



COLORADO
Department of Transportation



I-70 Mountain Express Lane (MEXL)

Annual Report 2024-2025

November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025

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List of Acronyms

ATMS	Advanced Transportation Management System
ATR	Automatic Traffic Recorder
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CTIO	Colorado Transportation Investment Office
EJMT	Eisenhower Johnson Memorial Tunnel
EB MEXL	Eastbound Mountain Express Lane
EL	Express Lanes
Express Lanes	I-70 Mountain Express Lanes
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GP	General Purpose
I-70	Interstate 70
LOS	Level of Service
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Milepost
mph	Miles per Hour
MVRD	Microwave Vehicle Radar Detection
OpenTMS	Open Transportation Management System
PPSL	Peak Period Shoulder Lane
PTI	Planning Time Index
TEL	Tolled Express Lane
TTI	Travel Time Index
VMS	Variable Message Signs
VPD	Vehicles Per Day
WB MEXL	Westbound Mountain Express Lane

1. Introduction

The Interstate 70 (I-70) Mountain Express Lanes (Express Lanes) include the Eastbound Mountain Express Lane (EB MEXL) and the Westbound Mountain Express Lane (WB MEXL). The Express Lanes (EL) are a managed lane facility that operate only during peak periods of high traffic volume on I-70 in Clear Creek County, Colorado. This section of I-70 has high travel demand from motorists traveling to and from the Denver metropolitan area for recreational activities. These peak periods of high volume generally occur on the weekends and holidays. Traffic volume follows a strong seasonal pattern, and this seasonal variation is also reflected in the annual operational calendar which begins on November 1st and ends on October 31st of the following year.

EB MEXL opened in December 2015 and operates in the eastbound direction to alleviate peak-period congestion and improve travel reliability on EB I-70. The EB MEXL is a combination of a peak period shoulder lane (PPSL) (milepost [MP] 232 to MP 241.4) and a tolled express lane (TEL) (MP 241.4 to MP 243.6).

The TEL is tolled during peak periods when the PPSL is operating, but it reverts to a general-purpose (GP) lane whenever the PPSL is non-operational. The PPSL is a hard-running shoulder lane that operates as an additional travel lane during peak periods and is tolled when it is operational. During off-peak periods when the PPSL is not operational, it reverts to a non-tolled shoulder lane for use in emergencies.

WB MEXL opened to the public for toll-free travel in July 2021 and operates in the westbound direction to alleviate peak-period congestion and improve travel reliability on WB I-70. Tolling commenced in July 2022. The WB MEXL is a PPSL (MP 232 to MP 242.2).

The 2024-25 operational year is the ninth year of operation for the EB MEXL. This is the third full year of tolling operation for the WB MEXL. The EB & WB MEXL volumes increased over the 2023-24 volumes.

A few of the notable differences between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 for the EB and WB MEXL operational years include:

- The total eastbound I-70 corridor traffic volumes increased 32% when compared to 2023-24.
- The total westbound I-70 corridor traffic volumes increased 50% when compared to 2023-24.
- The EB MEXL total volumes increased by 7% when compared to 2023-24.
- The WB MEXL total volumes increased by 68% when compared to 2023-24.
- EB MEXL capture rate decreased by 0.12 percentage points when compared to 2023-24.
- WB MEXL capture rate increased by 0.02 percentage points when compared to 2023-24.
- Crash totals when the EB MEXL was open were lower than the pre-MEXL years and previous year's totals.
- Crash totals when the WB MEXL was open were lower than the pre-MEXL years and previous year's totals.

EASTBOUND MEXL YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE¹	2022-23	2023-2024	2024-2025²
Regular Hours of Operations	997	1,085	1,223
Flex Hours of Operations	-	-	77
Allowed Hours of Operation	1,168	1,168	1,250
Regular Days of Operations	92	100	130
Flex Days of Operations	-	-	9
Allowed Days of Operations	100	100	125
Toll Rates \$7.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Toll Rates \$8.00	21%	35%	28%
Toll Rates \$9.00 ³	52%	65%	72%
EL Average Speed > 45 mph	99%	98%	99%
GP Average Speed > 45 mph	89%	87%	88%
Total EB EL Volume	235,500	234,100	248,400
Total EB I-70 Corridor Volume	2.9 million	3.03 million	3.94 million
Average Planning Time Index	1.64	1.85	2.09
Average Travel Time Index	1.11	1.17	1.20

1. All volume and speed data presented in this table are for periods when the EB MEXL is open.

2. 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 volume and speed data are obtained from Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT's) Microwave Vehicle Radar Detection (MVRD) devices.

3. Toll rates were introduced in June 2022.

WESTBOUND MEXL OPERATIONS^{1,2}	2022-23³	2023-24	2024-25
Regular Hours of Operations	1,329	1,136	1,478
Flex Hours of Operations	-	-	292
Allowed Hours of Operations	965	965	1,350
Days of Operations	125	125	145
Flex Days of Operations	-	-	31
Allowed Days of Operations	125	125	135
Toll Rates @ \$6.00 - \$7.00 ⁴	N/A	N/A	64%
Toll Rates @ \$7.00 - \$8.00	N/A	N/A	14%
Toll Rates @ \$8.00 - \$9.00	27%	21%	4%
Toll Rates @ \$9.00	73%	79%	18%
EL Average Speed > 45 mph	100%	100%	100%
GP Average Speed > 45 mph	98%	97%	99%
Total WB EL Volume	107,200	84,500	141,800
Total WB I-70 Corridor Volume	3.16 million	2.99 million	4.49 million
Average Planning Time Index	1.18	1.40	1.29
Average Travel Time Index	0.99	1.06	1.04

1. 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 volume and speed data are obtained from CDOT's MVRD devices.
2. All volume and speed data presented in this table is for periods when WB MEXL is open.
3. WB MEXL opened for tolling on July 8, 2022.
4. WB MEXL introduced Dynamic Toll pricing in December 2024.

The following sections of this report discuss the performance of the Express Lanes during the 2024-2025 operational year in further detail. Chapter 2 describes the performance measures required to be reported by Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO), formerly High-Performance Transportation Enterprise, as part of this annual report. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 discuss the duration of operation and corresponding toll rates for the Express Lanes. Chapters 5 through 7 present the performance of the Express Lanes based on metrics such as speeds, travel time indices, traffic volumes, crashes, and before-after comparisons.

2. Reporting and Performance Measures

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the CTIO have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which requires CTIO to provide an annual report about EB MEXL and WB MEXL operations (see Appendix A). This report is prepared in response to the MOU.

The MOU established the following performance measures:

- Travel Time Reliability
- Traffic Volumes and Traffic Type
- Safety and Crash Data (during operational and non-operational hours)
- Evaluation of Signing and Striping Related to Safety and Operations
- Incident Clearance Times

The measures of performance are collected and derived from various data sources, including:

- OpenTMS— An open-source transportation management system (TMS) that is essentially CDOT's Advanced TMS (ATMS). Stores data from Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) devices such as Microwave Vehicle Radar Detection (MVRD) devices and in-pavement Automated Traffic Recorder (ATR) devices
- INRIX—INRIX is a global company that provides location-based data and analytics relating to transportation, such as travel time reliability indices and travel speeds
- E-470 Public Highway Authority—E-470 provides tolling back-office services for EB MEXL and WB MEXL
- I-70 West Situational Reports—CDOT creates daily reports of incidents and operations for the I-70 Mountain Corridor
- DiExSys—A commercial database that analyzes police crash reports

In addition to the above performance measures, the MOU requires that EB MEXL shall not operate on more than 125 days (including holidays) or operate more than 1,250 hours per operating year. With respect to WB MEXL, the MOU requires that it shall not operate on more than 135 days or operate more than 1,350 hours per year. It should be noted that an additional 40 flex days and 400 flex hours were provided on top of the permissible days that could be used on either direction. In the 2024-25 operational year, EB MEXL operated on 139 days and a total of 1,300 hours and WB MEXL operated on 176 days and a total of 1,770 hours. This meant we exceeded the permissible limits by 15 days and 100 hours on both directions combined. However, we had 30 flex hours that were unused. Out of the total 315 days used on both directions 10 days had operated for less than 5 hours.

3. Days and Hours of Operation

High traffic volume periods on the I-70 Mountain Corridor are seasonal in nature because of the large number of recreational users who access the corridor. Operations data are presented in three seasons, as follows:

Winter Season: November 1 to May 20 (ski season)

- Winter Season correlates to the ski season, which generally begins during the Thanksgiving holiday and goes through mid-April.
- The EB MEXL opened for Winter 2024-25 on November 27, 2024, and the last open day was May 18, 2025.
- The WB MEXL opened for Winter 2024-25 on November 27, 2024, and the last open day was April 20, 2025.

Summer Season: May 21 to September 7 (camping/hiking season)

- Summer Season correlates to the camping and hiking season, which begins Memorial Day weekend and goes through Labor Day weekend.
- The EB MEXL opened for Summer 2024-25 on May 24, 2025, and the last open day was September 7, 2025.
- The WB MEXL opened for Summer 2024-25 on May 23, 2025, and the last open day was September 7, 2025.

Fall Season: September 8 to October 31 (hunting/fall foliage viewing season)

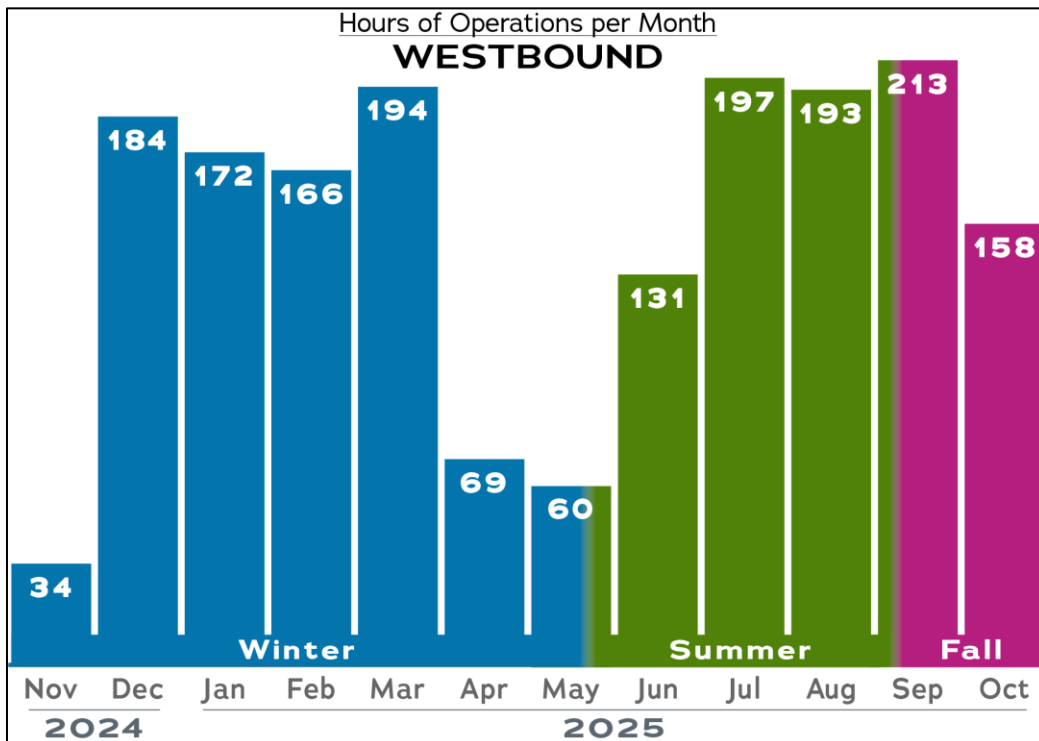
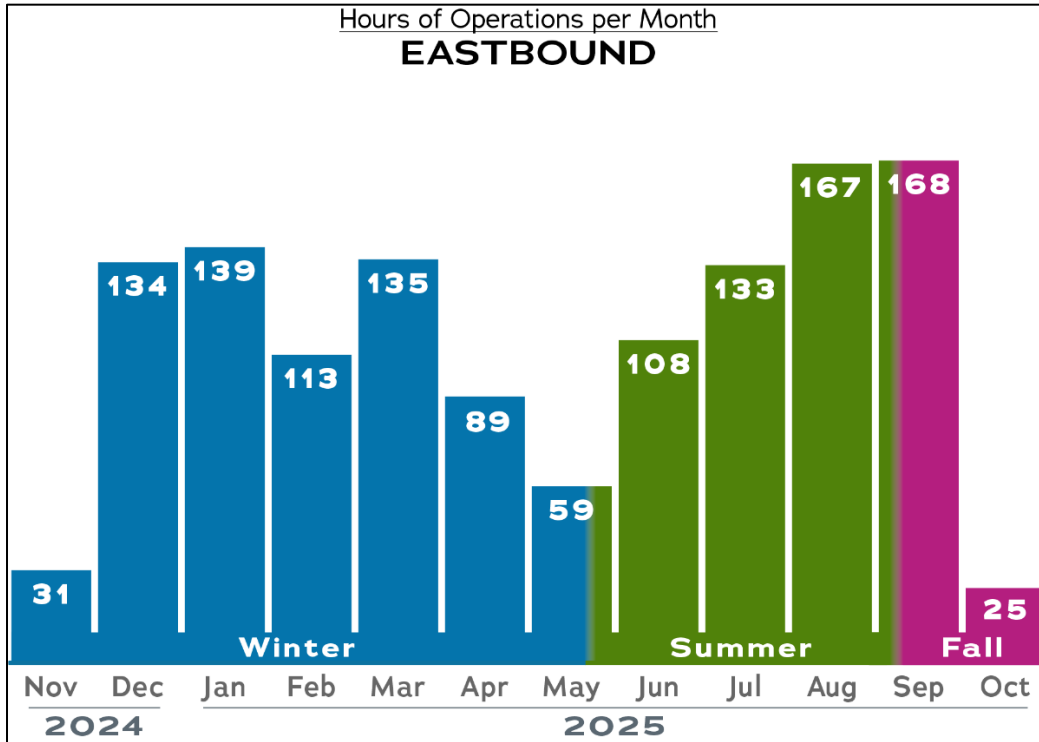
- Fall Season correlates with hunting and fall foliage viewing season, which begins after Labor Day through the end of October.
- The EB MEXL opened for Fall 2024-25 on September 11, 2025, and the last open day was October 6, 2025.
- The WB MEXL opened for Fall 2024-25 on September 11, 2025, and the last open day was October 31, 2025.

The MEXL opens and closes at the corridor operator's discretion given the traffic conditions and based on traffic history. During the days of operation in the 2024-25 operational year, the EB MEXL was typically open Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The WB MEXL was typically open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

In the 2024-25 operational year, the EB MEXL operated for 1300 hours on 139 days, and the WB MEXL operated for 1,770 hours on 176 days.

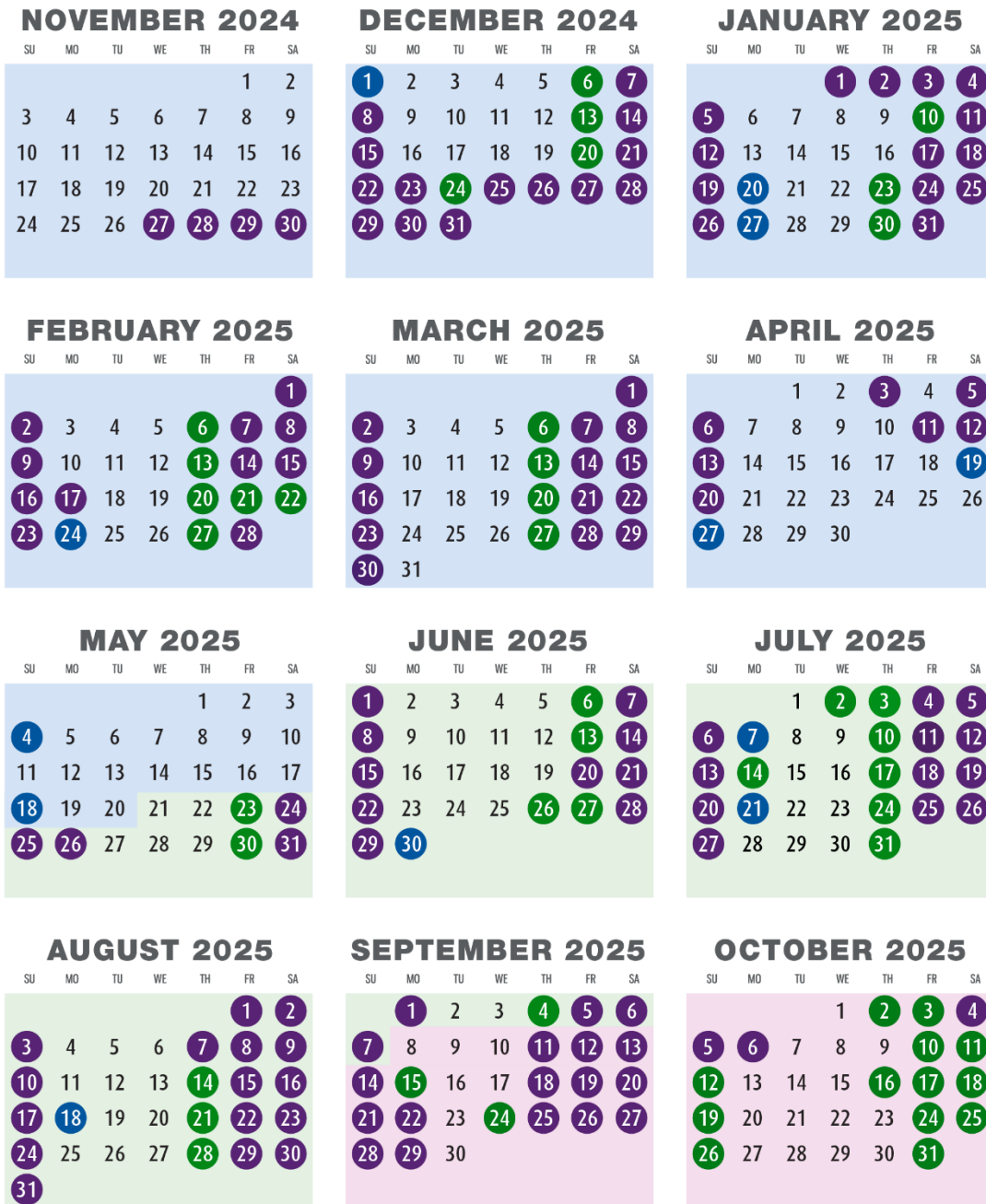
Exhibit 1 shows the number of hours of operation during each month and **Exhibit 2** shows the days of operation during each month.

