

SH 82 GRAND AVENUE BRIDGE

Preferred Alignment for the Bridge is Identified

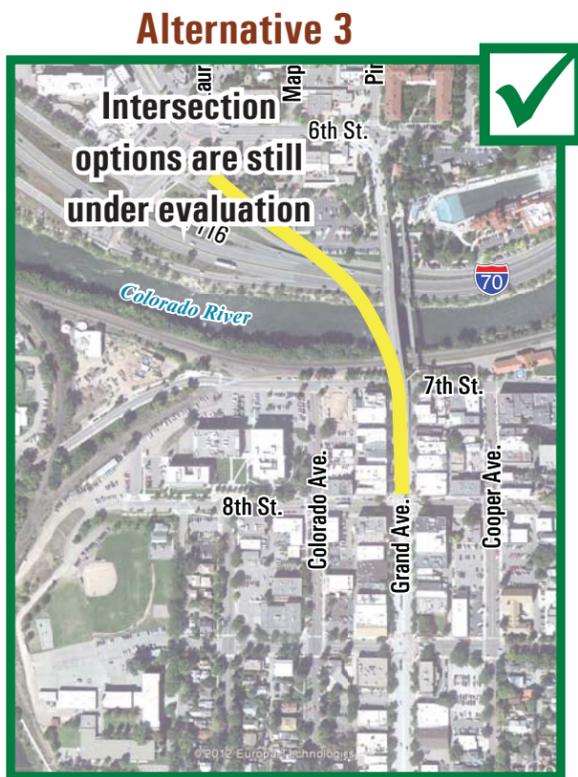
Alternative Alignment

The SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge project team has completed an evaluation of the remaining alternatives and identified Alternative 3 as the preferred alignment to be evaluated in detail in the Environmental Assessment. Alternative 3 touches down on the north side of the river near the 6th and Laurel intersection.

Approximately 90 people attended the August 22, 2012, Public Open House and the Stakeholder Working Group meeting. More than half of them turned in Comment Sheets. When asked how Alternatives 1 and 3 compare in the areas of traffic/access, visual, bike/pedestrian, and land use, attendees favored Alternative 3 approximately four times more than Alternative 1. This is consistent with feedback received at past Public Open Houses and the multiple meetings that have been held since last November.

The Project Working Group (PWG) met to compare the two alternatives against established criteria, taking into consideration additional technical evaluation and public input. The evaluation resulted in a recommendation that the Alternative 3 alignment be further developed and evaluated through the Environmental Assessment process.

The PWG also kept two of the three intersection options at 6th and Laurel, as considered for Alternative 3. It also recommended that a pedestrian connection on the south side of the bridge not be configured as an attached sidewalk, to minimize the width of the bridge. More information on these evaluations can be found on the project website shown below (click on Alternatives Development).



What Happens Now?

The project team is focusing on:

- Evaluating several bridge types that would be appropriate for the identified alignment.
- Further refining and evaluating bicycle/pedestrian options and connections.
- Refining intersection details for Options 3A and 3E.
- A Public Open House is planned for November to present this information. There will opportunity to provide input on:
 - What the bridge looks like (bridge types).
 - How it might be built (construction phasing, impacts, and duration).

Public comments will continue to be an important part of the process and will be considered along with the evaluation of impacts in the Environmental Assessment.

How Did the PWG Compare the Two Alignments?

The PWG used the criteria that were developed based on the project Purpose and Need and goals, and determined which alignment best met those criteria.

Criteria	Comparison
Purpose and Need: Improve connectivity between downtown and the Roaring Fork Valley, with the historic Hot Springs Pool area and I-70	Both alternatives provide the connectivity.
Purpose and Need: Address bridge deficiencies to improve safety and reliability	Both alternatives fix the problems with the bridge to improve safety and reliability.
Minimize environmental impacts (scenic, aesthetic, historic, natural resources)	Both have opportunities to incorporate aesthetics into the final design. Pending further evaluation, Alternative 3 appears to impact fewer historic properties.
Harmony with the community	Both alternatives have a similar ability to address the project Context Statement, satisfy the project Vision, and provide a Context Sensitive Solution.
Practical and financially realistic	Both are financially feasible since the bridge replacement is funded. Both are practical and can be constructed with equal bridge life. Alternative 1 is estimated to have a lower cost.
Reduce and minimize construction impacts (businesses, traffic, bicyclists/pedestrians, visitors)	Overall construction impacts for Alternative 3 would be fewer because some of the structure over the river can be built off line. This reduces the amount of traffic delay, congestion, and noise; and the amount of time required for detours and closures.
Minimize private property impacts (physical, economic)	Alternative 3 requires more property acquisitions. Alternative 1 results in fewer economic changes to 6th Street businesses.
Improve multimodal connections for buses, pedestrians, and bicycles	Pedestrian connections and safety are better under Alternative 3 because sidewalks are on lower-traffic local streets with easier connections between the Hot Springs Pool area and US 6 businesses. Bike connections are improved under both alternatives across the bridge, but they are better under Alternative 3 for local connections along US 6 and 6th Street. Bus connections are similar for both alternatives.
Consistency with City planning	Neither alignment is identified in approved City plans. Feedback from businesses and affected stakeholders indicates a preference for Alternative 3.
Incorporate sustainability (local sustainability plans, future transportation options, maintenance costs)	Both alternatives do not preclude future transportation improvements to local facilities. They both are consistent with objectives stated in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Maintenance costs of the entire system are lowered similarly for both alternatives.
Maintain or improve transportation operations	By separating SH 82 through traffic from local traffic, Alternative 3 shows a substantial improvement in traffic operations in the study area by reducing overall delay.

