

# **Overcoming Governmental Distrust to Engage Sensitive Communities**

**Mike Turner, AICP**



**Rail~Volution 2005  
September 10, 2005**

# Who is involved in the I-70 East Corridor EIS?



US Army Corps of Engineers



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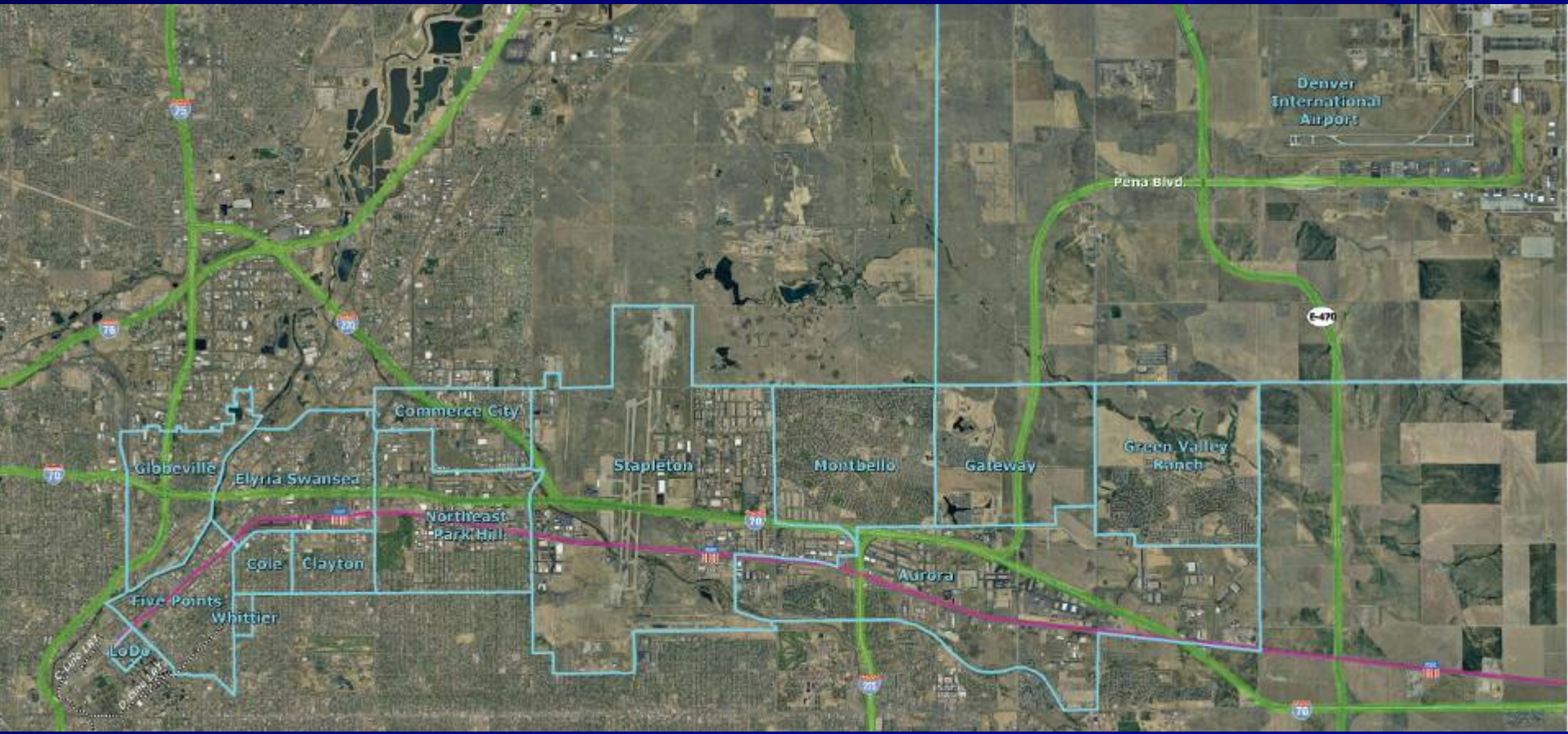


# What is the I-70 East Corridor EIS?

- Multi-modal transportation project
- Highway improvements
- New rapid transit line to airport
- Case study
  - Community impact assessment
  - Environmental justice



# Where is the I-70 East Corridor?



# Why a case study?

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>Corridor Neighborhoods</b>
Percent minority	48.1%	55.4 – 95.3%
Percent children in poverty	20.8%	4.3 - 39% <sup>(1)</sup>
Average annual household income	\$55,129	\$35,519 - \$64,401 <sup>(2)</sup>