Exhibit 1: Hours of Operation per Month



Note: Numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding.

Exhibit 2: Days of Operation



Dates MEXL Open

● = Eastbound Direction Only ● = Westbound Direction Only ● = Both Directions

■ = Winter Season

■ = Summer Season

■ = Fall Season

4. Toll Rates

MEXL toll rates are subject to adjustment, with the objective of maintaining reliable travel times and recovering operations and maintenance costs. There were no toll rate adjustments for EB MEXL during the 2024-25 operating year. EB MEXL toll rates were last updated and effective in June 2022. The tolling regime for EB MEXL is time-of-day tolling. Higher toll rates are used for days when traffic volumes are typically higher to better manage traffic demand in the Express Lanes. **Exhibit 3** presents the 2024-2025 toll rate schedule for EB MEXL.

Since December 2024, WB MEXL toll rates have shifted from static rates to standard dynamic pricing rates. The toll rate increased the greater the level of service (LOS). **Exhibit 4** displays the 2024-2025 dynamic toll rate schedule for WB MEXL.

Exhibit 3: I-70 EB MEXL Toll Rate Schedule

Day	ExpressToll®	License Plate Toll®
	EB Toll Rate	EB Toll Rate
Saturday	\$8.00	\$14.67
Sunday	\$9.00	\$16.25
Holiday	\$9.00	\$16.25

Exhibit 4: I-70 WB MEXL Dynamic Toll Rates

Band	ExpressToll®	ExpressToll®	License Plate Toll®	License Plate Toll®
	WB Toll Rate	WB Toll Rate	WB Toll Rate	WB Toll Rate
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
LOS A	\$6.00	\$9.00	\$12.00	\$18.00
LOS B	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
LOS C	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
LOS D	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$18.00

The EB MEXL operated at an \$8.00 toll rate 28% of the time, and at a \$9.00 toll rate 72% of the time. The WB MEXL operated at a \$6.00 to \$7.00 toll rate 64% of the time, at a \$7.00 to \$8.00 toll rate 14% of the time, at a \$8.00 to \$9.00 toll rate 4% of the time, and at a \$9.00 toll rate 18% of the time.

5. I-70 Travel Time Reliability

Travel time reliability is defined as the consistency or dependability of travel times, as measured from day to day and/or across different times of day. To assess the MEXL travel time reliability, the following evaluations were completed:

- OpenTMS data was used to evaluate if the goal of maintaining an average operating speed on the MEXL of at least 45 miles per hour (mph) 90% of the time was achieved.
- INRIX data was used to compare the planning and travel time indices before MEXL construction to the operational year of 2024-25.
- For the EB MEXL, INRIX data for the operational year 2011-12 was used to evaluate pre-EB MEXL travel time reliability. Operational year 2011-12 was used because it was the most recent full year of data prior to the construction of the EB MEXL.
- For the WB MEXL, INRIX data for the operational year 2017-18 was used to evaluate pre-MEXL travel time reliability. Operational year 2017-18 was used because it is the most recent full operational year of data prior to construction of the WB MEXL.

5.1. Eastbound Corridor-Level Travel Times Comparison

Travel time data was extracted from INRIX for periods before and after the EB MEXL was constructed and open for operation. The travel speeds were measured by an MVRD at Stanley Road/CR 312 in Idaho Springs. These speeds were assumed to be representative corridor speeds and were used to calculate the average corridor travel times. Saturday and Sunday travel times in 2011-12 during the Winter, Summer, and Fall seasons were compared to travel times for the same periods in 2024-25. Travel time in 2011-12 represents the average travel time eastbound across two general-purpose lanes. Travel time in 2024-25 represents the average travel time eastbound across three lanes: two general-purpose lanes and the EB MEXL. **Exhibit 5**, **Exhibit 6**, and **Exhibit 7** compare travel times between 2011-2012 and 2024-25 for each season. When the EB MEXL was operational, the exhibits show that the average travel time in the winter season of 2024-25 was lower than the average travel time for the same period during 2011-12. However, during the summer and fall season, the travel time for 2024-25 was greater than in 2011-12. A comparison of speeds between the first year of operations (2014-15) and the 2024-25 operational year is presented in Appendix B.

Exhibit 5: Eastbound Winter Season Travel Time Comparison

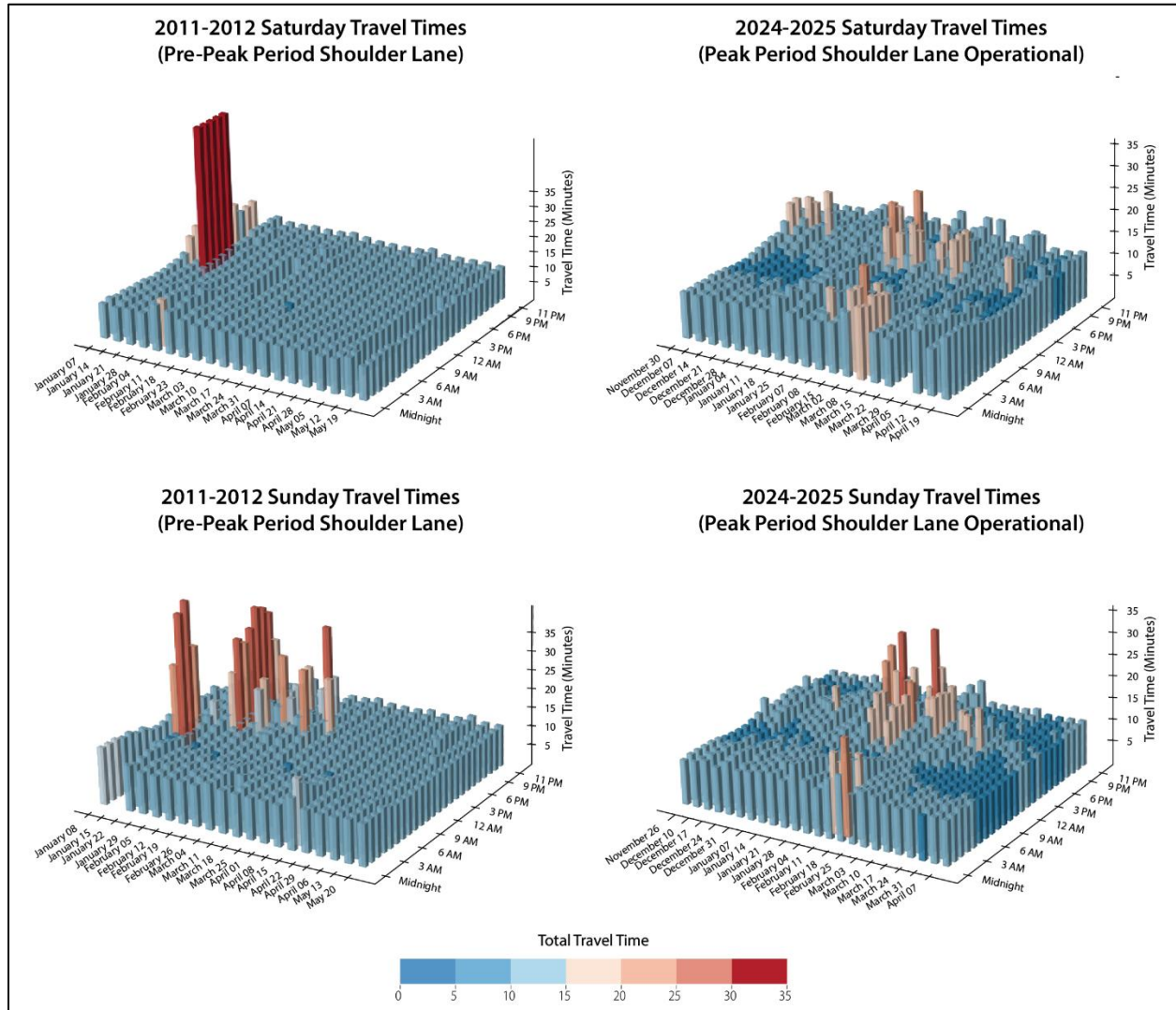


Exhibit 6: Eastbound Summer Season Travel Time Comparison

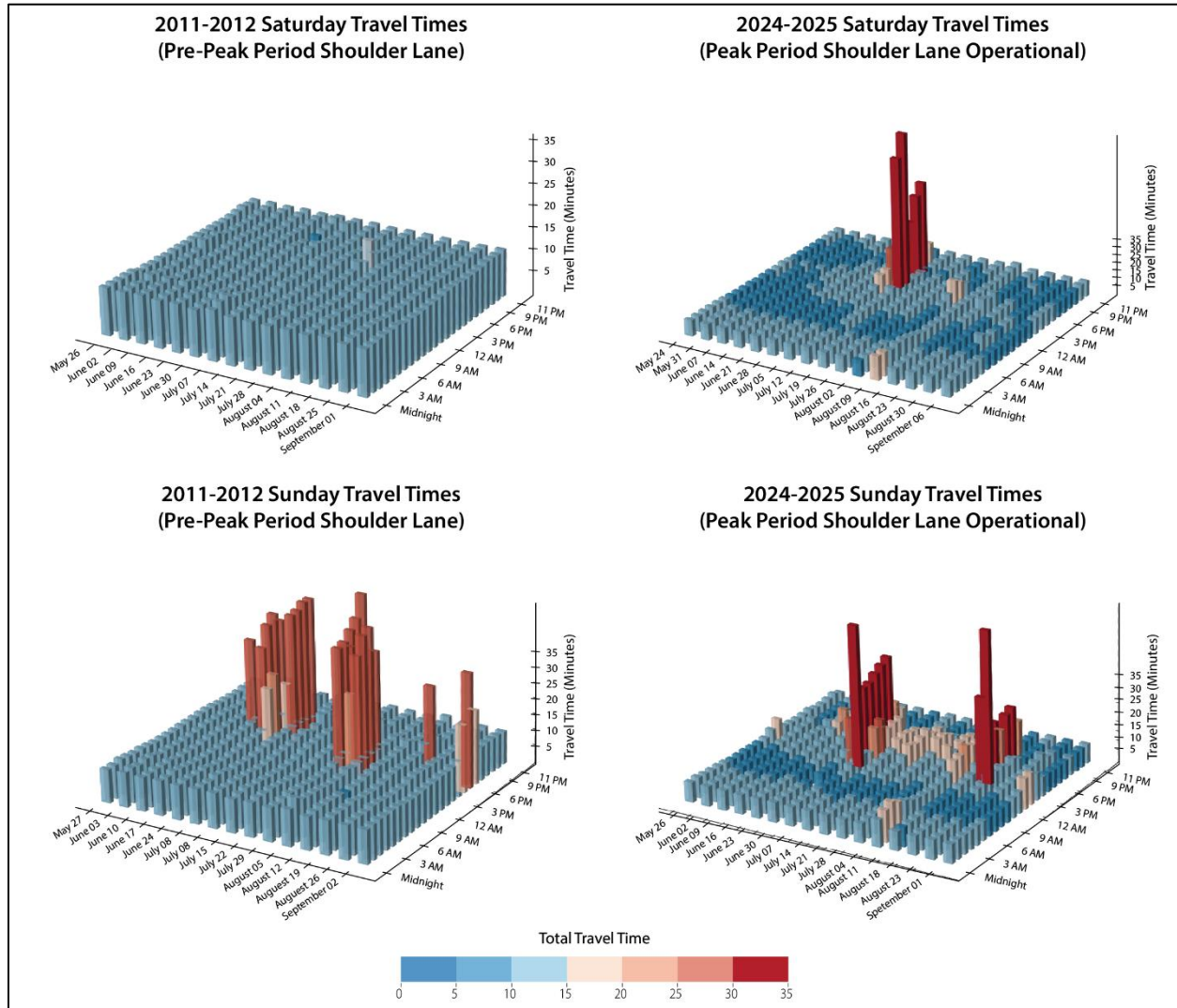
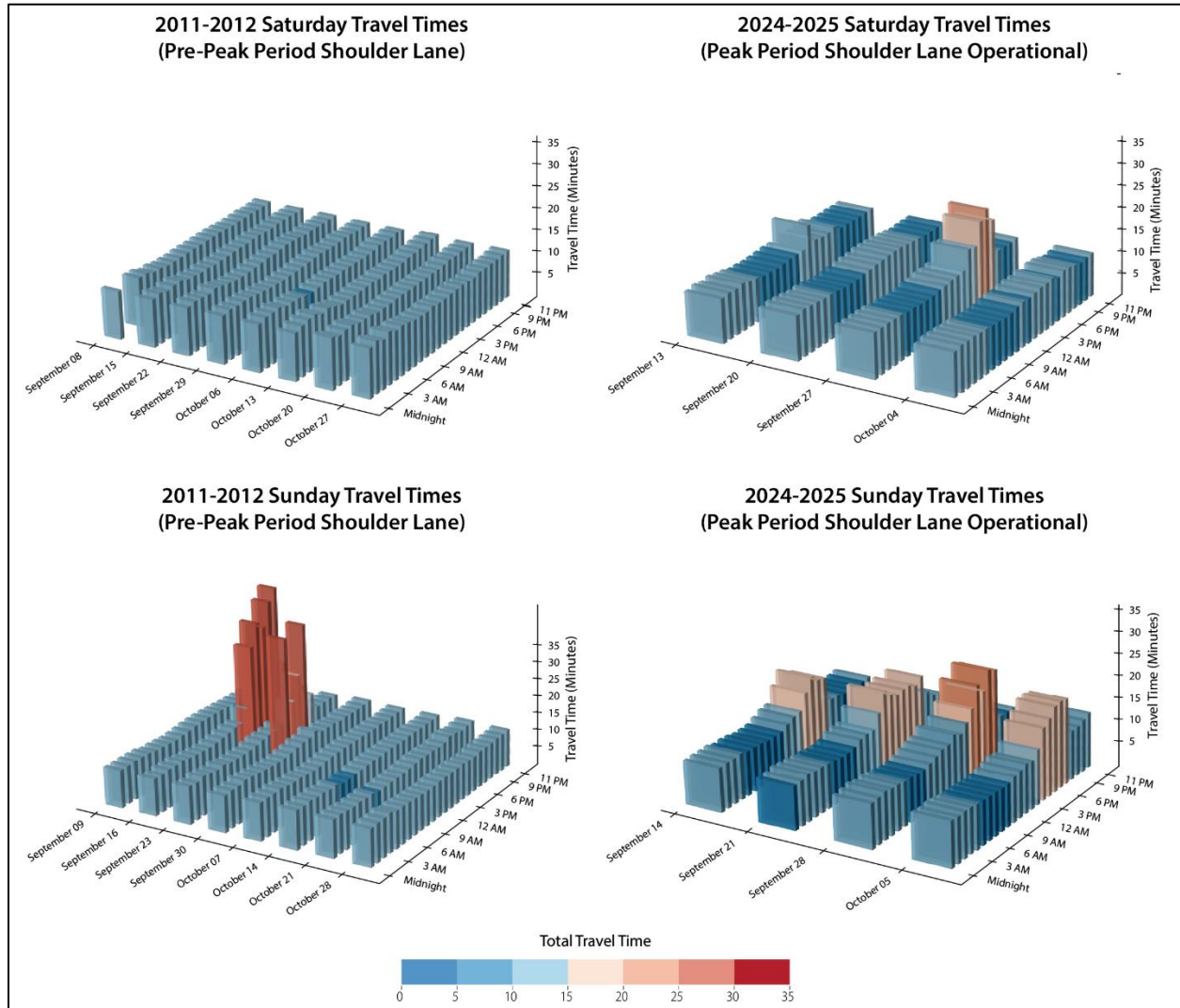


Exhibit 7: Eastbound Fall Season Travel Time Comparison



5.2. Westbound Corridor-Level Travel Times Comparison

Travel time data was extracted from INRIX for periods before and after the WB MEXL was constructed and open for operation. The travel speeds were measured by an MVRD device 0.3 miles east of Fall River Road. These speeds were assumed to be representative corridor speeds and used to calculate the average corridor travel times. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday travel times in 2017-18 during the Winter, Summer, and Fall seasons were compared to travel times for the same periods in 2024-25. Travel time in 2017-18 represents the average travel time westbound across two general-purpose lanes. Travel time in 2024-25 represents the average travel time westbound across three lanes: two general-purpose lanes and the WB MEXL. **Exhibit 8**, **Exhibit 9**, and **Exhibit 10**, compare travel times between 2017-18 and 2024-25 for each season. As shown by the exhibits, when the WB MEXL operational, the average travel times in 2024-25 were substantially lower than the average travel times for the same period during 2017-18. Please note that the 2024-25 operational year is the third full year of operations for WB MEXL. A comparison of speeds between the first full year of operations (2022-23) and the 2024-25 operational year is presented in Appendix B.

