement to leverage local funding, advance alternatives analysis, assist in obtaining future federal grant funding, potentially provide accelerated clearance review, and incorporate public input early on in the project.

Jason Longsdorf (HDR) expanded on the project's background to provide an overview of the PEL Study. He explained that work done during this phase can be adopted into a future environmental review process, a federally required process. Once the PEL phase is complete, various alternatives will be evaluated during the preliminary design and environmental review process. Once an alternative is selected, the project will go into final design and construction.

Agency coordination will occur as part of the PEL process, including working with the following organizations: the railroad partners (BNSF and Union Pacific), Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), city agencies, and the public.

## TECHNICAL PROCESS



### Fillmore Bridge Project

16

Figure 1: PEL Technical Process

#### Questions & Discussion

- Why is the City currently conducting roadway and paving maintenance in the project area when the bridge will ultimately be replaced?
  - The bridge deck and driving surface need maintenance now to keep the bridges serviceable until they're able to be replaced in the next five (5) years.
- Fillmore Street is a major east-west corridor and the Fillmore exit from Interstate-25 is often very congested. Will there be a plan to expand the street so it doesn't become even more congested in the future?
  - As the City evaluates replacing the bridges, they're also evaluate added capacity or having the ability to add capacity in the future should there be a need to widen Fillmore Street.

#### Existing Conditions

Jolie Snyder (HDR) provided an overview of the existing conditions of the Fillmore Street bridges, roadways, and facilities within the project area.

Jolie explained that the bridges are in poor condition and have deficiencies such as tilted rocker bearings, deck cracking, substandard railing, and corrosion. The roadway doesn't have a sidewalk on the north side, the curb ramps are in poor condition, and it does not meet vertical clearance under the bridge.

Regarding traffic, the roadway is very congested and is projected to reach capacity by 2033. The crash data further indicates a capacity issue, given that most are rear-end crashes.

The Pikes Peak Greenway Trail runs through the project area without connection to Fillmore Street. Sidewalks exist only on the south side of both bridges, and there is no bicycle infrastructure on Fillmore Street and nearby roadways. There is one bus stop on the northeast corner of Fillmore Street and Mark Dabling Boulevard, without a complimentary stop on the other side of the street.

Jolie also explained the environmental considerations in the project area, including wetlands and floodplains, threatened and endangered species, historic elements, and an environmental justice (EJ) community in the northeast corner of the identified project area.

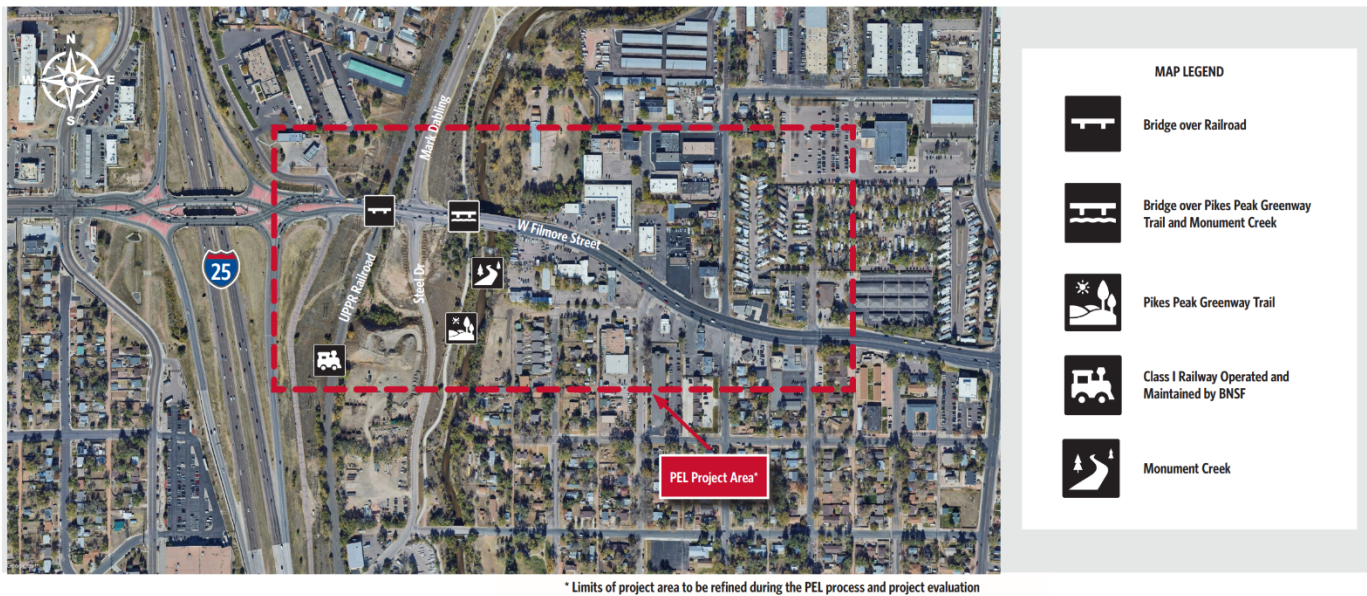


Figure 2: Project Area Map

*Comments, Questions & Discussion*

- Include additional environmental justice communities in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the project area.
  - Ensure project information is accessible to everyone in the project area, including EJ communities.
- Consider enhanced safety measures, such as better lighting, on the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail, where unhoused populations tend to gather under the bridges.
- Share the existing conditions visuals (e.g., photos of the bridges in disrepair) with the public, as they effectively convey the project's need.

**Purpose & Need**

Jason Longsdorf (HDR) then stated that the Purpose and Need statement helps guide the project team's criteria in evaluating and selecting alternatives.

