

# DRAFT

## Subtopic G7: Visual Resources

Eight public and agency comments were submitted in regard to subtopic G7: Visual Resources. From those 8 comments, 10 common concern statements were developed. Themes associated with the G7: Visual Resources subtopic include:

- The visual preference survey and simulations are inadequate.
- Current scenic views to historic towns and mountain scenery will be destroyed with the construction of sound walls to mitigate noise impacts.
- Two wilderness areas were not addressed.
- The visual resource mitigation summary contains inaccuracies.
- Highway widening will increase congestion, induce indirect impacts, and make the mountain experience more of an urban experience, badly degrading the visual and aesthetic experience of Colorado.
- Additional areas should be added to the visual resource mitigation summary.
- There is a disregard for sense of place.
- Using context sensitive solutions to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on other environmental elements would alter the visual characteristics and conclusions stated in the Draft PEIS.

CCS No.	Community Values Common Concern Statements (CCSs)
<b>Subtopic G7: Visual Resources</b>	
G7-a	<p><b>Visual Preference Survey</b></p> <p>A visual preference survey was conducted as part of the PEIS, to which only 50 responses were received. This is another example that the PEIS is deficient.</p>
G7-b	<p><b>Inadequacy of the Visual Analysis</b></p> <p>The magnitude of concrete and its configuration are important. The nature of a small highway with a median and without crowding or modifying the natural terrain and vegetation of the highway is one thing. Eliminate the median, add a median barrier, shoulders, perhaps sound walls or berms, crowd and damage the natural terrain and vegetation, increase the expanse of pavement, and it is a significantly different facility. The visual analysis and presentations in the Draft fail to adequately identify this phenomenon, despite the brief discussion of "Indirect Impacts."</p>
G7-c	<p><b>Effects of Sound Walls on Visual Character</b></p> <p>Constructing sound walls to mitigate noise impacts on communities will destroy current scenic views to historic towns and mountain scenery. This change in the visual setting of the Corridor will be detrimental to tourism. This is a drastic change to the visual experience of the traveler and the residents that was not taken into consideration when analyzing the visual impact of the preferred group of alternatives.</p>
G7-d	<p><b>Effects of Light Pollution on Visual Character</b></p> <p>CDOT and FHWA should not contribute to light pollution by adding lighting throughout the Corridor. Of specific concern are the Idaho Springs and Empire areas.</p>
G7-e	<p><b>Inadequate Simulations</b></p> <p>The various pictures and simulations do not adequately exhibit what either the traveler or the person on the ground, resident or tourist, will see and feel. Simulations of Idaho Springs from a rabbit's-eye view above the town are rather meaningless.</p> <p>The simulations of sound walls in the PEIS are not very good representations.</p> <p>While Section 3.13 is augmented by some limited images and simulations, it needs to be read in conjunction with Chapter 2.</p>

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CCS No.	Community Values Common Concern Statements (CCSs)
G7-f	<p><b>Use of Context Sensitive Solutions</b></p> <p>Avoiding or mitigating adverse impacts on other environmental elements and ecosystems by using “context sensitive solutions” will alter the visual characteristics and conclusions stated in the Draft. Water resources and 404 permitting are good examples; a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative may be an elevated section of highway, which may constitute a severe reduction of scenic and “sense of place” quality.</p>
G7-g	<p><b>Unacceptable Analysis of Visual Elements</b></p> <p>While the USFS Visual Resources Methodology presented in Section 3.13 is a well-accepted and valid process, the visual resources section does not convey an acceptable analysis of the elements about which the public is concerned.</p> <p>Miles of degree of impact is not an indicator of quality and value. It is useful in estimating how much context-sensitive design is needed and, hence, project cost.</p> <p>Reasonable public participation in the Visual Resource analysis was not allowed. The Draft PEIS gives the impression that someone took some pictures and did a USFS method academic exercise and called it good. If the public were to have been involved properly in the visual analysis, the outcome and report would have been very different.</p> <p>Walking some of the entire route, with local citizens identifying topographical modifications (cliffs, slopes, water-related topography and vegetation), is needed to augment the material in the Draft PEIS.</p>
G7-h	<p><b>Inaccuracy in Visual Resource Mitigation Summary</b></p> <p>The visual resource mitigation summary in Section 3.19.1 states that special consideration is given to the Genesee Bridge over I-70 because it is the last glimpse of the Continental Divide from westbound I-70 until west of Silver Plume. This is incorrect. From Idaho Springs to the far side of Empire Junction, there is a view of the snow-covered peaks of the Continental Divide. This is approximately 8 miles of spectacular scenery. Special design consideration should also be given to this section of the highway.</p>
G7-i	<p><b>Two Wilderness Areas Unacknowledged</b></p> <p>The study neglects to acknowledge the existence of James Peak Wilderness area as well as the Mount Evans Wilderness Area. Of the many wilderness areas addressed in the study, James Peak is the closest in proximity to I-70. The study suggests that the visual impacts on these areas will be negligible due to less pollution when traffic moves smoothly as opposed to stop and go. It fails to take into account the stop-and-go traffic with 15 years of construction.</p>
G7-j	<p><b>Disregard for Sense of Place</b></p> <p>Highway widening will increase congestion, induce indirect impacts, and make the mountain experience more of an urban experience, badly degrading the visual and aesthetic experience of Colorado.</p> <p>Visual perceptions combine with other factors to create a cumulative impacts concern with the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. A “sense of place” of the critical historic values recognized by Colorado Preservation, Inc. (CPI) integrate with the visual character and quality, with the mind’s eye sense of what early settlers went through, with the feeling of being at oneness with the entire “setting.”</p> <p>The sterile visual analysis misses the essence of public concerns; it lacks a sense of quality of experience.</p>