Exhibit 8: Westbound Winter Season Travel Time Comparison

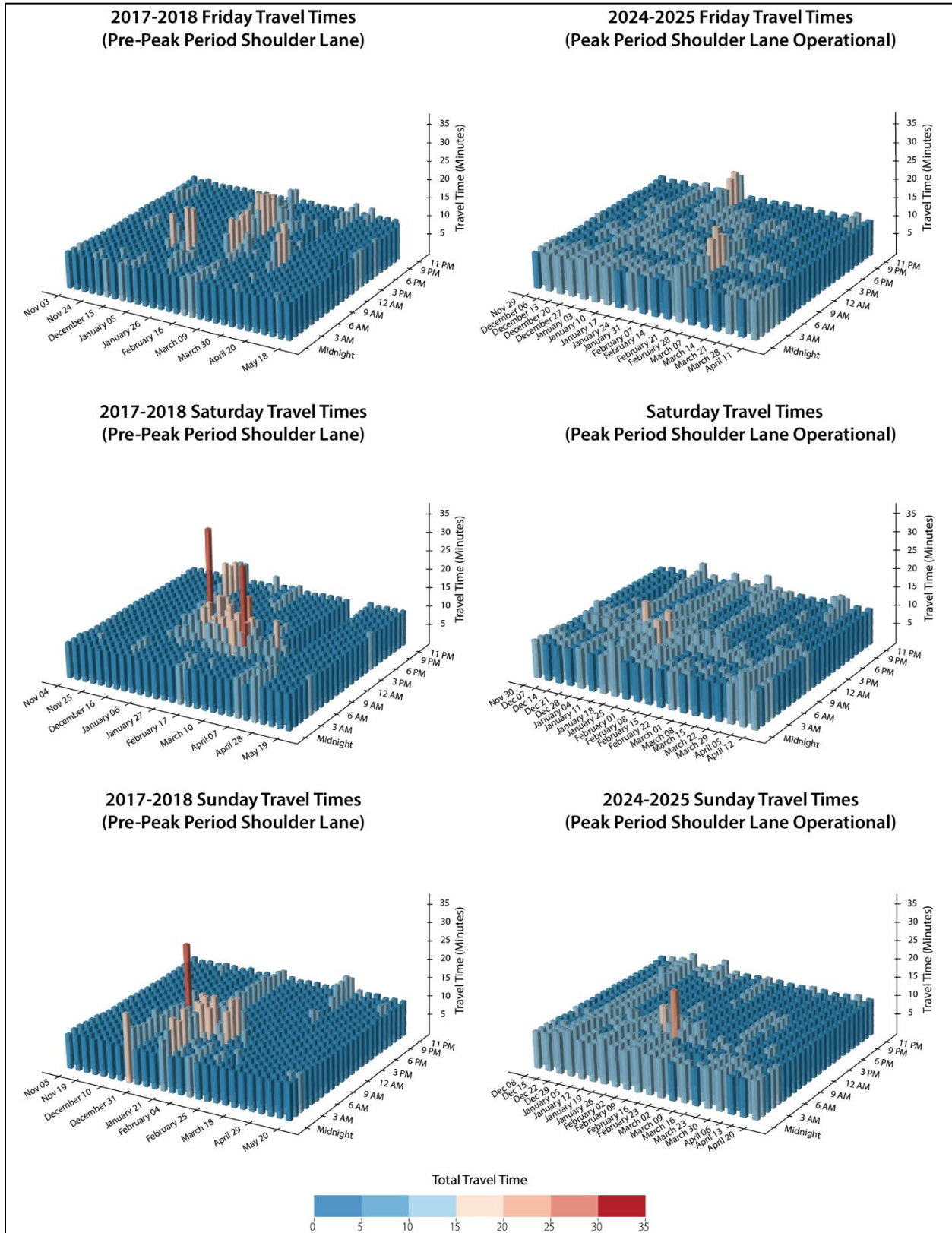


Exhibit 9: Westbound Summer Season Travel Time Comparison

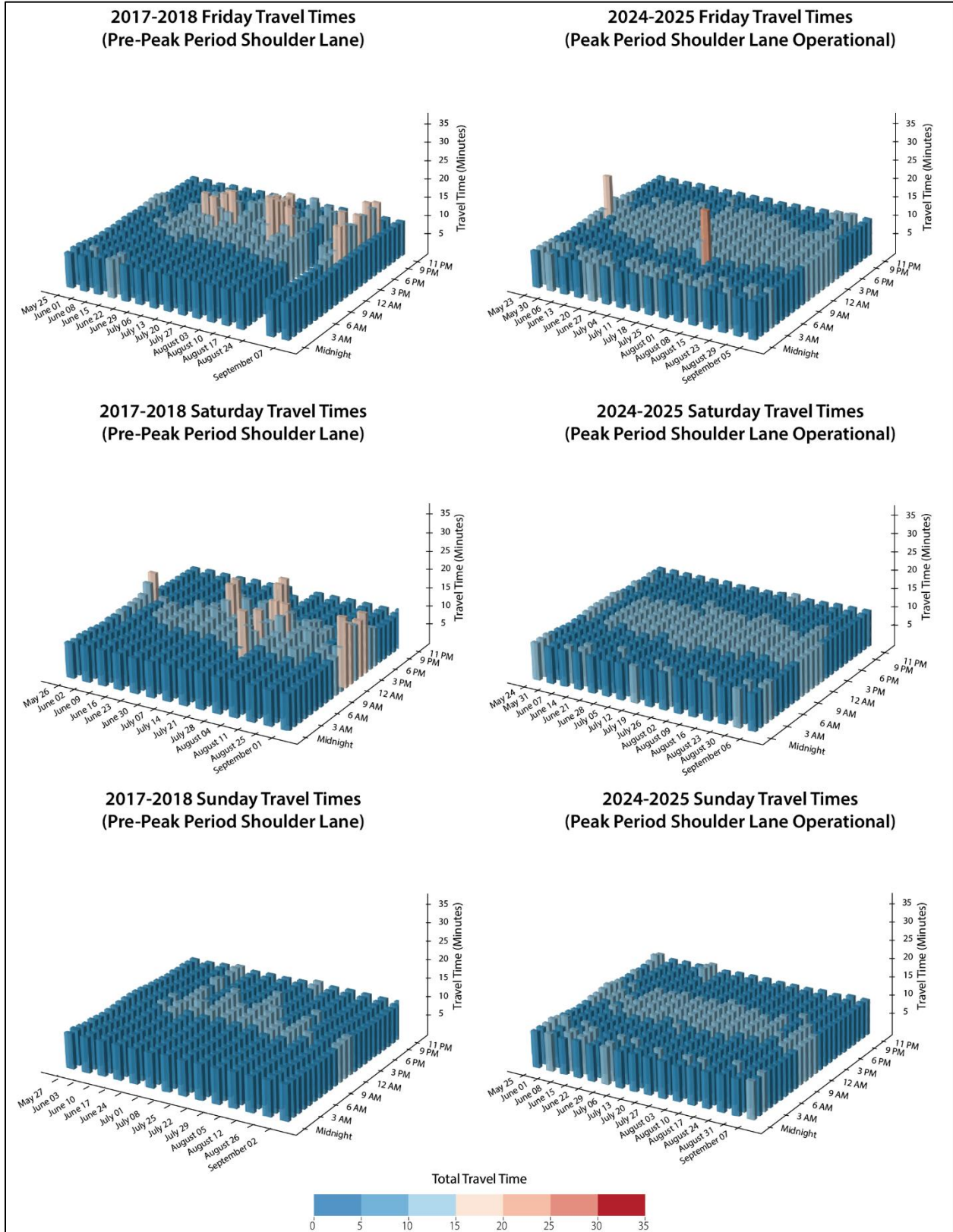
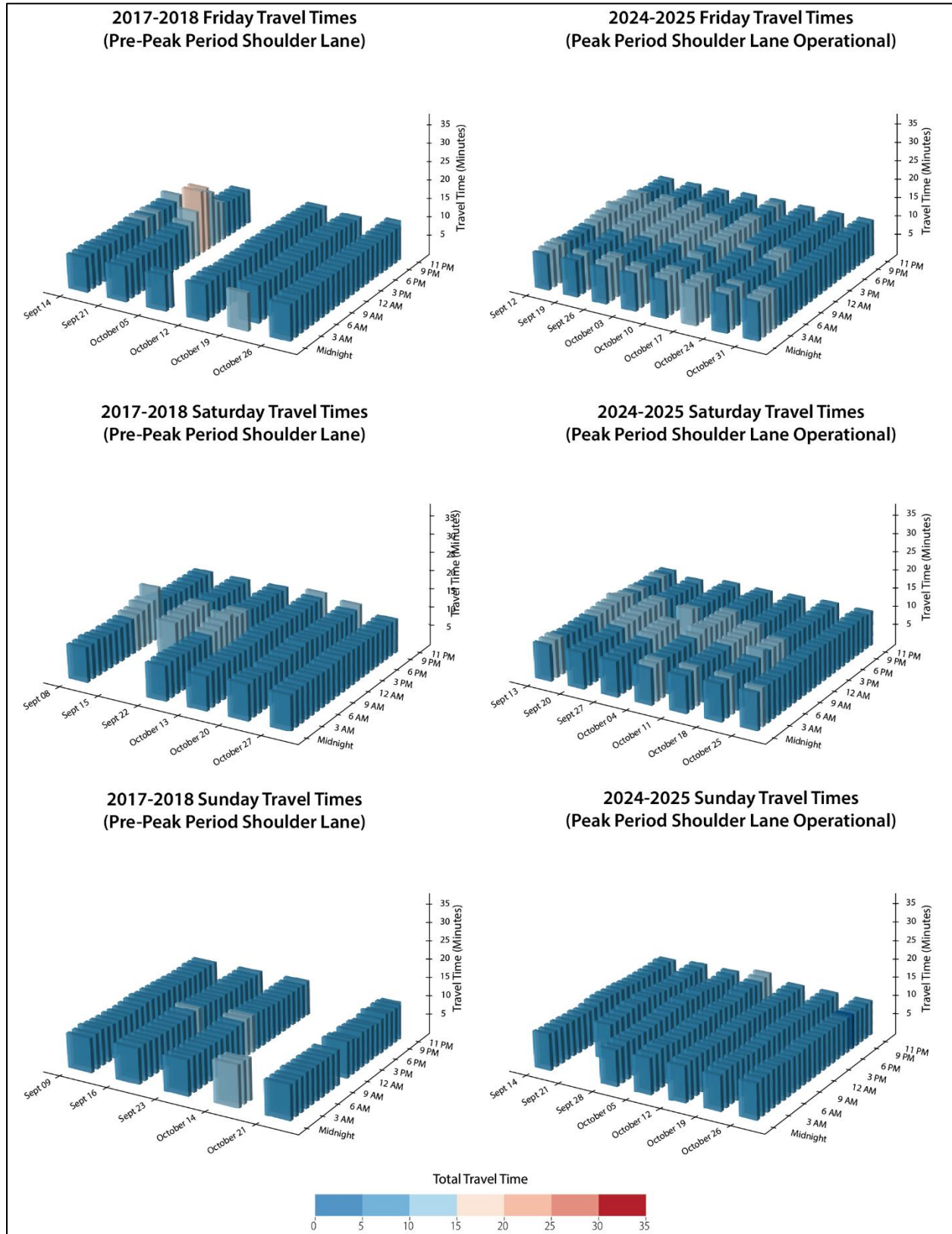


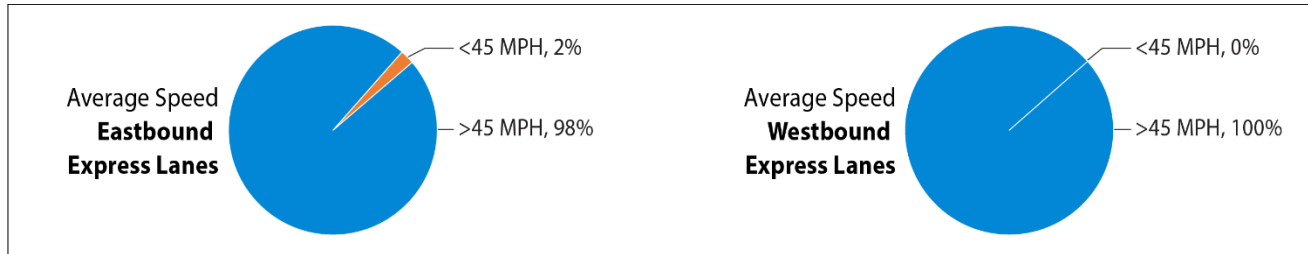
Exhibit 10: Westbound Fall Season Travel Time Comparison



5.3. Average Operating Speeds above 45 MPH

Average hourly speeds for the MEXL lanes during the operational hours for the 2024-25 operational year were collected from MVRD devices. As illustrated in Exhibit 11, the EB and WB Express Lanes maintained average hourly operating speeds of at least 45 mph 98% and 100% of the time that they were operational, respectively. The percentages of average operating speeds for the Express Lanes remained the same as last year, 2023-24.

Exhibit 11: Proportion of Time Express Lane Average Operating Speed is above 45 MPH



5.4. Corridor-Level Planning Time Index and Travel Time Index

Planning time index (PTI) is a reliability measure that represents the ratio of the 95th percentile peak-period travel time to the free-flow travel time. For example, a value of 1.5 means that for a 30-minute trip in free-flow traffic, 45 minutes should be planned. A smaller value of PTI indicates a well-operating corridor. The PTI values were obtained from INRIX for the segment of I-70 between MP 230 and MP 241 and are reported in Exhibit 12.

Travel time index (TTI) is the ratio of the peak-period travel time to the free-flow travel time. For example, a value of 1.3 indicates a 30-minute trip during free-flow conditions took 39 minutes during the peak period. When the MEXL is open the overall corridor speed may exceed this 85th percentile due to the faster moving vehicles in the MEXL. Consequently, the TTI may be less than 1.00 when the MEXL is operational. The TTI values were obtained from INRIX for the segment of I-70 between MP 230 and MP 241. INRIX uses historical 85th percentile speed as the free flow travel time to calculate the TTI.

For the EB MEXL,

Exhibit 12: compares the PTI for the months of November 2011 to October 2012 (prior to the construction of EB MEXL) to the operating year 2024-25. For the WB MEXL, Exhibit 12 compares the PTI for the months of November 2017 to October 2018 (prior to the construction of WB MEXL) to the operating year 2024-25. **Exhibit 13** displays the PTI change between 2024-25 and the pre-MEXL years in both directions. EB MEXL saw an increased PTI during the summer season, specifically in July. Most likely, this is due to the increased travel times as previously shown in Exhibit 6. However, overall, the PTI remained smaller in 2024-25 compared to pre-MEXL years. This indicates that the MEXL continues to improve corridor operations and reliability so that drivers can plan for a shorter buffer time to ensure they arrive at their destinations on time.

Exhibit 12: Planning Time Index Comparison between Pre-MEXL Year and 2024-25

Eastbound I-70 Planning Time Index Comparison between 2011-12 and 2024-25												
Day of Week	Nov 11	Dec 11	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12	Apr 12	May 12	Jun 12	Jul 12	Aug 12	Sep 12	Oct 12
Saturday	1.58	1.42	4.69	1.49	1.41	1.11	1.1	1.08	1.21	1.06	1.06	1.15
Sunday	1.48	1.76	2.83	2.41	2.54	1.3	1.29	3.56	3.63	2.8	3.09	1.56
Day of Week	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25
Saturday	1.37	1.88	1.78	3.59	1.76	1.31	1.04	1.15	5.66	1.49	1.59	1.08
Sunday	1.43	1.53	1.71	2.28	1.81	1.51	1.11	4.67	2.60	3.93	2.40	1.55

Westbound I-70 Planning Time Index Comparison between 2017-18 and 2024-25												
Day of Week	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18
Friday	2.91	1.09	1.35	2.1	1.44	1.44	1.13	1.38	1.98	2.03	1.55	1.04
Saturday	1.13	4.85	2.11	2.25	1.43	1.14	1.41	1.50	1.95	1.48	2.30	1.05
Sunday	1.06	1.66	1.81	1.13	1.06	1.16	1.18	1.06	1.27	1.10	1.04	1.07
Day of Week	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25
Friday	1.58	1.31	1.48	1.91	1.12	1.31	1.29	1.26	1.37	1.37	1.43	1.13
Saturday	1.09	1.52	1.62	1.63	1.18	1.64	1.09	1.38	1.36	1.34	1.39	1.07
Sunday	1.20	1.12	1.10	1.11	1.09	1.06	1.07	1.19	1.22	1.17	1.25	1.08

Exhibit 13: Planning Time Index Change¹

Eastbound I-70 Planning Time Index Change (2011-12 vs 2024-25)												
Day of Week	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Saturday	13%	-32%	62%	-141%	-25%	-18%	5%	-6%	-368%	-41%	-50%	6%
Sunday	3%	13%	40%	5%	29%	-16%	14%	-31%	28%	-40%	22%	1%

Westbound I-70 Planning Time Index Change (2017-18 vs 2024-25)												
Day of Week	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Friday	46%	-20%	-10%	9%	22%	9%	-14%	9%	31%	33%	8%	-9%
Saturday	4%	69%	23%	28%	17%	-44%	23%	8%	30%	9%	40%	-2%
Sunday	-13%	33%	39%	2%	-3%	9%	9%	-12%	4%	-6%	-20%	-1%

1. Green color indicates months when the TTI improved, yellow color indicates months when the TTI deteriorated.

Exhibit 14: summarizes the TTI. For EB MEXL, the TTI is compared for the pre-EB MEXL operational year 2011-12 and the operating year 2024-25. For WB MEXL, the TTI is compared for the pre-WB MEXL months of November 2017 to October 2018 and the operating year of 2024-25.