The draft Purpose and Need statement is the following:

“The purpose of the transportation recommendations is to address structural deficiencies for the bridges carrying Fillmore Street over Monument Creek, the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail, and the Union Pacific Railroad, improve safety and accommodate travel demand on Fillmore Street, and increase multimodal connectivity along the crossings and to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail.

The project looks to address the structural deficiencies, improve safety, accommodate travel demand, and increase multimodal connectivity.”

### *Facilitated Discussion*

Angela facilitated a conversation about the draft Purpose and Need statement using a digital whiteboard program called Miro. She asked participants to share what they liked about the statement and what they would change. A screenshot of the Miro board for this discussion can be found in **Appendix B.1**.

Key themes include:

- Improve the safety of multi-multimodal facilities along Fillmore Street that the Pikes Peak Greenway users will encounter as a network.
- Maintain access for first responders so they can continue responding to needs in the area.
- Consider future housing construction and how projected growth will impact traffic congestion in the project area.
- Consider adding something about the economic development benefits of the proposed work.
- Ensure proposed project improvements are consistent with locally adopted plans.
- Incorporate specific language into the project's purpose statement to reflect inclusivity.

## **Alternatives**

Jolie provided an overview of the three high-level alternatives being considered so far.

- **Option 1** is the existing alignment, which includes three westbound and two eastbound lanes.
- **Option 2** is a north shift alignment, with four lanes of traffic maintained throughout construction.
- **Option 3** is a south shift alignment, which would include building on the south while retaining a portion of traffic on the north side of the existing bridge.

Jolie explained that these alternatives are not the only ones that will be evaluated, and the screening process has not started yet. The three options will each be broken into additional alternatives with different project elements. When considering other options, it is important to consider the right-of-way constraints in this area.

### *Facilitated Discussion*

Angela facilitated a discussion among SWG members to understand their perspectives and thoughts on the following questions:

- Are there any questions about the initial alternatives being considered?
- Do these alternatives resonate with the identified needs?
- Is this clear?

Key themes were expressed and recorded on a digital whiteboard tool called Miro. A screenshot of the Miro board for this discussion can be found in **Appendix B.2**.

Key themes include:

- Provide a deeper explanation of how alternatives and options were created.
- Include multimodal connections on both the north and the south sides of Fillmore Street to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail.
- Consider extending multimodal connections east of the project area along Fillmore Street to Cascade Avenue so that pedestrians and cyclists have a more complete network of connections.
- Be mindful of adjacent projects and make sure sidewalk connections are well integrated.
- Create a connected multimodal network that is safe and comfortable for all users.

## Engagement Overview

Angela provided an overview of the PEL Study's engagement plans and desired outcomes.

She explained that in the weeks leading up to the SWG meeting, the project team held one-on-one interviews with stakeholders to get input on priorities and concerns related to the project. Some of the themes that were heard include:

- Improve trail connectivity and the multi-use path
- Create an inviting experience for pedestrians, transit and cyclists
- Ensure pedestrian safety along the right of way
- Coordinate with the Fire Department and Police Department to ensure that they're still able to access the area when responding to issues
- Coordinate with local transit regarding closures and detours
- Consider opportunities to improve the transit connections in the area
- Communicate openly with small businesses to minimize impacts to them
- Use a variety of communication methods
- Communicate transparently about construction and closures throughout the project

Angela also shared that the project team wants to make sure the engagement process reaches all interested stakeholders, organizations, and community members so that they have awareness and opportunity to provide input. The role of the SWG is to enhance sharing and dissemination of information to the broader community as are future community engagement activities. Most immediately the project team is planning a public open house on November 19 as a first step to meet this goal. The objectives of the kick-off open house are to inform and educate the community about the Fillmore Bridge Project's history and current phase, share the draft purpose and need, and collect input on the drafted alternatives to help inform the decision matrix.

The project team will develop flyers, e-blasts, social media posts, and a promotion toolkit to ensure the public is informed about the meeting. The promotional toolkit will be shared with SWG representatives with the expectation that they share it with their communication channels.

### *Facilitated Discussion*

Before closing out the meeting, Angela paused to ask SWG members if the information shared at the initial SWG meeting clearly conveyed what the project is and is not? If anything was missing? And encouraged stakeholder representatives to please share additional

communication channels that the project team can leverage to help promote the November open house.

Participants did not have questions or additional feedback on the public engagement or the upcoming public meeting.

## **Next Steps**

Angela, the meeting facilitator, wrapped up the presentation by reminding SWG members about the public open house on November 19, 2024 and providing a high-level preview of upcoming technical and engagement project milestones. Gayle Sturdivant, City of Colorado Springs, closed the meeting by thanking the SWG for their participation and project involvement.

## Appendix A – Meeting Participants

### Stakeholder Working Group Members in Attendance

Organization	Name
Citizens' Transportation Advisory Board	Carlos Perez
Trails & Open Space Coalition	Allen Beauchamp
Public Works	Kerry Childress
Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC	Devin Camacho
COS Fire Department	Jeff Hanenberg
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	Emily Duncan
Bike Colorado Springs	Jerry White
Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs	Chelsea Gondeck
Mountain Metro Transit	Jacob Matsen
School District 11	Cedric McCampbell
Economic Development Office	Shakanah Tedder
Planning and Neighborhood Services	Ryan Tefertiller
Aberdeen Ridge Retirement Community	Jane Woolson

### Project Team

Name	Organization
Gayle Sturdivant	City of Colorado Springs
Jessica Bowser	City of Colorado Springs
Maren McDowell	City of Colorado Springs
Lance Sweenhart	HDR
Zach Bentzler	HDR
Jolie Snyder	HDR
Angela Jo Woolcott	Kearns & West
Caitlin Sheridan	Kearns & West
Shelly Oren	Kearns & West



## Appendix B.1 – Miro Board Discussion

### Draft Purpose & Need

