



Summary of Mineral Palace Park Meetings

The current Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), being conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for the New Pueblo Freeway, is studying 3 options for I-25 along the east boundary of Mineral Palace Park. One option would require acquisition of approximately 50 feet of land along the east side of the park. The second option would move the railroad and the I-25 improvements east into the Fountain Creek floodplain. The third option would involve no changes to I-25.

Investigation of the options continues, as no decision has been made. The impacts and costs to the historic park and its functions will be weighed against impacts and costs to Fountain Creek floodplain, wetlands, riparian habitat, and railroad realignment. The final decision will be documented in the EIS and is expected to be presented to the citizens of Pueblo sometime in the spring of 2004.

Mineral Palace Park is an historic gem and participants during the past 2 years of New Pueblo Freeway meetings have discussed the park many times. A majority of the participants, although originally very much opposed to impacting the park, have now stated they could accept park land being used only if major improvements are made to the park and they participate in guiding those improvements. However, a few participants remain steadfast in their position to take no park land.

If no park land is acquired then the CDOT has no obligation to make improvements in the park, with the exception of investigating noise impacts.

Should acquiring land from the park be the final decision, participants began their vision for park improvements to include: 1st honor the history of the park; and 2nd improve the functionality of the park for today's uses.

The following statements capture the many discussions about improvements to the park:

- ⊕ Preserve and restore the historic elements in the park in their present location when possible
- ⊕ Relocate remaining historic features to improve or regain their original uses
- ⊕ Create new usable areas that are reminiscent of the past
- ⊕ With every improvement, honor the history of the park

In addition to the fundamental approach described above, specific thoughts have been captured through the public meetings:

- ⊕ Water has always been an element in this park. Consider reintroducing a fountain into the park. Work to re-establish the size and vitality of the lake.
- ⊕ Expand the Botanical Garden theme of the park. Strengthen the rose garden, green house and art guild links.
- ⊕ A preference exists for berms with landscaping as noise abatement.
- ⊕ Move the roads in the park to the perimeter. Keep vehicular access around the perimeter with access to parking. Provide access to play areas from parking with no need to cross streets.
- ⊕ Improve and add bike and pedestrian walks within the park.
- ⊕ Put picnic, pool and playground areas together. Move less noise-sensitive activities closer to the highway.
- ⊕ More parking is needed for the current uses.
- ⊕ Be thoughtful and 'green' in material choices throughout the park, for example, consider other options to blue grass.
- ⊕ Some feel maintaining views into the park from the interstate improves Pueblo's image and should be preserved.