Exhibit 15 shows the percentage change of travel time index by month and by weekend days. In general, the TTI is larger in 2024-25 compared to pre-MEXL years. This indicates that the MEXL is not improving corridor operations and reliability such that it takes more time to travel the length of the MEXL corridor. This could be in part due to construction work at Floyd Hill in proximity to the MEXL.

Exhibit 14: Travel Time Index Comparison between Pre-MEXL Year and 2024-25

Eastbound I-70 Travel Time Index Comparison between 2011-12 and 2024-25												
Day of Week	Nov 11	Dec 11	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12	Apr 12	May 12	Jun 12	Jul 12	Aug 12	Sep 12	Oct 12
Saturday	1.07	1.06	1.45	1.04	1.02	0.98	0.99	0.98	1.01	0.97	0.97	0.98
Sunday	1.05	1.11	1.46	1.32	1.27	1.01	1.01	1.67	1.71	1.55	1.43	1.02
Day of Week	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25
Saturday	1.03	1.15	1.19	1.43	1.13	1.01	0.97	1.02	1.65	1.05	1.07	0.96
Sunday	1.06	1.08	1.17	1.34	1.20	1.04	0.99	1.65	1.51	1.75	1.40	1.03

Westbound I-70 Travel Time Index Comparison between 2017-18 and 2024-25												
Day of Week	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18
Friday	1.16	0.94	0.99	1.22	0.99	0.99	0.95	1.01	1.21	1.16	1.01	0.93
Saturday	0.95	1.41	1.12	1.12	0.99	0.94	1.00	1.02	1.12	1.02	1.20	0.93
Sunday	0.95	1.01	1.10	0.99	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.99	0.96	0.94	0.94
Day of Week	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25
Friday	1.08	1.05	1.10	1.17	1.01	1.06	1.02	1.06	1.13	1.10	1.10	0.99
Saturday	1.00	1.08	1.15	1.11	1.02	1.11	0.98	1.06	1.09	1.05	1.06	0.97
Sunday	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00	0.98	0.97	1.02	1.03	1.00	1.02	0.97

Exhibit 15: Travel Time Index Change¹

Eastbound I-70 Travel Time Index Change (2011-12 vs 2024-25)												
Day of Week	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Saturday	4%	-8%	18%	-38%	-11%	-3%	2%	-4%	-63%	-8%	-10%	2%
Sunday	-1%	3%	20%	-2%	6%	-3%	2%	1%	12%	-13%	2%	-1%

Westbound I-70 from MP 230 to MP 241 Travel Time Index Change (2017-18 vs 2024-25)												
Day of Week	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Friday	7%	-12%	-11%	4%	-2%	-7%	-7%	-5%	7%	5%	-9%	-6%
Saturday	-5%	23%	-3%	1%	-3%	-18%	2%	-4%	3%	-3%	12%	-4%
Sunday	-6%	1%	9%	-2%	-5%	-3%	-1%	-7%	-4%	-4%	-10%	-3%

1. Green color indicates months when the TTI improved, yellow color indicates months when the TTI deteriorated.

6. I-70 Traffic Volumes

Annual traffic volumes and capture rates for the MEXL, as well as the corresponding volumes on the I-70 Corridor (when the MEXL is operating), are presented in this chapter. Capture rate is defined as the proportion of traffic volume on the I-70 Mountain Corridor which uses the MEXL. **Exhibit 16:** presents the total traffic volumes for the Express Lanes and the I-70 corridor by direction. Traffic volumes and capture rate for EB MEXL are compared between 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. When compared to the previous operating year, the EB and WB MEXL volumes have increased while the capture rates have decreased.

Exhibit 16: Total and Average Daily Traffic Volumes and Capture Rate¹

Direction	MEXL Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic	MEXL Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic	MEXL Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic	Entire I-70 Corridor Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic ²	Entire I-70 Corridor Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic ²	Entire I-70 Corridor Total Volume/ Average Daily Traffic ²	MEXL Capture Rate ³	MEXL Capture Rate ³	MEXL Capture Rate ³
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Eastbound	235,500/ 2,600 vpd	234,100/ 2,300 vpd	249,800/ 1,800 vpd	2.90 million/ 31,600 vpd	3.03 million/ 30,300 vpd	4.00 million/ 28,800 vpd	10.1%	9.5%	8.4%
Westbound	107,200/ 900 vpd	84,500/ 700 vpd	141,800/ 800 vpd	3.16 million/ 25,700 vpd	2.99 million/ 23,900 vpd	4.49 million/ 25,500 vpd	4.6%	4.4%	4.3%

1. Volumes rounded to the nearest 100; vpd - vehicles per day.
2. Corridor volumes include both GP and Express Lanes. Corridor volumes are solely calculated for days when the Express Lane is open.
3. Capture rates are calculated with total corridor volumes during MEXL open hours only.

The EB MEXL was generally open Saturdays and Sundays. **Exhibit 17** shows how the average daily traffic is distributed by day of week when the MEXL is operational. Sundays typically are the busiest days for the EB MEXL as drivers return to the Denver area from weekend recreational activities. The EB MEXL also opened on weekdays to accommodate holiday traffic for Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, and state holiday Frances Xavier Cabrini Day.

The WB MEXL was generally open on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The WB MEXL serves heavy traffic demand heading to the mountains during the weekends. Fridays are typically the busiest days for WB MEXL. It was also opened on weekdays during Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Day, New Year's Eve and Day, Valentine's Day, President's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, and state holiday Frances Xavier Cabrini Day to accommodate the holiday peak traffic.

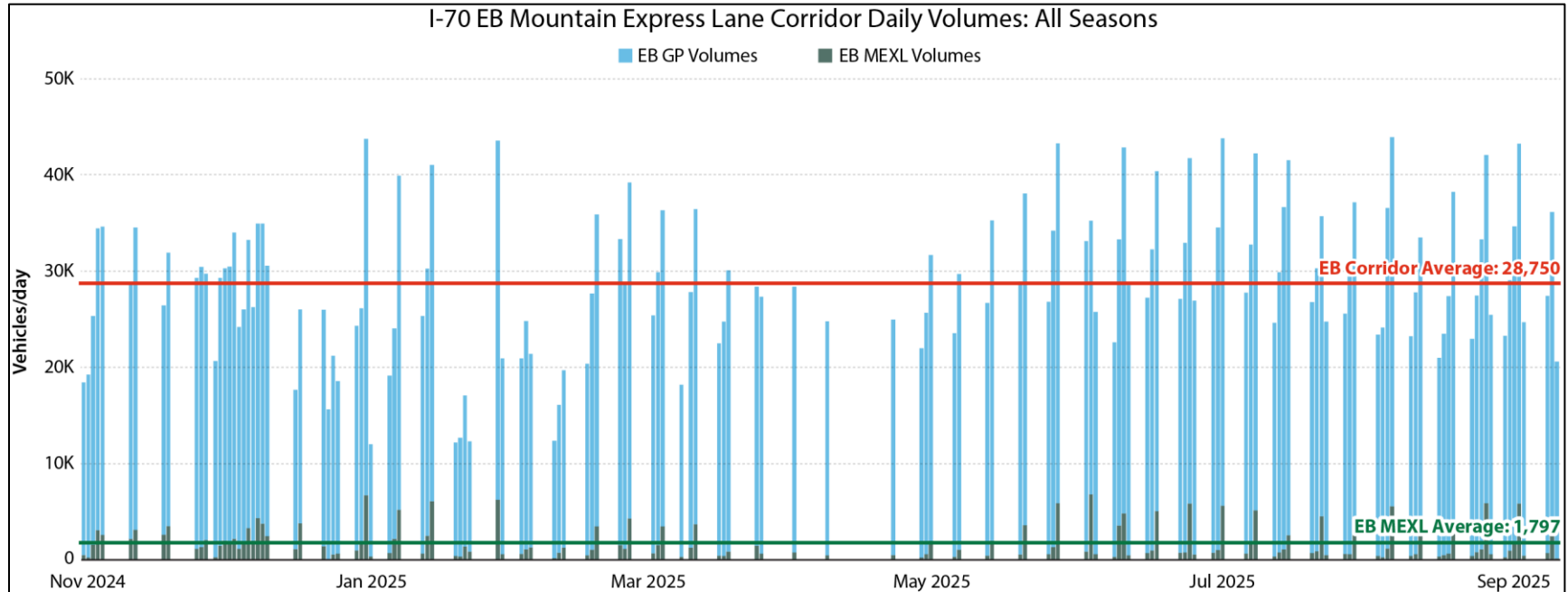
Exhibit 17: Average Volume by Day of Week

Direction	Mountain Express Lane	Mountain Express Lane	Mountain Express Lane	Mountain Express Lane	I-70 Corridor	I-70 Corridor	I-70 Corridor	I-70 Corridor
	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Other	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Other
Eastbound Average ¹	N/A	1,270	3,310	970	N/A	28,120	34,450	24,640
Westbound Average ¹	1,150	750	560	760	30,220	26,490	22,360	23,280

1. Averages are weighted by number of express lane operational days.

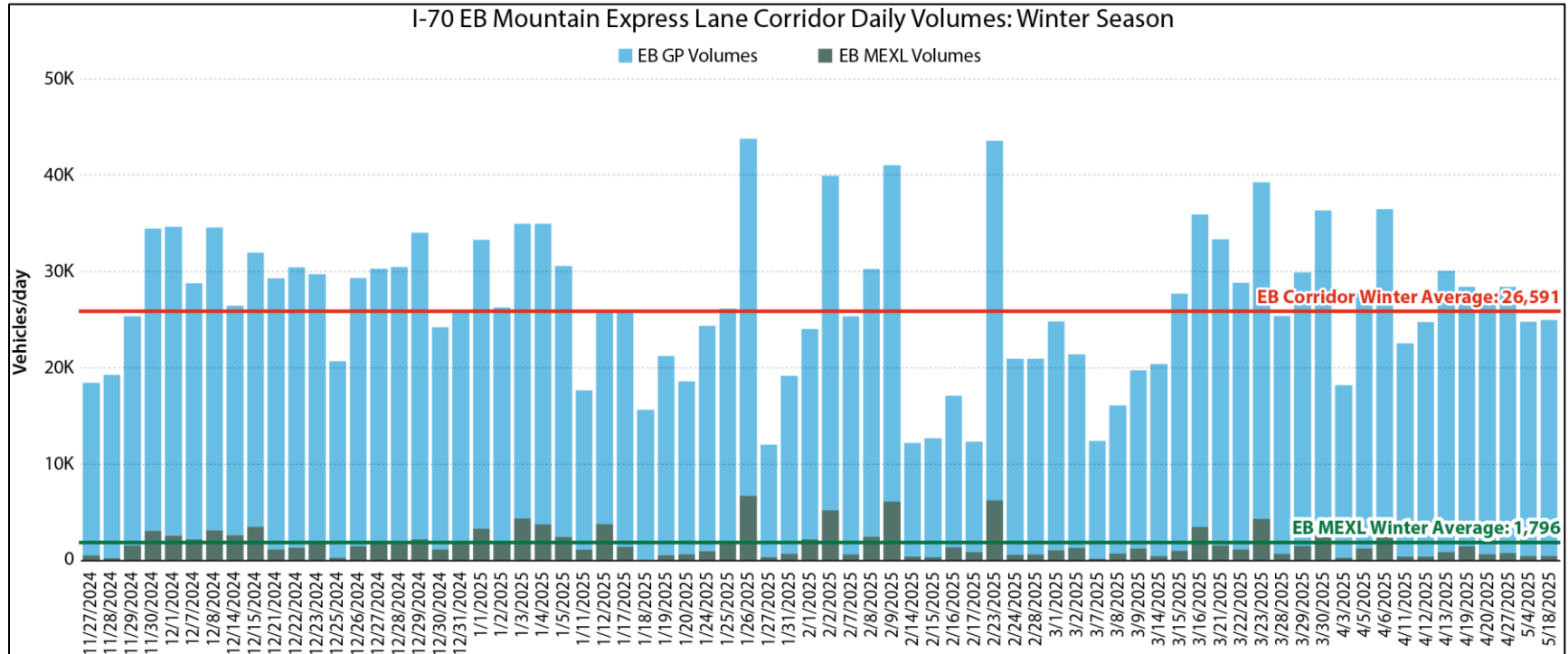
Exhibit 18 through **Exhibit 23** display the eastbound and westbound traffic volumes for the I-70 corridor general-purpose lanes and the express lane when the MEXL is open.

Exhibit 18: I-70 EB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes for All Seasons when the EB MEXL is Open



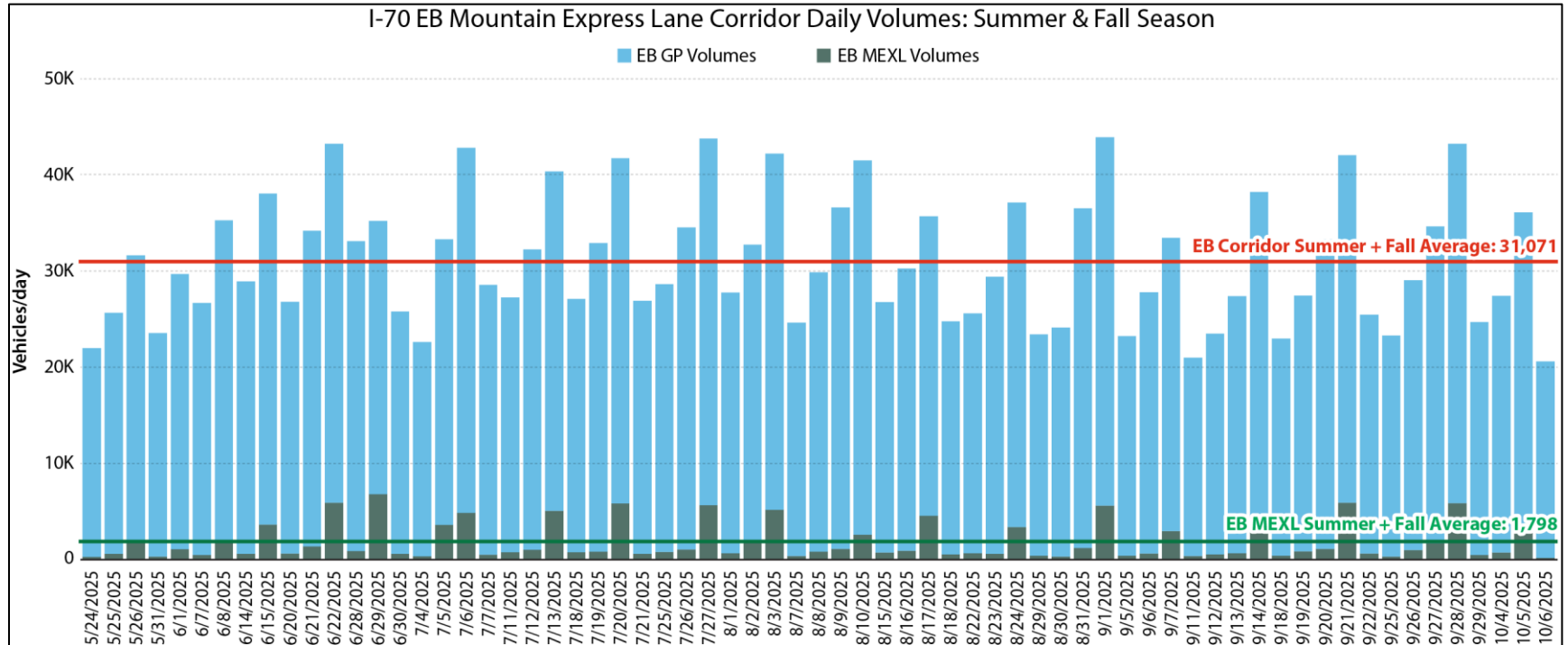
Minimum EB MEXL Volume	Maximum EB MEXL Volume	Minimum EB Corridor Volume	Maximum EB Corridor Volume	EB Average Corridor Volume	EB MEXL Average Volume
41	6,805	12,023	43,931	28,750	1,797
January 18, 2025	June 29, 2025	January 27, 2025	September 1, 2025	N/A	N/A

Exhibit 19: I-70 EB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes in the Winter Season when the EB MEXL is Open