1. Only one neighborhood below Denver average
  2. Only two neighborhoods above Denver average
- Source: Piton Foundation

**Pct Owner Occupied**

- 0-20
- 20-40
- 40-60
- 60-80
- 80-100

Globeville

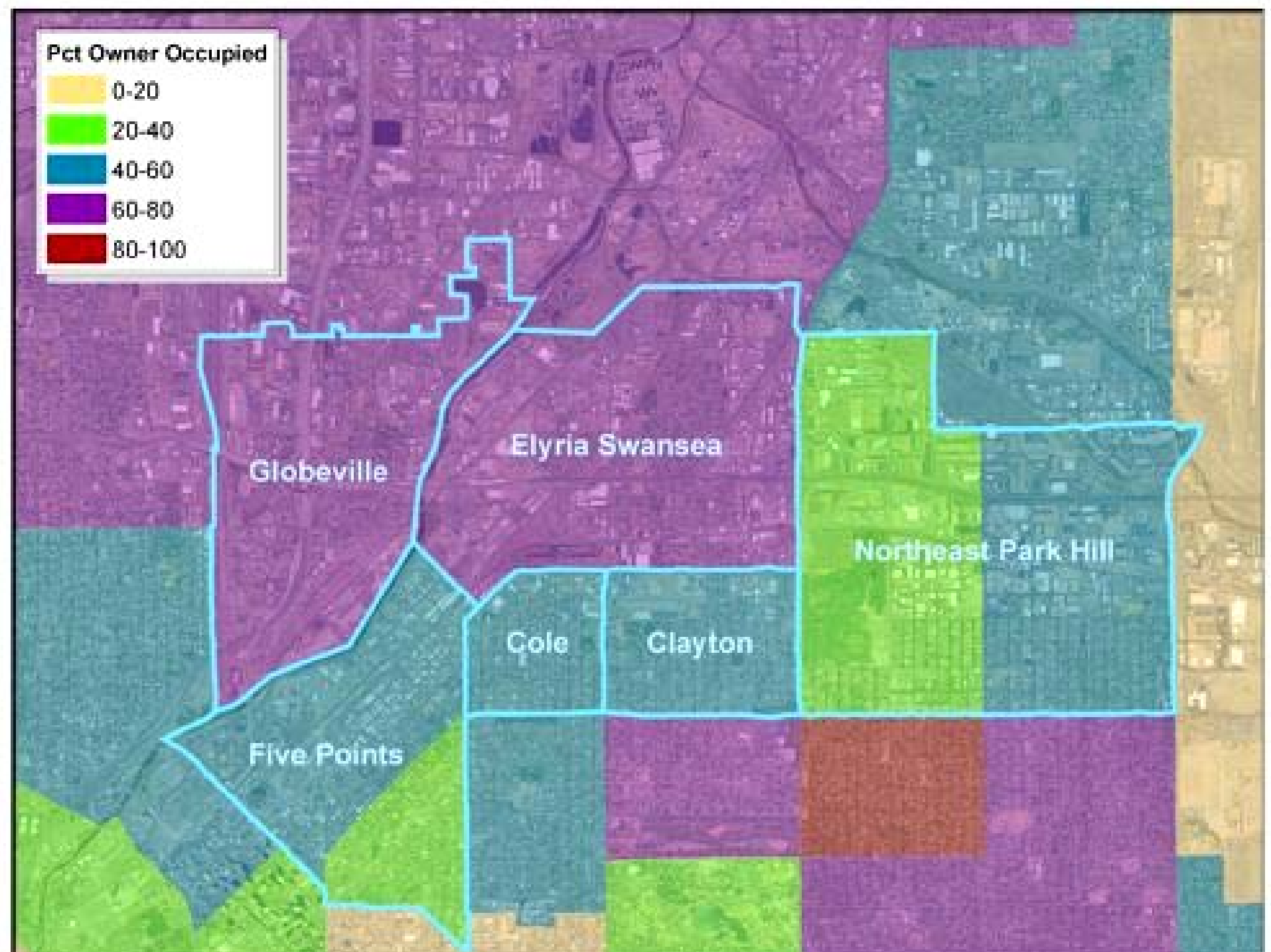
Elyria Swansea

Northeast Park Hill

Cole

Clayton

Five Points



**Pct African-American**

0-10

10-30

30-70

Globeville

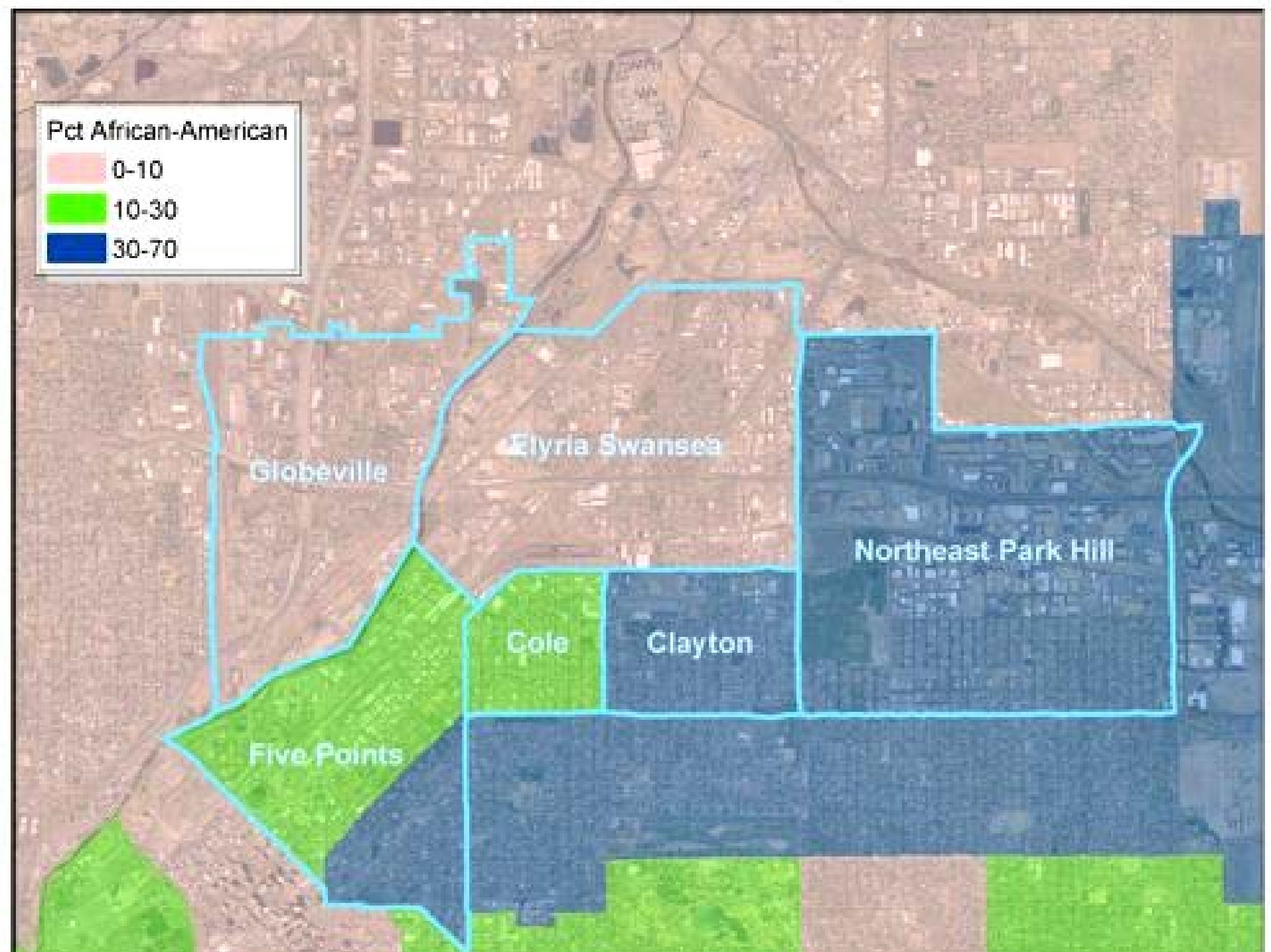
Elyria Swansea

Northeast Park Hill

Cole

Clayton

Five Points





**Pct Latino**

0-20

20-50

50-100

Globeville

Elyria Swansea

Northeast Park Hill

Cole

Clayton

Five Points

# History of distrust

- Overall governmental distrust and neglect
- I-70 original construction
  - Split two communities
  - Condemnation issues
- RTD demonstration line
  - Compromises made
  - Promises made



