

South Powers Extension PEL Study – Public Engagement Public Open House / Virtual Open House Summary – May 2022

Event Overview



Figure 1. Project Team staff reviewing a large map of the Project Area with members of the public

An in-person Public Open House was held May 25, 2022, and a three-week online Virtual Public Open House to enable broader public participation remained on the project website for three weeks from May 25 through June 15, 2022.

Approximately 50 citizens attended the in-person Public Open House for the South Powers Extension PEL Study held from 5:30 – 7 p.m., May 25, 2022, at the City of Fountain, City Hall (116 S. Main St., Fountain CO, 80817).

The room was arranged with a large, printed map of the entire study area on a table in the center of the room. Meeting attendees could engage with the project team to discuss the project and mark comments and concerns directly on the map. Ten stations were also set up

around the perimeter of the room staffed with project team members who discussed the particular topics of the display boards with the public and addressed their questions. Topics included the Reason for the project; Vision for the South Powers Boulevard corridor; existing conditions of environmental resources, land use, traffic & safety; benefits of combining a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) and an Access Control Plan (ACP) into one study; and the history of the corridor.

All displays at the May 25 in-person open house were made available through the "Go to Virtual Open House" button on the project website as part of the Virtual Public Open House.

<https://www.SouthPowersStudy.com/>

The Virtual Public Open House remained live on the project website for three weeks, between May 25 and June 15, 2022, for the public to review the display boards and to post comments either geographically on the Interactive Comment Map or in the open house Comment Form.



Figure 2. Project Team staff speaking with member of the public at the May 25th Open House

Public Open House Display Boards included:

[Station 1 - Welcome](#)

[Station 2 - Process](#)

[Station 3 - History](#)

[Station 4 - Access Control Plan](#)

[Station 5 - Traffic](#)

[Station 6 - Crashes](#)

[Station 7 - Land Use](#)

[Station 8 - Environmental](#)

[Station 9 - Next Steps](#)

[Station 10 - Comments](#)

Goals of Public Engagement

- Inform the public about the PEL study;
- Review the Vision for the corridor and the Reason for the project;
- Review the existing conditions of the area;
- Collect comments or questions; and,
- Collect public input to help shape recommendations for the corridor.

Tools Provided for the Public to Submit Feedback

- Website: <https://www.SouthPowersStudy.com/>
- Email address: SouthPowersStudy@gmail.com
- E-newsletters
- Comment forms on the website and at the in-person public open house
- Comments on the Interactive map as part of the website Virtual Public Open House

Website

The project website went live on May 12, 2022. Through the website, the public has an ongoing opportunity to sign up to receive e-newsletter study updates and submit questions and comments. The website includes tabs that provide information on the Reason for the project, the Vision, the location, and the study schedule. The Overview tab includes information describing a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) process, an Access Control Plan (ACP) definition, and the benefits of combining the PEL and ACP.

The Corridor History tab includes background on the current South Powers Boulevard and corridor history extending back to 1963. References to numerous previous planning documents dating back to 1970 are also included on the Corridor History tab. Both a list of Frequently Asked Questions & Answers and an Interactive Map of the study area are available on the project website. Additional documents that will be added include; the Purpose & Need and Goals statements, the ACP, the PEL Report, and the Existing Conditions Report.

Outreach

The following communications tools were used to promote the in-person and virtual Public Open Houses:

- Enewsletters describing the study, timeline, and public engagement opportunities and promoting specifics about the public open houses were distributed on May 12, May 17, May 23, June 2, and June 13, 2022 to the approximately 250 email addresses on the database at that time.
- An article about the study and promoting the public open houses was submitted to El Paso County. It appeared in the May issue of "The Roadway" publication.
- News releases were distributed by the El Paso County Public Information Office to local news media.