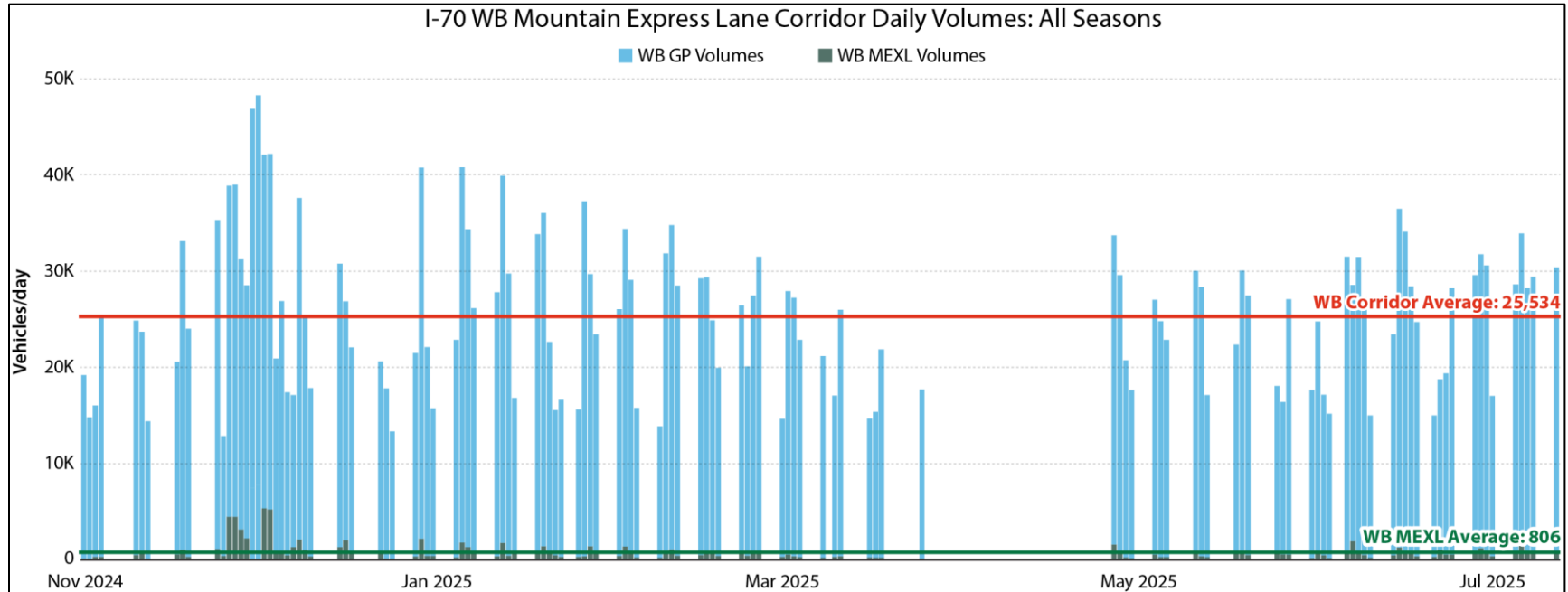
Minimum EB MEXL Volume	Maximum EB MEXL Volume	Minimum EB Corridor Volume	Maximum EB Corridor Volume	EB Average Corridor Volume	EB MEXL Average Volume
41	6,712	12,023	43,754	26,591	1,796
January 18, 2025	January 26, 2025	January 27, 2025	January 26, 2025	N/A	N/A

Exhibit 20: I-70 EB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes in the Summer and Fall Seasons when the EB MEXL is Open



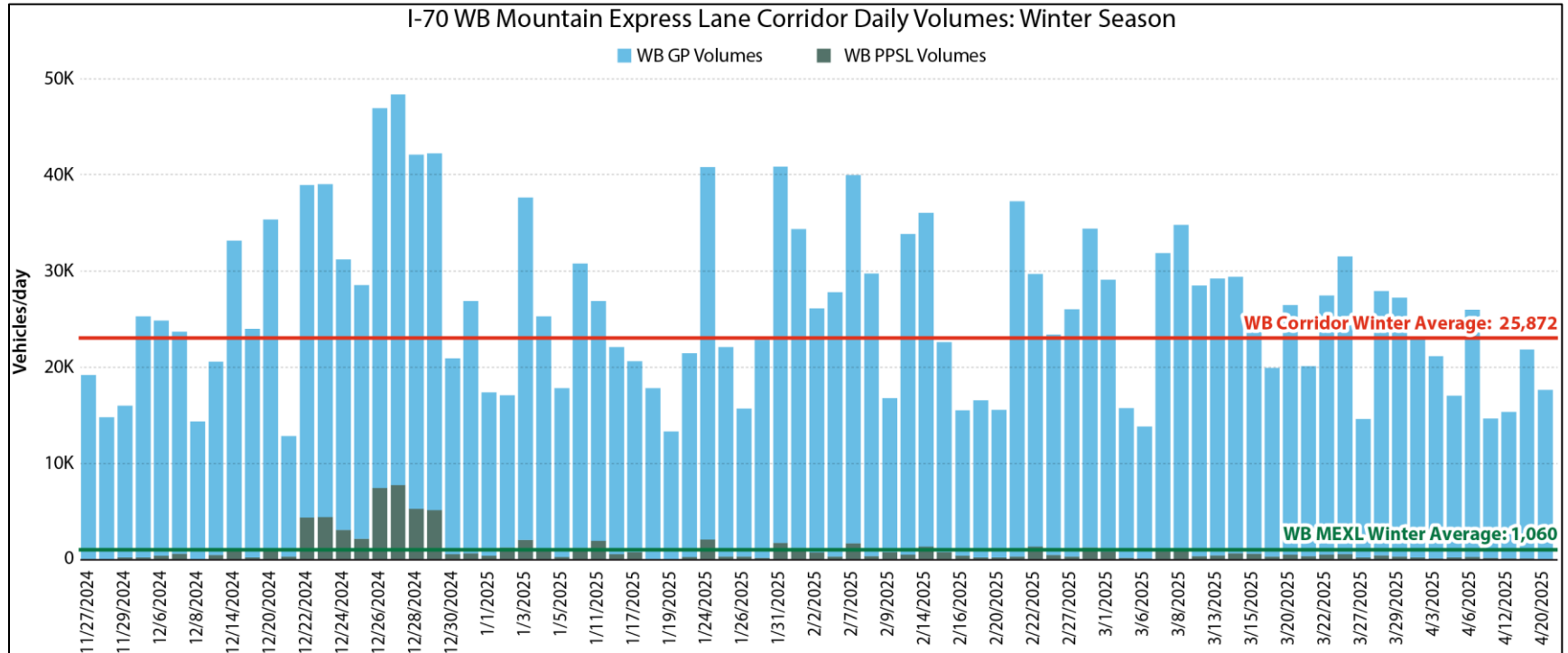
Minimum EB MEXL Volume	Maximum EB MEXL Volume	Minimum EB Corridor Volume	Maximum EB Corridor Volume	EB Average Corridor Volume	EB MEXL Average Volume
169	6,805	20,616	43,931	31,071	1,798
October 6, 2025	June 29, 2025	October 6, 2025	September 1, 2025	N/A	N/A

Exhibit 21: I-70 WB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes for all Seasons when the WB MEXL is Open



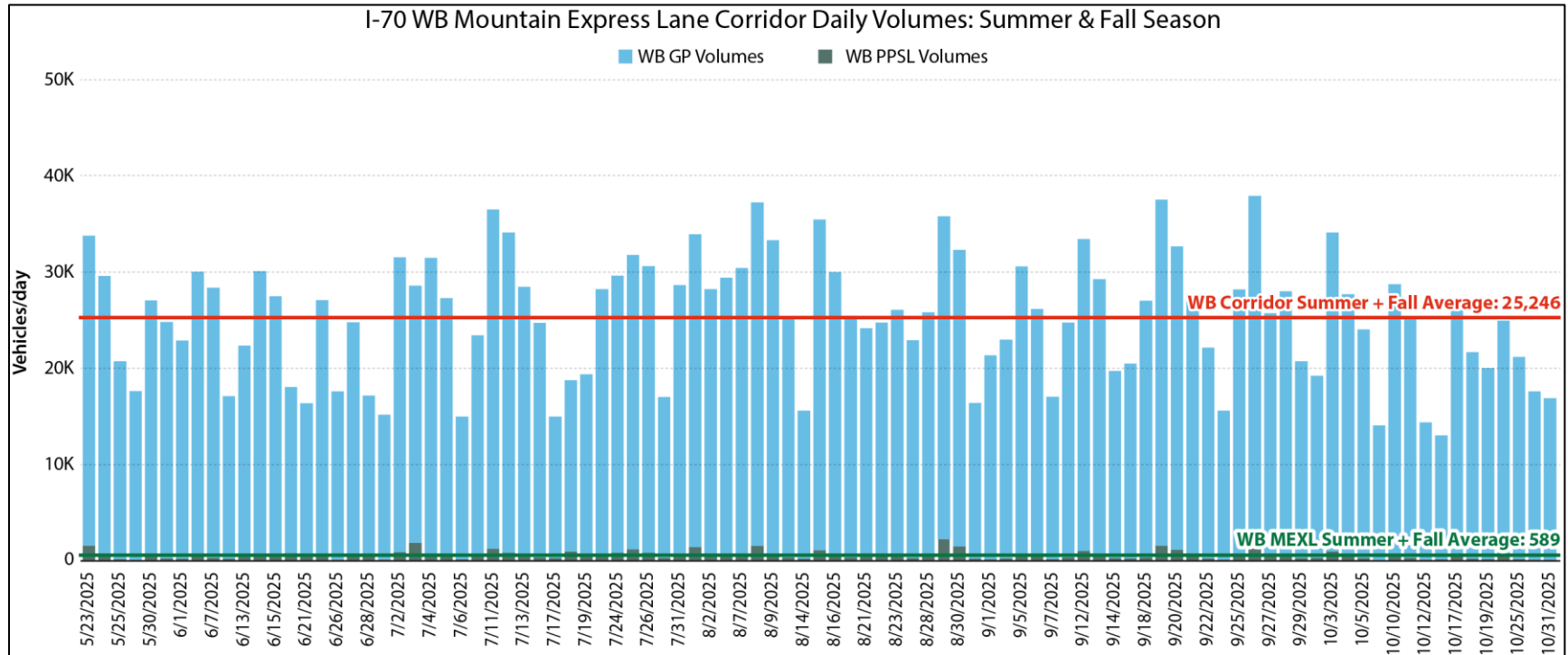
Minimum WB MEXL Volume	Maximum WB MEXL Volume	Minimum WB Corridor Volume	Maximum WB Corridor Volume	WB Average Corridor Volume	WB MEXL Average Volume
59	7,788	12,863	48,329	25,534	806
January 19, 2025	December 27, 2024	December 21, 2024	December 27, 2024	N/A	N/A

Exhibit 22: I-70 WB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes in the Winter Season when the WB MEXL is Open



Minimum WB MEXL Volume	Maximum WB MEXL Volume	Minimum WB Corridor Volume	Maximum WB Corridor Volume	WB Corridor Average Volume	WB MEXL Average Volume
59	7,788	12,863	48,329	25,872	1,060
January 19, 2025	December 27, 2024	December 21, 2024	December 27, 2024	N/A	N/A

Exhibit 23: I-70 WB MEXL and Corridor Daily Traffic Volumes in Summer and Fall Season when WB MEXL is Open



Minimum WB MEXL Volume	Maximum WB MEXL Volume	Minimum WB Corridor Volume	Maximum WB Corridor Volume	WB Corridor Average Volume	WB MEXL Average Volume
81	2,278	13,028	37,920	25,246	589
October 6, 2025	August 29, 2025	October 16, 2025	September 26, 2025	N/A	N/A

7. Preliminary Safety Performance

7.1. Crash Data and Crash Clearance Times

DiExSys is the database created from police crash reports, and it provides the most detailed and accurate crash data available. There is typically a minimum one-year lag for crash data availability from DiExSys. At the time of writing, the DiExSys data is not available for the 2024-25 operational year. Hence, the crash data analysis in this report is preliminary and is compiled from OpenTMS, which was examined for the Mountain Express Lane 2024-25 operational year. When an incident occurs, CDOT personnel create an event in the Colorado Transportation Management System software, which is then integrated into OpenTMS. **Exhibit 24:** shows the number of crashes by mile post when the Mountain Express Lane was open in 2024-25.

Exhibit 24: Crash Frequency by Mile Post for 2024-25 Year (Top - Eastbound, Bottom - Westbound)

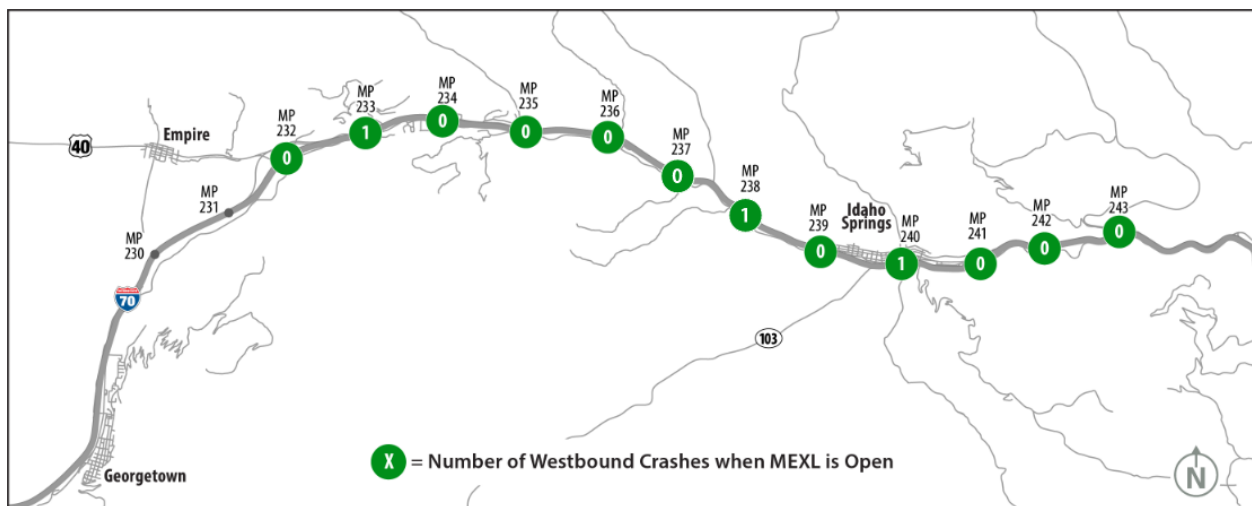
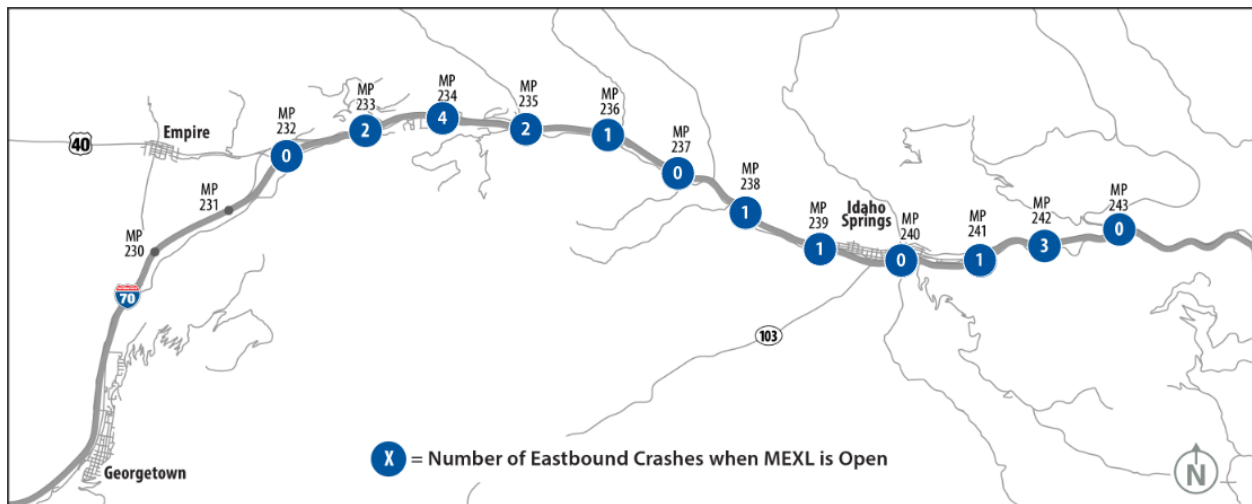


Exhibit 25: outlines the crash frequency while the Express Lanes were open and the associated average crash clearance times by season, as reported in OpenTMS. There were 15 crashes when the EB MEXL was open for the 2024-25 operational year. The overall weighted average crash clearance time was 101 minutes. The average seasonal clearance times were 41 minutes and 169 minutes in the Winter and Summer, respectively. The seasonal clearance time was high in the Summer because there was a crash that took over 923 minutes to clear. Without accounting for this crash, the average seasonal clearance time for Summer was 43 minutes and the overall weight average crash clearance time was 42 minutes. There were no crashes on EB MEXL in the Fall.

There were three crashes when the WB MEXL was operational and open. Two of these crashes occurred in the Winter while the other crash occurred in the Summer. The overall weighted average clearance time was 35 minutes. The average seasonal clearance time was 29 minutes in the Winter and 49 minutes in the Summer. There were no crashes on WB MEXL in the Fall.

Exhibit 25: Total Crashes while Mountain Express Lane was Open

Season	EB Mountain Express Lane	EB Mountain Express Lane & GP Lane	EB GP Lane	Total Seasonal Crashes	Average Clearance Time ¹
Winter	2	2	4	8	41 min
Summer	2	3	2	7	169 min
Fall	0	0	0	0	N/A
Total	4	5	6	15	101 min

Season	WB Mountain Express Lane	WB Mountain Express Lane & GP Lane	WB GP Lane	Total Seasonal Crashes	Average Clearance Time ¹
Winter	0	0	2	2	29 min
Summer	0	0	1	1	49 min
Fall	0	0	0	0	N/A
Total	0	0	3	3	35 min

1. Weighted average to account for differences in seasonal crash totals.

Exhibit 26 summarizes the crash data for the EB I-70 Mountain Express Corridor for the latest five operational years (November 2020 through October 2025) for days when the Express Lane was open. Pre-MEXL crash data are provided for reference to compare the change in number of crashes before and after the MEXL started operations. Crashes on the EB MEXL corridor have been trending downward with an outlier spike in the 2022-23 year.

For WB MEXL, crash data occurring between the latest three operational years (November 2022 through October 2025) is compared to pre-MEXL crash data for days when the Express Lane was open. Crashes in 2024-25 have decreased from previous years.