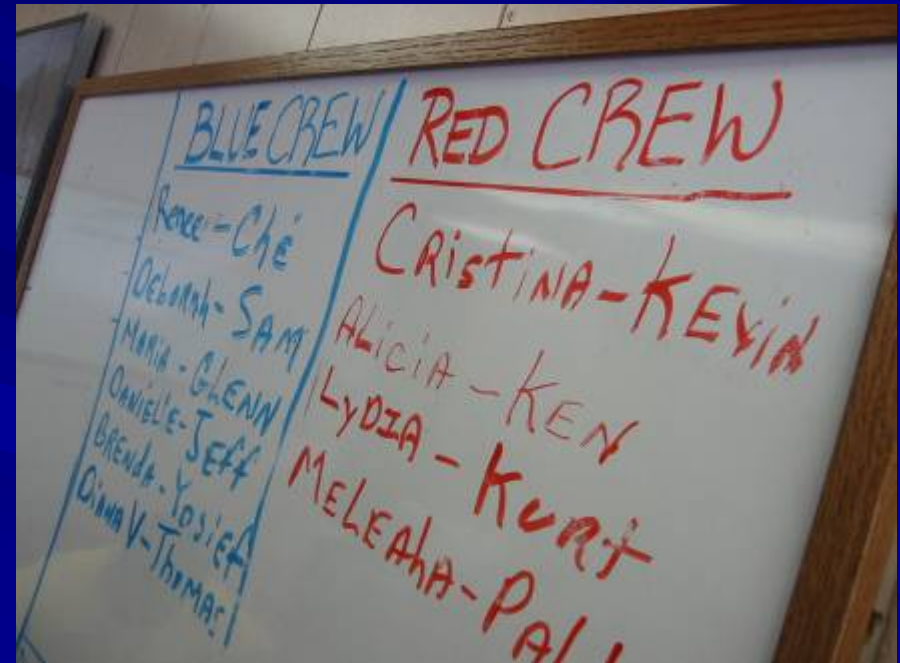
# How to overcome distrust?

- Build on existing relationships
- Include everyone
- Contact early and often
- Be committed
- Ask, don't tell
- Low-tech solutions



# Outreach program overview

- Goals
- Approach/tools
  - Branding
  - Training
  - Door to door outreach
  - Scoping meetings
  - On-going outreach



# Outreach process goals

- Solicit participation from every segment of the corridor
- Reach previously underserved residents and businesses
- Fulfill NEPA requirements



# Overall outreach approach



**Globeville**

**Elyria Swansea**

**Cole**

**Clayton**

**Five Points**

**Northeast Park Hill**

**Stapleton**

**Montbello**

**Green Valley Ranch**

# Branding the project

- Logo
- “Yellow shirts”
- Outreach bags
- Name tags
- Flyers
- Business cards
- Advertising



# Outreach training

- Requirement for outreach
- History of neighborhoods
- How to go “door to door”
- Ethnic courtesy
- Lose the “techno-speak” and DYA





*“After consultation with the FTA, FHWA, EPA and the CEQ, the Figure 1 matrix clearly illustrates why our AA – based on metrics derived from the purpose and need to evaluate fixed-guideway technologies– eliminated BRT, but identified LRT and commuter rail technology (specifically DMU) as the preferred alternatives for the DEIS.”*

# Door to door outreach

- Pass the test!
- Specialists from the neighborhoods
- Bilingual teams
- Administer questionnaire
- Educate and invite
- Information on local services



# Block meetings

- 8-16 block radius
- Hosted by neighbor in backyard or park
- Intimate – 10-15 people
- Discuss block issues
- Meals and translation



# Neighborhood meetings

- Larger meetings – up to 120
- Flyers
- Food, translation, child care
- Discuss neighborhood issues



# Corridor-wide meetings

- Largest meetings – up to 250
- Flyers, newsletters, and advertisements
- Food, translation, and child care
- Bring together all perspectives
- Dynamic format



# Ongoing outreach

- Working groups
- Website ([www.i-70eastcorridor.com](http://www.i-70eastcorridor.com))
- Neighborhood specific meetings
- Stakeholder presentations
- Project office

# Working Groups

- Issue specific
- Informal setting
- Education and group discussion
- Hands-on exercises



# Lessons learned

- Client support a must
- Reduced level of acrimony
- Removed agency bias and team hierarchy
- Many aspects can be used anywhere
  - Engage people
  - Communicate
  - Educate
  - Treat people with respect



# Lessons learned

- Overcoming agency skeptics, keeping the faith
- An open process but with limits
- Setting precedent for other studies

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