

GUANELLA PASS REEVALUATION

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

Your feedback is important. Public input played a critical role in the development of the project and we would like to hear your comments regarding the proposed changes. To ensure your comments are considered, please submit them by April 6, 2009. There are four ways to submit comments:

- Complete the included comment card.
- Email: guanellapass.road@fhwa.dot.gov
- Attend the public meetings and provide comments (see meeting information on this page).
- Send written comments to:
Mark Meng
Project Manager, CFLHD
12300 West Dakota Avenue, Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228

STAY INFORMED

Project information is available on the project website, found at: <http://www.cflhd.gov/guanellapasroad>

From the website it is possible to access the FEIS, ROD, and the Route Assessment, all of which provide significant information regarding the decision-making process. Additionally, as new information becomes available, it will be posted on the website.

PUBLIC MEETING INFORMATION

Platte Canyon Fire Department

March 24, 2009 7pm - 9pm
153 Dellwood Drive, Bailey, CO 80421

Georgetown Community Center

March 26, 2009 7pm - 9pm
613 6th Street, Georgetown, CO 80444

March 2009



Central Federal Lands Highway Division
12300 West Dakota Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80228

GUANELLA PASS REEVALUATION



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER?

This newsletter is intended to update you on efforts being taken on the Guanella Pass Road project and ask for your feedback. With the help of several interested parties, a truly exceptional project was developed and is being implemented, one that incorporates several context-sensitive designs that aim to preserve the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area. However, there is one portion of the project, the surface type, which is not performing as anticipated. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Central Federal Lands Highway Division is evaluating a recommendation to provide a more sustainable roadway surface for the gravel and macadam segments of the route. We would like to keep you informed of the status of the project, the reason for the reevaluation, and request your input in helping us to identify potential impacts of the proposed changes or any new information or changed circumstances in the Guanella Pass Road corridor. We will also be holding public meetings for the reevaluation and would like to invite you to participate in these meetings. See the back page for information about the public meetings.

WHAT IS THE GUANELLA PASS ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT INTENDED TO ACCOMPLISH?

The project being implemented was developed and selected through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision-making process. Major milestones of the project include:

- **June 1998** - release of the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DEIS).
- **November 2000** - release of the *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (SDEIS).
- **September 2002** - release of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS).

- **January 2003** - release of the *Record of Decision* (ROD).
- **Phase I** - construction from milepost 9.3 to milepost 17.0 was completed in 2007.
- **Phase II** - construction from milepost 17.0 to the town of Georgetown is currently underway.
- **Phase III** - construction (on the Park County side) is planned for 2012.

During the EIS process, project objectives were developed based on the purpose and need and are listed below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Transportation

1. Provide a roadway width and surface capable of accommodating anticipated year 2025 traffic volumes.
2. Improve safety by providing consistent roadway geometry and providing reasonable protection from unsafe conditions.
3. Accommodate and control access to Forest Service facilities located along the road.

Maintenance

4. Reduce the anticipated maintenance costs to the counties and town maintaining the road.
5. Repair roadway drainage problems.

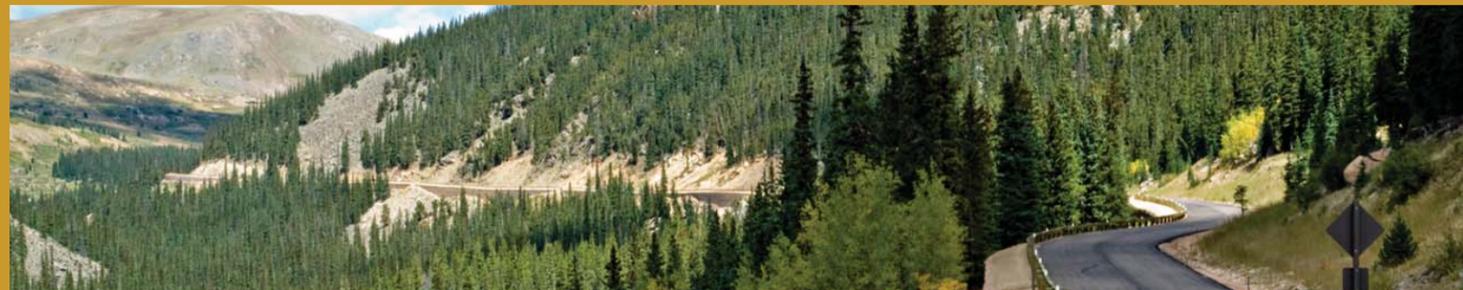
Environment

6. Repair existing unvegetated slopes.
7. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to the environment by considering key issues identified through the public and agency involvement process.*
8. Maintain the rural and scenic character of the road.

