

Over The River Traffic Fact Sheet

Addressing traffic and safety concerns is one of the highest priorities for the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Indeed, they recognize that *Over The River*, their proposed temporary work of art, can go forward only if those concerns are sufficiently addressed.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have exhibited numerous temporary works of art around the world, and with each project they have shown a commitment to avoiding and mitigating impacts associated with their temporary works of art. They are committed to taking this same approach in the Arkansas River Valley.

Concern about traffic is one of the reasons why the artists requested a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the project as opposed to a less thorough – and easier – Environmental Assessment study. This EIS will determine the specific mitigation measures that will ensure that increased tourist traffic on US-50 has as little effect as possible on the daily routines of local residents. The EIS, which began in March of 2009 and is expected to be complete by spring of 2011, will identify a number of traffic mitigation methods that will likely include extensive use of public transit and innovative traffic management proposals.

Furthermore, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is a cooperating agency on the EIS, and their input will be crucial in evaluating and finalizing the specific mitigation measures and traffic management plan for *Over The River*. The Bureau of Land Management, as lead agency in the preparation of the EIS, will continue to coordinate closely with CDOT throughout the process.

Even before the EIS began, however, Christo and Jeanne-Claude had proposed a number of steps that would help mitigate the traffic impacts and address the concerns of residents in the Valley.

- They committed that at no time will both lanes of US-50 be closed, whether during construction leading up to the exhibit, during the exhibit or when the exhibit is being removed.
- The artists have agreed to eliminate all construction activities on the highway during the summer months of June, July and August. During that time, construction will be limited to the railroad side – the north bank of the river – to avoid causing traffic delays during the high tourist season.
- When installation construction does occur, the vast majority of impacts will be limited to the direct areas where anchors need to be drilled and installed, which entails about 15 percent of the Arkansas River Valley between Salida and Cañon City.
- In response to concerns raised by some residents of the Valley, the artists have already agreed to exhibit the temporary work of art during a period when there is no school bus traffic.
- The artists have offered to provide additional ambulance and helicopter services to help expedite emergency response times during the two-week exhibition period. There are numerous informal helicopter landing areas in the Valley that are used today, but the specific landing areas will be determined by weather, the pilot and security personnel – the same process that emergency responders currently follow. Christo and Jeanne-Claude will also work with local municipalities and emergency responders to develop specific emergency/incident response plans, which will benefit valley residents for years to come.
- At times, the installation process will require temporary one-lane closures on US-50. However, these short-term one-lane closures, estimated to cause 2-4 minute delays, would involve no more than a 400-foot stretch of the highway in any 10-mile section.
- Any temporary road closure will be enforced with CDOT-approved flagging protocol, as is typical of the temporary one-lane closures that commonly take place on US-50 during normal road repairs. In fact, many of the traffic impacts that are caused by CDOT's normal maintenance activities on US-50 are likely to be more significant than the impacts caused during *Over The River's* construction period.