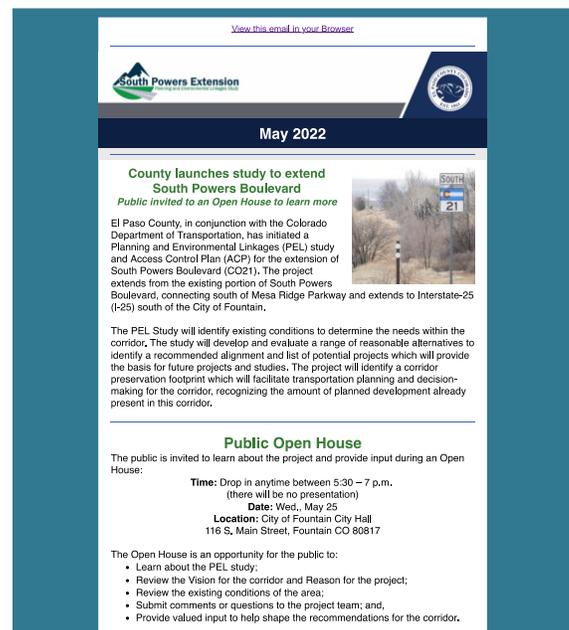


Figure 3. ENewsletter

- Communications materials were distributed to various community organizations for inclusion in their e-newsletters to their constituents.
- Social Media posts and news releases were provided to project partner agencies of El Paso County, City of Fountain, City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Department of Transportation, and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments for them to distribute through their communication channels.
- Open House information as posted on the project website and the El Paso County website

Equitable Engagement

The communications materials promoting the public open house and online virtual option open house included a statement that American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation services were available upon request by email at least five days in advance to SouthPowersStudy@gmail.com

No members of the public requested either of these services.

In addition, the e-newsletters regarding the study and the Public Open House were distributed to various organizations in the Southeast area of Colorado Springs, which has the City’s highest percentae of minority and low income populations. These organizations included the RISE Coalition, Solid Rock Community Development Corporation, several churches, the local Boys & Girls club, the Deerfield Community Center, and the YMCA.

Participation Overview

The project team reviewed input collected during in-person and virtual Open House events and categorized input into 'Key Themes.' This information is intended to provide a high-level overview of what was heard from the public. The complete list of comments received is included below in Figure 4.

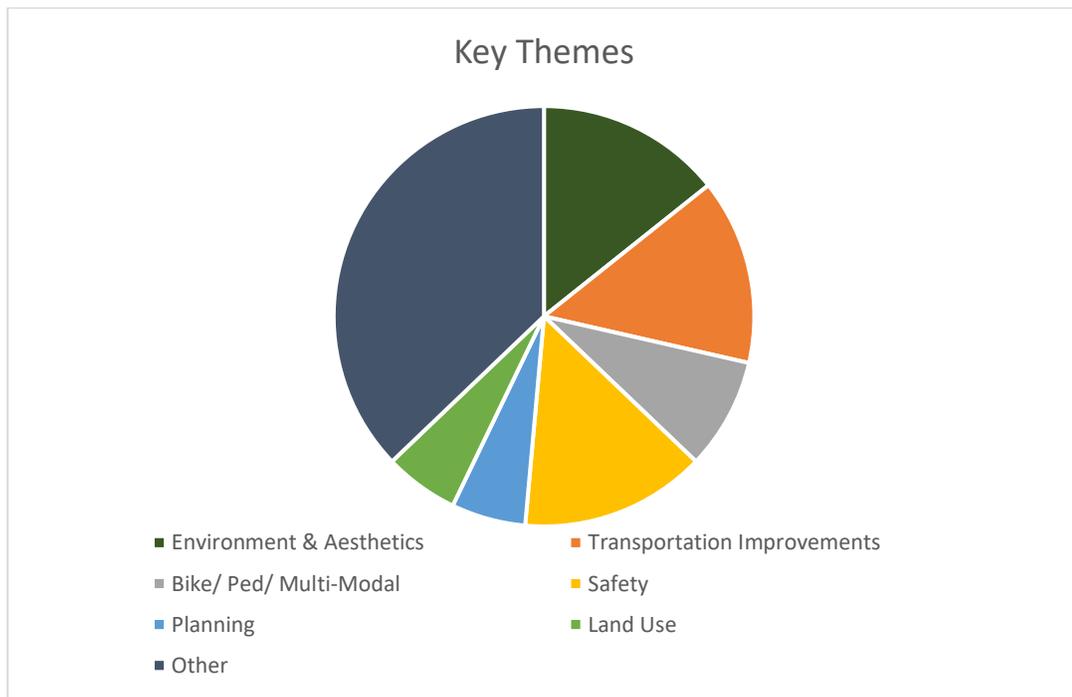


Figure 4. Key themes of Public Input

The 'Key Themes' noted in the chart above identify high-level categories of information collected by the project team during the Public Open House events. The concepts and ideas mentioned by stakeholders and the public include environment & aesthetics, roadway use, bike & pedestrian considerations, planning considerations, land use considerations, safety needs, and access control.

