



Kickoff/Charter meeting
Victory World Outreach Church
Sept. 24, 2014
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Meeting purpose

About 50 stakeholders participated in the Agency/Key Stakeholder Charter Meeting for the Hancock Expressway/Academy Boulevard Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study and Design project. Stakeholders included property and business owners, staff from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs Utilities and the Colorado Springs Police Department.

The City's project manager and the consultant team briefed participants about:

- The study
- Study area background, history and limits
- The PEL process
- PEL goals and objectives
- PEL schedule
- Success factors
- Issues and concerns identified by property and business owners with interests close the intersection

The purpose of the study is to evaluate and recommend multi-modal transportation improvements in the area of Hancock Expressway and South Academy Boulevard, including (but not limited to) alternatives for the reconfiguration of the intersection, transit, and pedestrian access. And in,

- Compliance with CDOT and FHWA guidelines for PEL studies; and in
- Accordance with goals established for the larger South Academy Corridor in the City Council-adopted *Great Streets Plan*.

The Academy Boulevard/Hancock Expressway Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study will determine an alternative for reconstruction of the transportation facilities at and around this intersection. This PEL is the next step of the *Academy Boulevard Corridor Great Streets Plan*. The PEL will be prepared in close coordination with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the community. CDOT and FHWA guidance, and stakeholder participation will be integral to the PEL process. The expected outcomes are recommendations for transportation system improvements that meet multi-modal transportation needs and contribute to the revitalization of the South Academy Corridor.

Project Background:

The City of Colorado Springs has been actively engaged in a revitalization planning and implementation effort focusing on the segment of Academy Boulevard between Maizeland Road and Drennan Road/Proby Parkway. In 2011 City Council adopted the *Academy Boulevard Corridor*

Great Streets Plan for this approximately six-mile corridor. Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach designated the *Great Streets* corridor as an Economic Opportunity Zone (EOZ). The *Great Streets* Plan identifies the Hancock Expressway/Academy Boulevard area as a major redevelopment node, recommending that a more detailed process be undertaken to comprehensively redesign the transportation improvements for this intersection and surrounding area as more urban, modern, multi-modal and economic development-supportive.

Participant feedback/questions:

At a minimum, what has to be accomplished for the PEL to be accepted by FHWA? –Tim Roberts

(Following responses from Stephanie Gibson, FHWA)

- Need to ask ourselves why we are doing a PEL?
- Project dependent
- Refer to PEL handbook and questionnaire as a guide
- Public involvement is a critical aspect
- Identify a preferred alternative, but don't eliminate alternatives

(Following response from Holly Buck, FHU)

- Articulate benefits of project

What is meant by disposition of property?

- Will be determined by alternative
- May result in excess property
- Some property may be needed for utilities
- Too early in process to discuss in detail

Relationship of this process to other long-range plans for area –Aubrey Hoover

- Non-motorized
- Transit

This area needs a shot-in-the-arm –Doug Jones

- We have the businesses here today that can help revitalize this area
- Thanks for the support

Improve lighting to attract shoppers/diners –Noah Rubin

- Provide sense of security

This is another process in a long string of studies –Matt Craddock

- Exciting to see something finally happening that will transform the area

Happy to see access being addressed –Manny San Fernando

Area has seen 185 police calls and 24 accidents at the Hancock/Academy intersection in the past nine months –Officer Randall Blackburn

Cost of undergrounding utilities is a concern

- Why are we considering undergrounding the utilities?
 - Construction impacts
 - Aesthetics
- The area has five 115kv lines and one? 230,000kv line

- Colorado Springs Utilities has experience with undergrounding 115kv lines and from this experience the cost start at about \$2 million per mile. The 230kv is more expensive to underground
- Will likely find that cost for undergrounding will be more of an issue than technical feasibility
- Undergrounding lines under the roadway may free up property for other uses such as Transit, recreation, and business

We still have to maintain and protect utility easements –Ron Carlentine (City Real Estate)

- Restrictions on what can be built above buried utility lines

Financing requests will have to go through the utility board –Elena Nunez

Send links to the Great Streets Plan and Tiffany's report to group –Matt Craddock

Environmental considerations –Jessica Myklebust

- Landfill
- Environmental Justice
- Trails

The area is a desirable destination for pedestrians who shop, dine –Chris Lieber

- Current gap in trail system and with this project there may be an opportunity to close this gap

Area immediately west of Astrozon is undeveloped and a landfill

- How will it impact traffic?
- How will it impact development?
 - Complicated process to evaluate landfill potential
 - Portion of landfill may be undermining the integrity of Academy Boulevard
 - Continuing to evaluate landfill impacts

How will additional businesses be attracted to the local area? –Doug Jones