Exhibit 26: Number of Crashes on I-70 Corridor by Operating Year

Season	EB Pre-Mountain Express Lane	EB Post-Mountain Express Lane	EB Post-Mountain Express Lane	EB Post-Mountain Express Lane	EB Post-Mountain Express Lane	EB Post-Mountain Express Lane
	2012-13 to 2014-15 ¹	2020-21 ¹	2021-22 ¹	2022-23 ¹	2023-24 ²	2024-25 ²
Winter	16	17	8	16	13	8
Summer	8	11	11	8	10	7
Fall	4	5	1	3	0	0
Annual Total	28	33	20	27	23	15

Season	WB Pre-Mountain Express Lane	WB Post-Mountain Express Lane	WB Post-Mountain Express Lane	WB Post-Mountain Express Lane
	2021-2022 ¹	2022-23 ¹	2023-24 ²	2024-25 ²
Winter	13	10	5	2
Summer	7	1	0	1
Fall	1	1	0	0
Annual Total	21	12	5	3

1. From DiExSys database (police reports); data are only available through November 2023.

2. From OpenTMS.

Appendix C provides details of crashes on the I-70 corridor when the MEXL was open and closed by mile point.

7.2. Responder Outreach

CTIO worked with the corridor emergency responders to solicit input on operations or safety concerns of the I-70 MEXL corridor. The outreach was conducted by sending a written evaluation to the first responders who work in the corridor. A compilation of the evaluation questions and responses is provided as Appendix D.

Below is a summary of the responses received:

- Drivers have noticed misuse of the express lane. Reporting that vehicles were using the PPSL when it's closed or use the lane for passing. It's been noticed that the express lane is used as an emergency lane sometimes. However, drivers have also mentioned that it's not due to driver confusion but impatient or entitled drivers.
- It's a little unclear where the express lane ends east bound in the veteran memorial tunnels.
- There have been suggestions about increased hours of operation.

- There are complaints about varying times of express lanes has been confusing and having both directions open at the same time. This has been especially confusing for out of state drivers.
- Maintenance of the signs needs to be improved. It's been noticed that a lot of the signs do not function.
- The signs are said to be vague and a little unclear for tourists. There should be more signs indicating the speed limit on express lanes.
- Very few trucks are trailers are noticed in the express lanes.
- Communication with the maintenance team could be slightly better.
- Communications between the tunnel and TOC to first responders can be improved, specifically the timing and speed of notifications.
- The pavement conditions are not adequate although they have been greatly improved in past years.
- Snow removal operations could be improved, and plows tend to be pushed towards the approach of Eisenhower Johnson Memorial Tunnel (EJMT) and Berthoud during major storms.
- It's been a challenge to get responders to scenes in heavy traffic.
- Express lane is not adequately wide, especially on east bound. Especially relevant for emergency vehicles.
- Excess speed in the express lanes has been a big risk hazard. The ruts caused by truck chains is extremely dangerous for passenger cars when roads are slick.
- MEXL has largely been a success.

CTIO will continue working with corridor first responders to address concerns and resolve them.

Appendix A. Memorandum of Understanding

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OLA #: 351001403
Routing #: 18-HAA-XE-00005-M0006

**AMENDED AND RESTATED
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)
By and between the
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (Division)
AND
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CDOT)
AND
COLORADO HIGH-PERFORMANCE TRANSPORTATION ENTERPRISE (HPTE)**

WHEREAS, CDOT has constructed both the *I-70 Eastbound and Westbound Peak Period Shoulder Lane Projects* (hereinafter referred to as the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Division, CDOT and HPTE previously entered into an MOU for the Project on April 22, 2014, and subsequently entered into an Amended MOU on September 22, 2017 and July 31, 2020 (the “Existing MOU”) that allowed for added operation flexibility following the commencement of operations; and

WHEREAS, this Amended and Restated MOU is intended to supersede and replace the Existing MOU; and

WHEREAS, CDOT and HPTE desire to continue tolling during periods of high traffic volumes on the eastbound inside shoulder from MP 230.0 to MP 244.0 and on the westbound inside shoulder from MP 242 to 230.5 (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Toll Facility”); and

WHEREAS, the Division, CDOT and HPTE recognize the seasonality of the traffic demand experienced by the Toll Facility and therefore agree that for purposes of data collection, operational assessments, performance measures and reviews, the Toll Facility reporting period shall be the twelve month operating year from November 1st to October 31st, inclusive; and

WHEREAS, the following are conditions of the design variance required for the Project:

1. CDOT and HPTE agree to collect sufficient Toll Facility data and adjacent GP Lanes data to provide a complete view of the total corridor performance.
2. The following data on the Toll Facility and adjacent GP Lanes are to be collected during each operating year to assemble the following performance measures that are based upon the Project’s Concept of Operations. The Project’s Concept of Operations, recommended performance measures are as follows:
 - a. Interstate 70 Travel Time Reliability;
 - b. Interstate 70 Traffic Volume and Traffic Type;
 - c. Interstate 70 Safety and Crash Data, during operational and non-operational periods including the location of the incident;
 - i. Included as a performance measure will be an evaluation of incidents that occur in the Toll Facility when the Toll Facility is in the closed state; and
 - ii. Evaluation of signing and striping related to safety and operations of the facility.
 - iii. Outreach to emergency responders for feedback on the safety and operations of the facility.
 - d. Incident clearance times (as measured from the time of dispatch of Courtesy Patrol to when all emergency responders have left the scene).

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Routing #: 18-HAA-XE-00005-M0006

The information provided by the performance measures shall be assembled into a report that provides an assessment of the operating year's performance with recommendations as needed for the upcoming operating year. If recommendations included in the report require changes to the MOU, CTIO, and CDOT staff will arrange a time to present the recommendation(s), such as an adjustment in the hours of operation, to Division staff for consideration and approval in the form of a new version of this MOU. If needed, as a part of the operating year assessment, CDOT or HPTE will conduct a review of the functionality of the Toll Facility or components of the Toll Facility. The accuracy and findings of the report shall be certified by CDOT and HPTE and submitted to the Division, within two months of the end of the operating year. One certified report shall be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph so long as both parties are bound by such certification. CDOT and HPTE agree to provide Clear Creek County (CCC) results of the Project's ongoing assessment as a part of CDOT/CCC Quarterly Coordination Meetings.

3. CDOT will maintain the striping to ensure it remains of high quality for the facility.
4. CDOT and HPTE agree to limit the use of the Toll Facility according to the following operational limitations:
 - a. The Toll Facility operations shall be limited to peak periods of congestion and is not intended to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - b. The Toll Facility shall operate during holiday associated traffic and planned special events throughout the year, both of which are anticipated to generate a large, concentrated number of return trips from the I-70 Mountain Corridor to the Denver Metropolitan Area.
 - c. In order to balance the semi-predictable nature of the I-70 Mountain Corridor traffic peaks with the uncertainties that come from adverse weather and tight geometry, HPTE, and the CDOT Transportation Management Center (CTMC) operations center will have the flexibility to determine when congestion levels have risen to a level that warrants opening the Toll Facility.
 - d. When necessary, the Toll Facility shall be allowed to operate during emergency closures of the general purpose lanes. A toll may not be charged for use of the Toll Facility during emergency closures. If a toll is not charged, these hours of emergency use will not be counted when calculating whether the Toll Facility's annual operational limits set forth in Paragraph 6 below apply.
 - e. The Toll Facility operations are weather dependent.
 - f. The Toll Facility shall not operate on more than 125 fixed days per year (including holidays), or operate in excess of 1250 fixed hours per year in the eastbound direction
 - g. The Toll Facility shall not operate on more than 135 fixed days of operation (including holidays), or operate in excess of 1350 fixed hours per year in the westbound direction.
 - h. The Toll Facility can also draw on an additional Flexible Hours and Days Allowance, starting from 400 hours and 40 days as the initial baseline amount, that can be used in either the eastbound or westbound direction as needed.
 - i. The additional Flexible Hours and Days Allowance will increase annually from the initial baseline amount based on the actual increase in traffic volumes over the prior operating year. The new annual amount and supporting calculation will be included in the operating report.
 - j. With traffic demand anticipated to increase, the future need for additional PPSL operating hours is expected to be necessary. CDOT, HPTE and FHWA agree to revisit the operational limitations of the PPSL's when the Floyd Hill Express Lane is fully operational.
 - k. The Toll Facility shall cease operation by the year 2035 unless modified by a different project, which may or may not be a part of the Corridor's long term solution.
 - l. Starting in 2025, utilizing the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, CDOT, HPTE, and FHWA will begin evaluating a long-term solution that addresses future demand beyond 2035.
 - m. Any proposed changes to the operating limitations of the Toll Facility or to this agreement will be in accordance with the 2011 I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision.

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Routing #: 18-HAA-XE-00005-M0006

The CDOT and the HPTE agree that if the above operational limitations are not met, the Division has the right to revoke the design variances allowed for the Project and require all Federal funds be repaid in full. If the above-mentioned limitations are not met, the Division has the right to require CDOT to restore the cross section and right side break down the shoulder to a pre-Project condition.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Amended and Restated MOU to be duly executed, on the date of the last signature below.

STATE OF COLORADO
Jared S. Polis, Governor
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Shoshana M. Lew, Executive Director

DocuSigned by:


BY: 63C1F827D40E4B3..., DATE: 9/2/2025
Keith Stefanik, P.E. Chief Engineer

COLORADO HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSPORTATION ENTERPRISE

DocuSigned by:

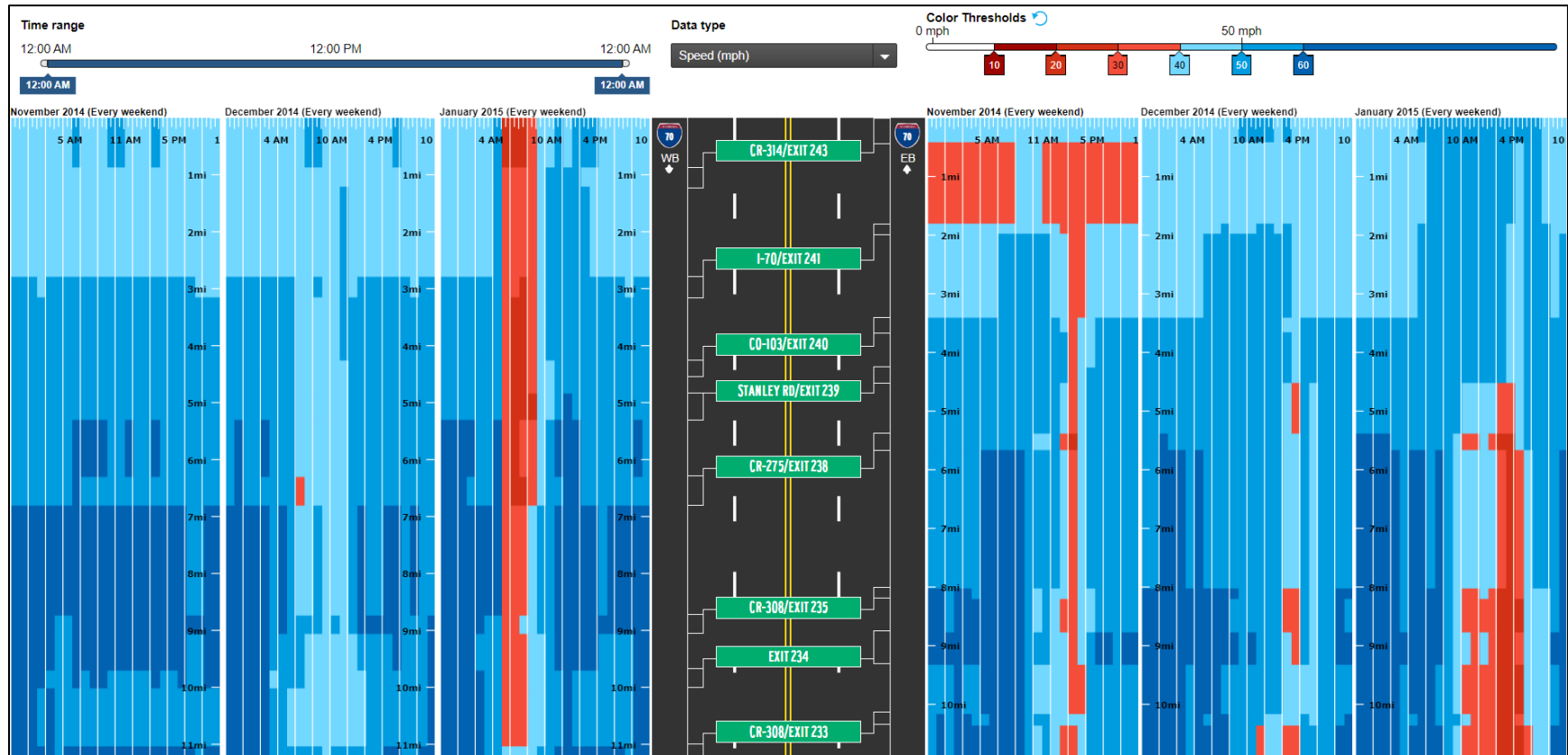
BY: 1B0591C26F0B43A..., DATE: 9/2/2025
Piper Darlington, Director

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
COLORADO DIVISION**

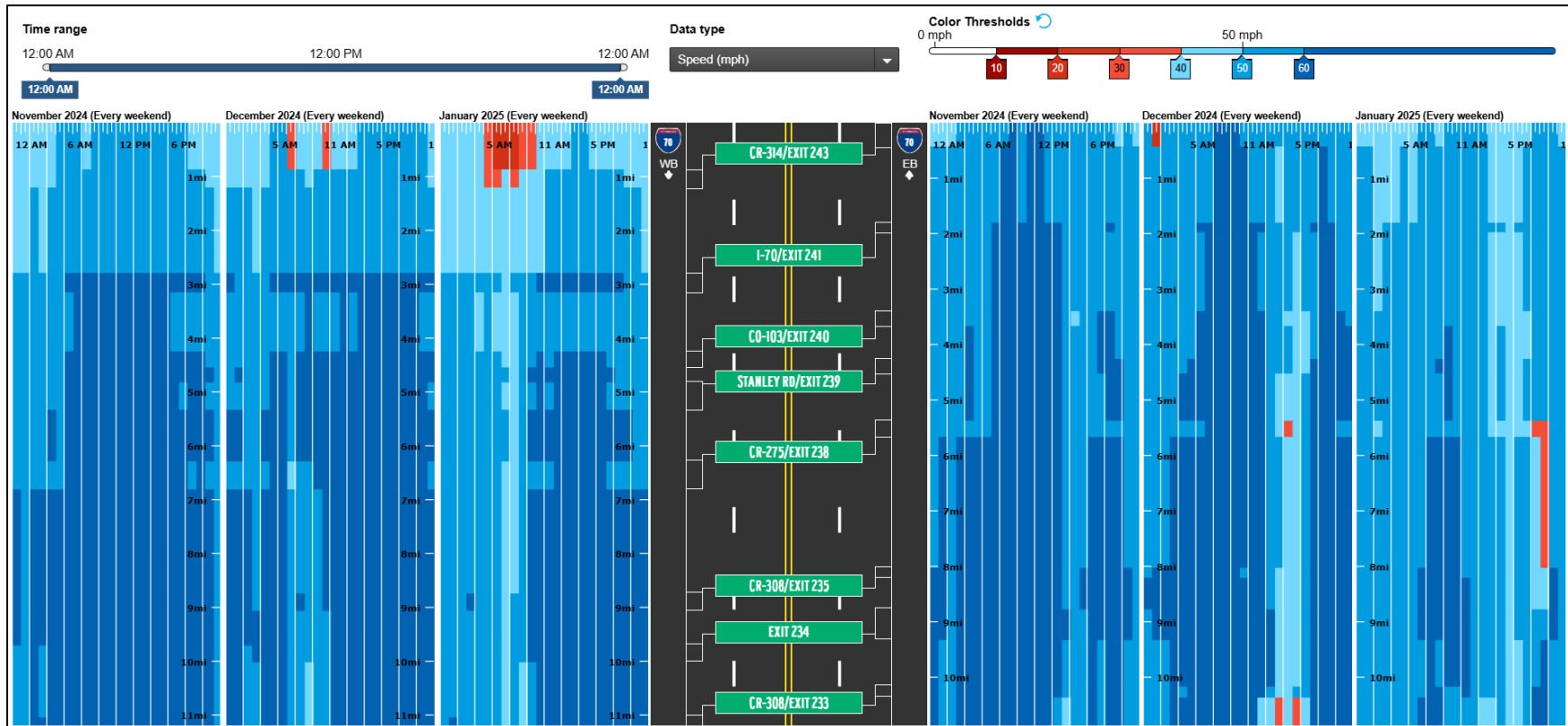
Signed by:

BY: 29AB7EA10042453..., DATE: 8/29/2025
John M. Cater, Division Administrator

Appendix B. Raw Speed Graphics from INRIX

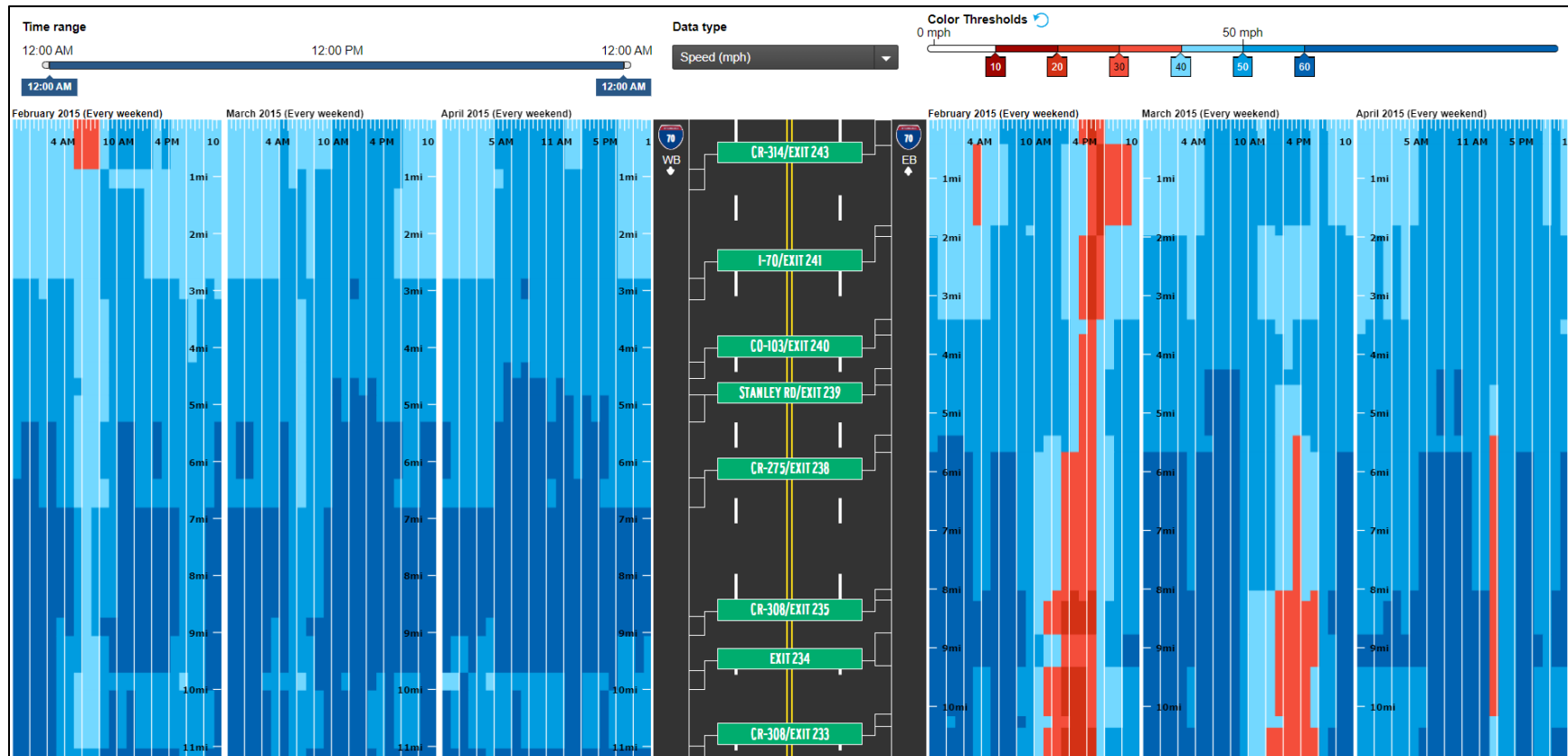
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2014-15 Weekends



Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Weekends

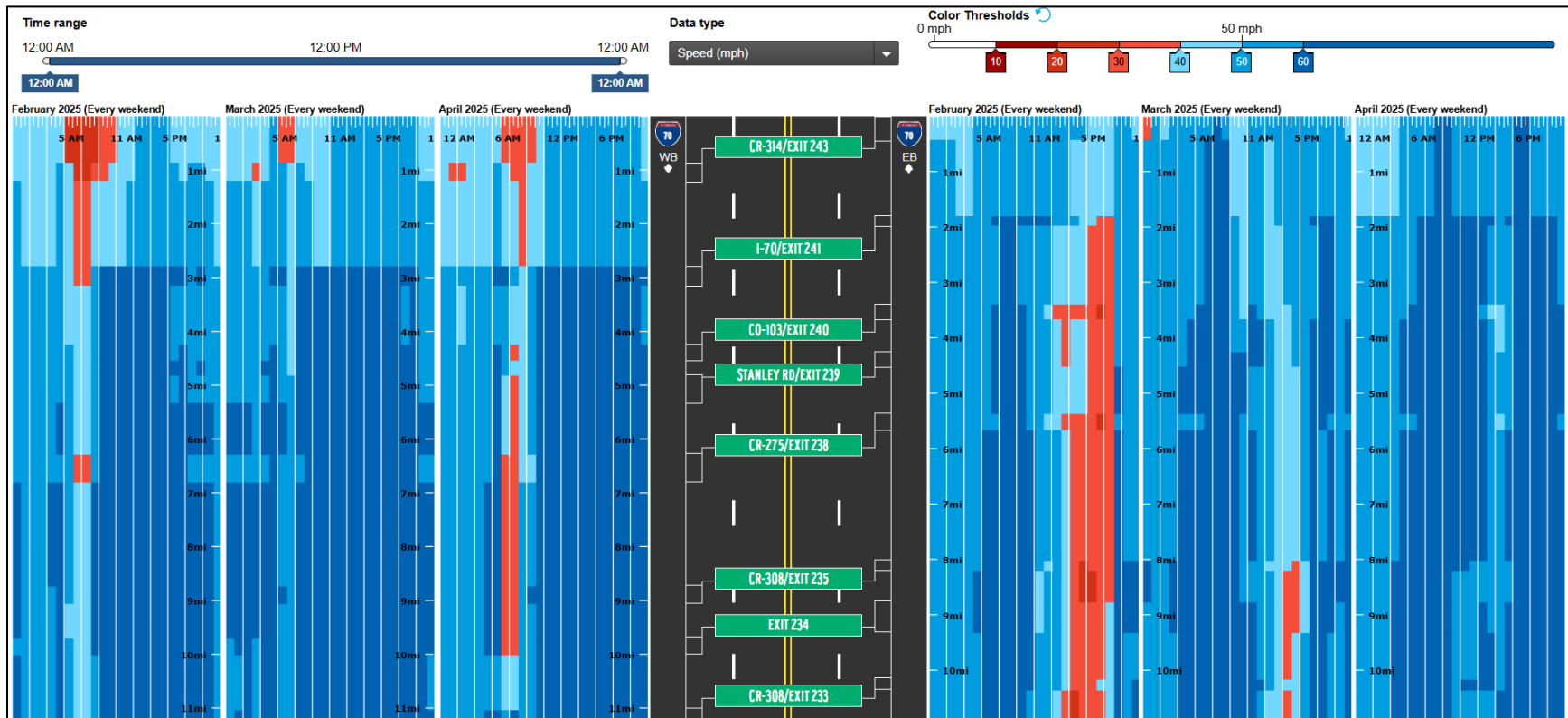


Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2014-15 Weekends

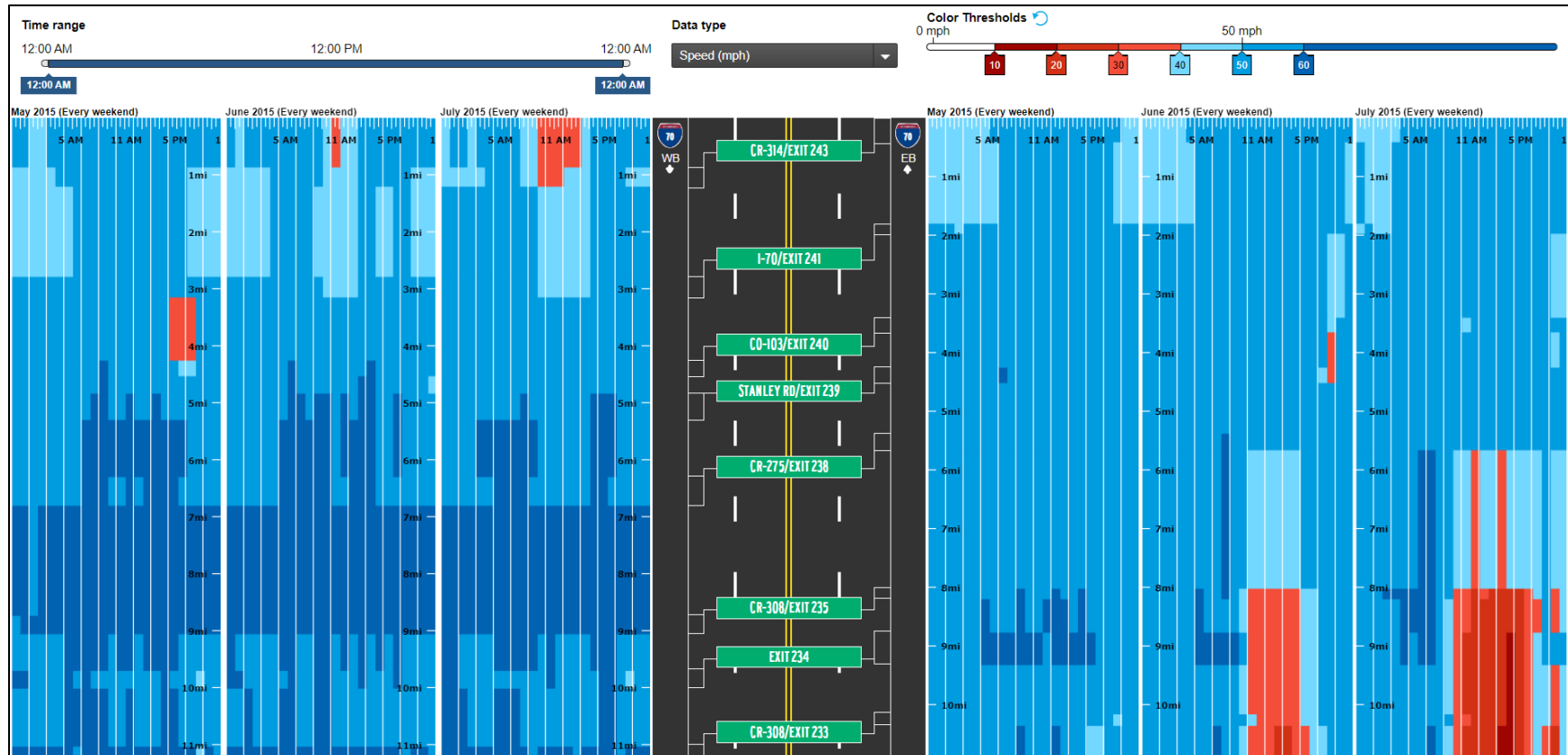


Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Weekends

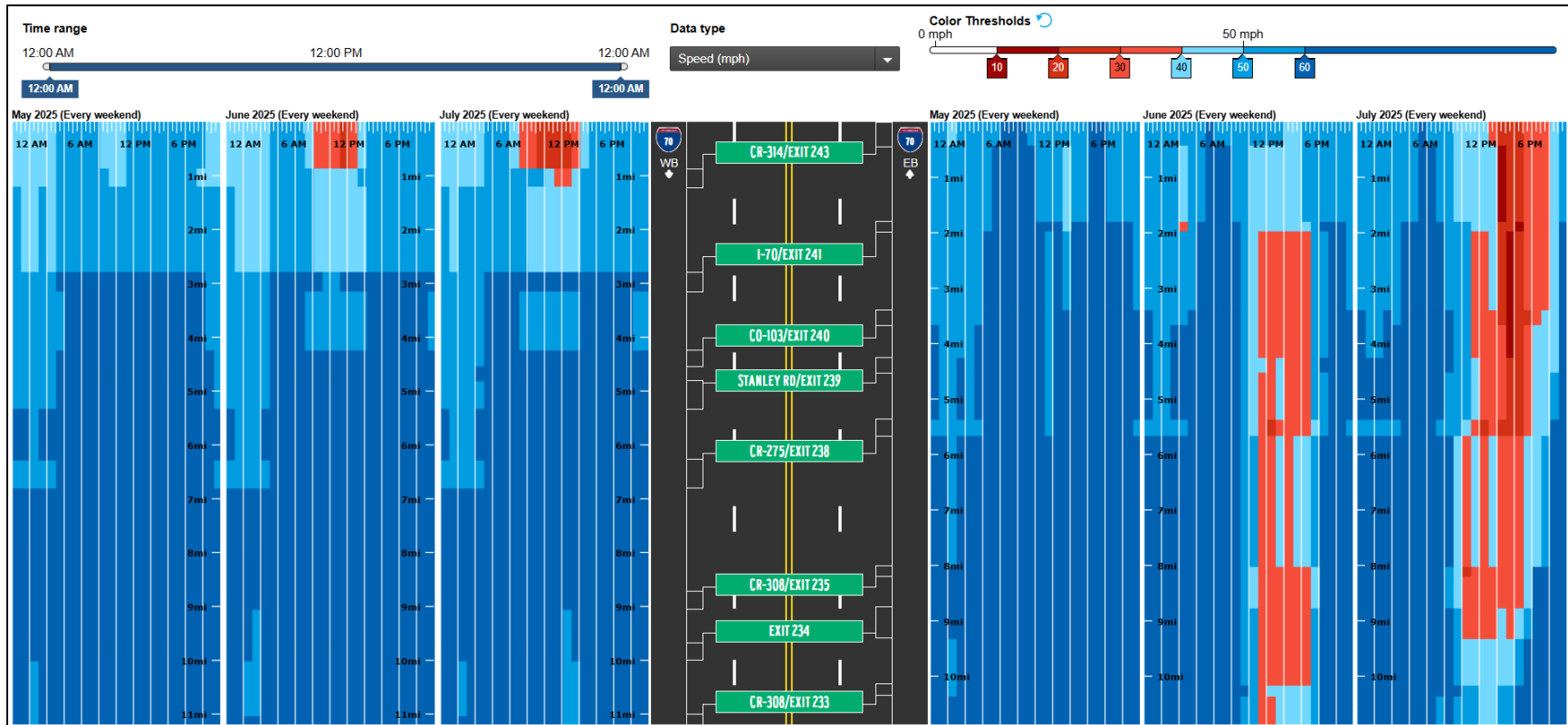
A graphic displaying Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 for February 2024, March 2024 and April 2024 weekends.



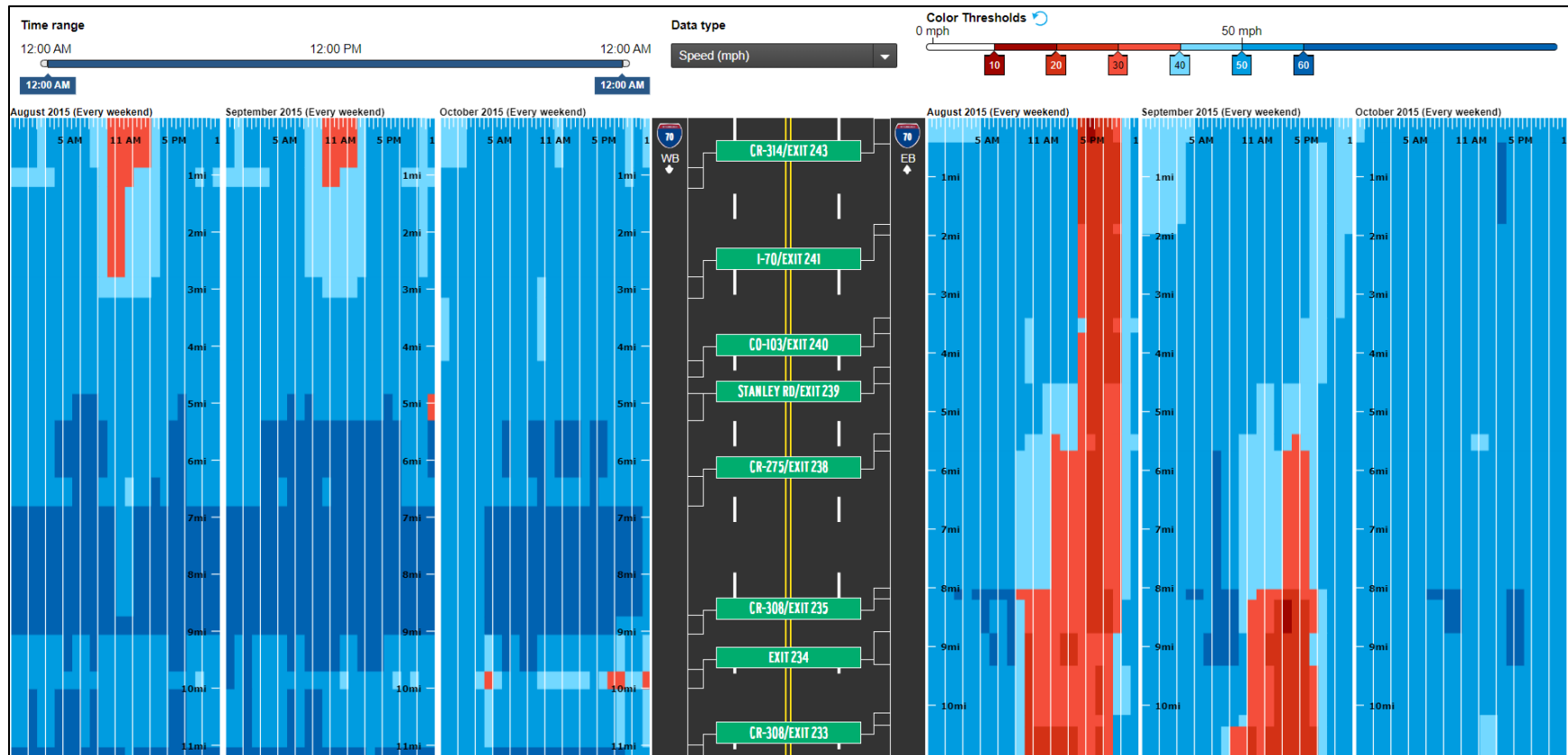
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2014-15 Weekends