* Key Issues for this project were identified as: Social Environment, Water Resources, Visual Quality, Recreational Resources, Plants and Animals, and Construction Impacts.

March 2009

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PROJECT LOCATION



Six alternatives were evaluated in the FEIS. Alternative 6 provided the best overall balance of the sometimes conflicting needs of the project by ensuring that each objective was at least partially addressed to a minimum level of satisfaction. Alternative 6 includes the following elements:

- classification change of the road, which allows a lower design speed with sharper roadway curves and a narrower roadway width,
- combination approach to roadway rehabilitation and reconstruction,
- visually-sensitive design, such as rockery cut walls, retaining walls with rock facing, and steel-backed timber guardrails (to give a more rustic appearance), and
- combination of surface types (56% asphalt with chip seal overlay, 30% macadam, 14% gravel).

The ROD, signed in 2003, selected Alternative 6 as well as the surface types to be used along the roadway.

HOW IS THE PROJECT PERFORMING AND WHAT IS BEING REEVALUATED?

The vast majority of the work constructed has been an enormous success. The exception is those segments of the route that have been surfaced with gravel and macadam in Phase I. In the short period of time since construction, these segments have shown signs of accelerated deterioration. Based on observance of these problems, the FHWA initiated a Route Assessment to evaluate the performance of the improvements.

The Route Assessment reveals severe erosion and surface degradation on the gravel and macadam sections, including rutting, washboarding, premature failures, and excessive surface distress. The degradation leads to increased erosion, adverse impacts to water resources, decreased safety, and greatly increased maintenance needs and costs. In addition, as these sections degrade, water can infiltrate the newly constructed subgrade. Reconstructing the

subgrade would be extremely expensive. It can also undermine features such as cut walls, retaining walls and steel-backed timber guardrails, putting them at risk for failure.

In order to protect the investment made on the project, the Route Assessment recommended surfacing the gravel and macadam portions of the roadway with a permanent and sustainable surface. Therefore, we are evaluating the use of asphalt (with chip seal overlay) throughout the route on all gravel and macadam sections. This is consistent with the surface material selected on the remainder of the route. The chip seal overlay, in combination with other features of the alternative including the narrow, curvilinear alignment, steel-backed timber guardrails, rockery cut walls, and rock-faced retaining walls, is proposed to enhance visual aesthetics to address the project objective of maintaining the rural and scenic character of the roadway. The chip seal applied over the asphalt would offer the same visual appearance as the macadam, and a large aggregate

gate mixture could offer a rougher driving experience if this is so desired. These were two issues that we heard from the public during the EIS process.

WHAT IS A REEVALUATION?

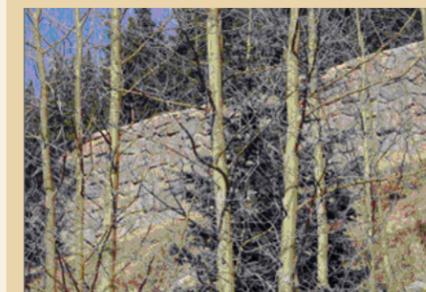
The FHWA is reevaluating the FEIS to determine if any changes to the project and any changed circumstances or new information result in significant impacts not evaluated in the FEIS. If new significant impacts are identified, then a supplemental EIS would need to be prepared. The Reevaluation of the Guanelle Pass Road FEIS will focus on:

- the impacts of the proposed surface material change,
- any new information or changed circumstances in the Guanelle Pass Road corridor,
- the potential for new or previously undisclosed impacts, and
- new project-related issues that have arisen since the FEIS and ROD was approved.

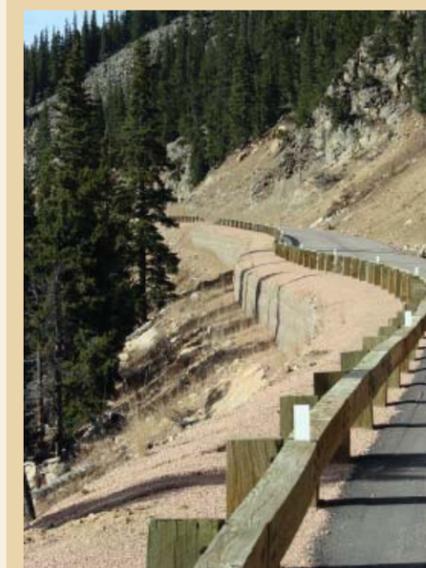
EXAMPLES OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Rockery walls



Retaining wall with simulated stone face



Steel-backed timber guardrail

EXAMPLES OF ROADWAY DEGRADATION



Post-Construction



Approximately one year later

EXAMPLES OF ROADWAY DEGRADATION



Macadam surface failure



Rutted gravel roadway