



## Colorado Transportation Investment Office Memorandum

**To:** The CTIO Board of Directors

**From:** Piper Darlington, CTIO Director

**Date:** June 18, 2025

**Subject:** I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) Expansion of Operations

### **Purpose:**

To seek approval of expanded operating parameters under an Amended & Restated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the I-70 PPSL between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and CTIO.

### **Requested Action:**

CTIO staff is requesting approval of Resolution #473 adopting the three-party Amended & Restated Memorandum of Understanding authorizing expanded operating parameters.

### **Background:**

The I-70 PPSL, more commonly referred to as the Mountain Express Lanes (MEXL), is 24 miles long (12 miles in each direction), running eastbound from Empire Junction through the Veterans Memorial Tunnels and westbound from the Veterans Memorial Tunnels to Empire Junction. The eastbound direction opened for tolling in December 2015, and the westbound direction opened in 2022. They both use a Hard Shoulder Running concept, whereby the inside shoulder lane is used as a single-lane Express Lane to provide additional capacity in the corridor, during peak travel periods only. The hours/days of operation each year are restricted under the MOU.

Over the past year, CTIO staff have reviewed the MOU's parameters and discussed possible changes with FHWA to better reflect the corridor's growing needs. In November and December of 2024, CTIO and CDOT convened a working group of stakeholders with representation from Idaho Springs, Clear Creek County, Denver Transit, the I-70 Coalition, FHWA, and law enforcement to discuss how to provide more flexibility to CTIO through expanded hours/days of operations.

CTIO staff [briefed](#) the Board in January 2025 on the outcome of the stakeholder process and highlighted remaining items to be completed before the MOU could be ratified. A key step included a 1041 access permit hearing in Clear Creek County which was held on May 27, 2025. An updated access permit with the proposed updates to the MOU was approved at the meeting by the Board of County Commissioners and staff are now seeking approval of the revised MOU. As parties to the MOU, FHWA and CDOT leadership have already reviewed the changes being presented today.

## Options and Recommendations

- Approve Resolution #473, the revised I-70 PPSL MOU between CDOT, CTIO, and FHWA. **Staff Recommendation.**
- Request additional information or changes.
- Do not approve.

## Attachments:

- **Attachment A:** Resolution #473 Amended & Restated Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Highway Administration, Colorado Department of Transportation, and CTIO.
- **Attachment B:** I-70 PPSL Amended & Restated Memorandum of Understanding.