Participation Metrics

Between the online and in-person Public Open House events, the amount of public input was moderate.

- Number of Site Visits/views: 531
- Attendees to the in-person Public Open House: approximately 50
- Number of people on the project database/contact list: 277
- Survey responses/Comment forms completed: Online (3); In Person (7)

Written comments received during the May 25, 2022 in-person Public Open House

Don't break up the City of Fountain, it has a small own feel. Send the Freeway (Powers) east, not through Fountain. There needs to be another north/south road in Colorado Springs, or a loop like 470. No tolls. Don't connect Link Rd to Mesa Ridge Pkwy. If I was coming south on Powers, I'd choose to get on the freeway at Mesa Ridge Pkwy, unless the further south connection to the freeway had a higher speed. Fountain Rd could use a King Soopers, on the E/S side.
I want a hospital, we need it. There should be a separate trail for pedestrians and bicyclists as well.
Add post markers on maps like traffic circles at the intersections. We participated in the South Powers Study over twenty years ago. There were maps, drawings, meetings, and nothing was done. Why wasn't anything done? There were proposed bike lanes that were never built.
My concern for the region is water and population. I would like more town meetings for more information.
There would be too much traffic if pedestrian and bicyclist modes of transportation were to be accommodated. This project needs to be done ASAP.
We need access to a hospital on the south end of Powers Blvd.
The well water is contaminated.
And hoping to know the exact location of this new road very soon. I understand that's yet to be determined - I want to keep informed.
I would love to receive information on this project. I live in downtown Fountain and it's so desperately needed to divert traffic away from downtown.
Thank you for the information and update. Nicely done.
I think this is a great idea to do to help traffic and to expand businesses and grow Fountain area to keep up.
The interactive map is not active yet. I would like to see the proposed roadway on a map please. I will be at the meeting in Fountain as well.
Do you have a map that shows in detail the path the road would take? Why not do this with Mark Sheffel Rd. instead of Powers? It seems like it would be easier since with Powers you're going to have to cross Mark Sheffel to get by anyway.

Public comments written on corridor maps during the May 25, 2022 in-person Public Open House

include: Eighteen public open house comments were made on the corridor maps at the in-person Public Open House.

These comments were spread across four main categories:

- Safety/Security (5)
- Transportation Improvements (2)
- Environmental Stewardship (3)
- Other (8)

Safety/Security:

- Identified existing Fire Station Location near Mesa Ridge Parkway
- High Accident Location at Marksheffel Road / Mesa Ridge Parkway

- North of Wigwam Road, the bridge washes out here about every 5 years and then floods across I-25
- Same location, flash floods happen here across I-25 (rarely, but happens)
- Hanover Fire Chief Carl Tatum location

Transportation Improvement:

- Add bypass to connect parts of Meridian Road to Hanover Road
- Include a Meridian Road -Overton Road Connection

Environmental Stewardship:

- Identified conservation lands (Hanna Ranch and Frost Ranch)
- Wigwam Water District PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) 172 pps
- Aquifer Location Identified

Other:

- Proposed alignment starts in people front yards (at Marksheffel Road)
- Autoimmune Disease Research Center Health Affects from PFAS
- Add a Hospital
- We don't have a hospital, north of Platte Avenue has seven
- Future Solar Farm Locations (2)
- Located Midway Substation E-W Transmission
- Also located transmission lines from Comanche to the west side of I-25

Summary of public comments posted to the Interactive Map on the project website include: There was one comment received on the interactive map on the project website indicating the location of the Ray Nixon Power Plant and two sections of high electric power lines.