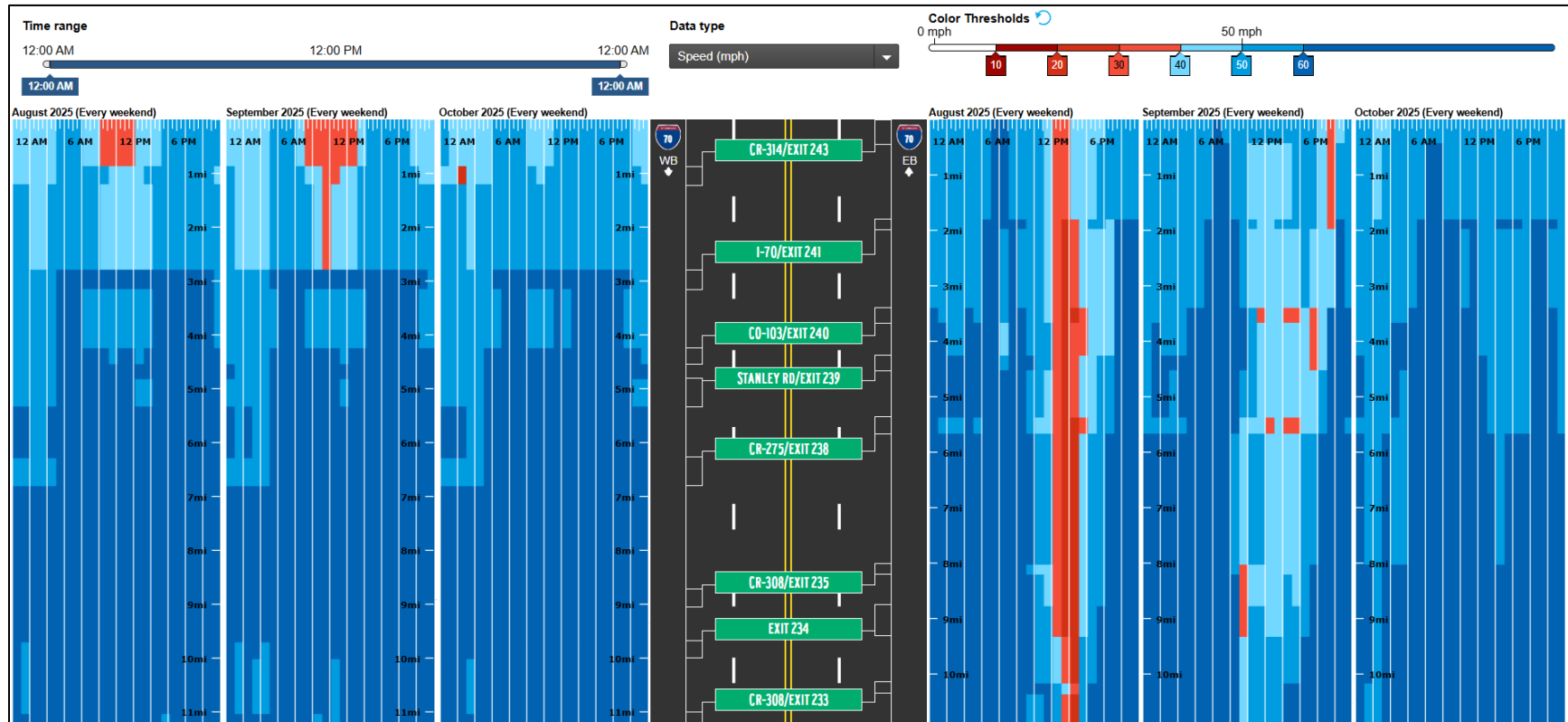
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Weekends



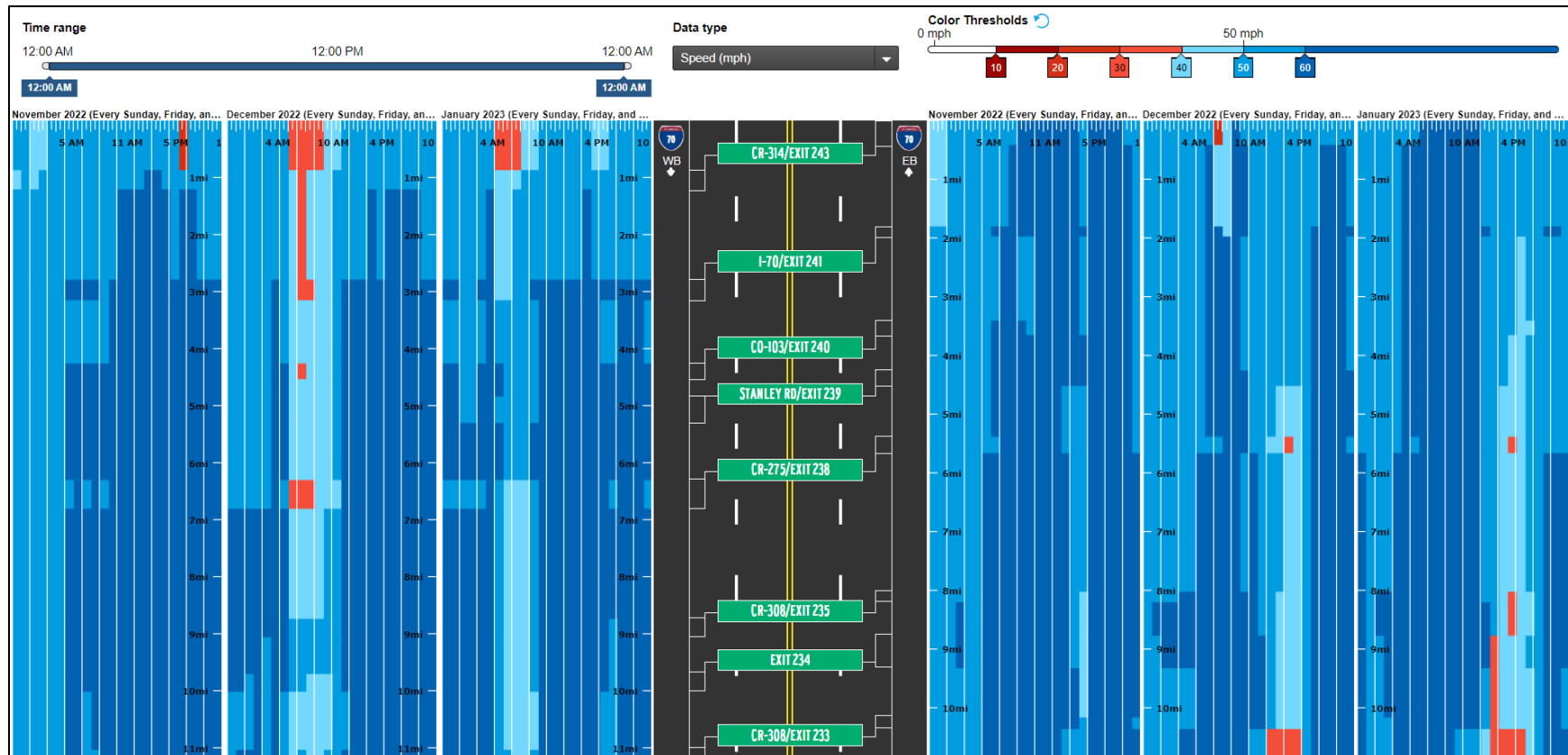
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2014-15 Weekends



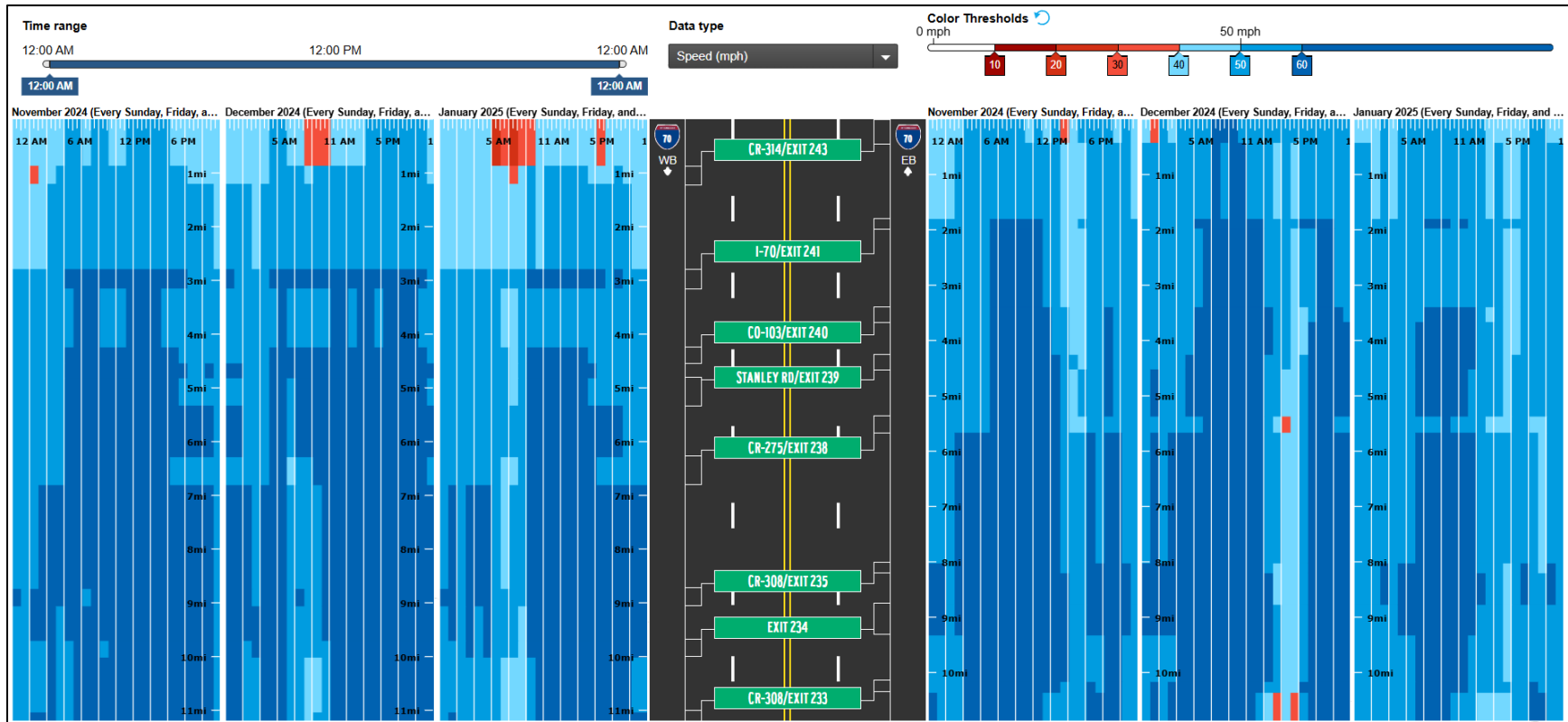
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Weekends



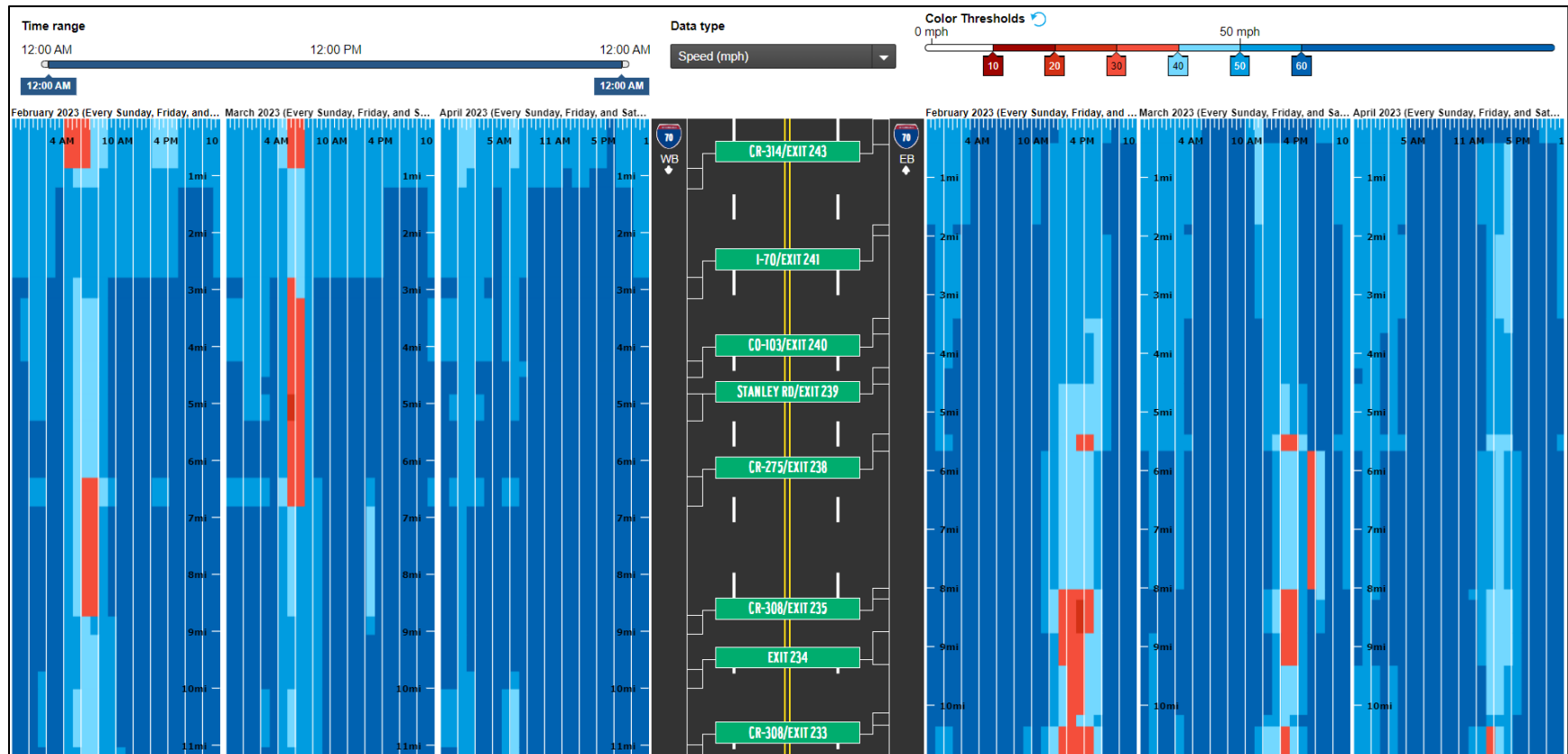
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2022-23 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays



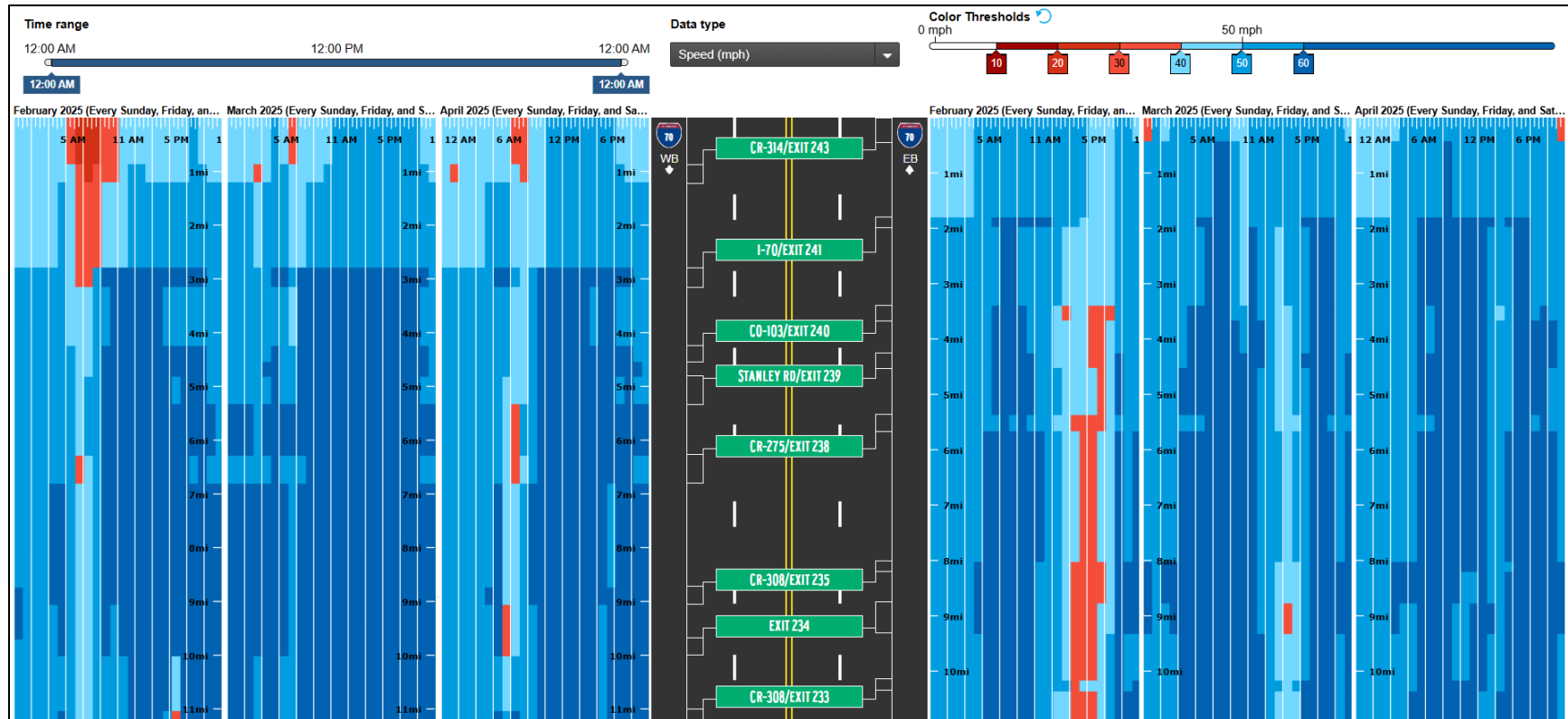
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays



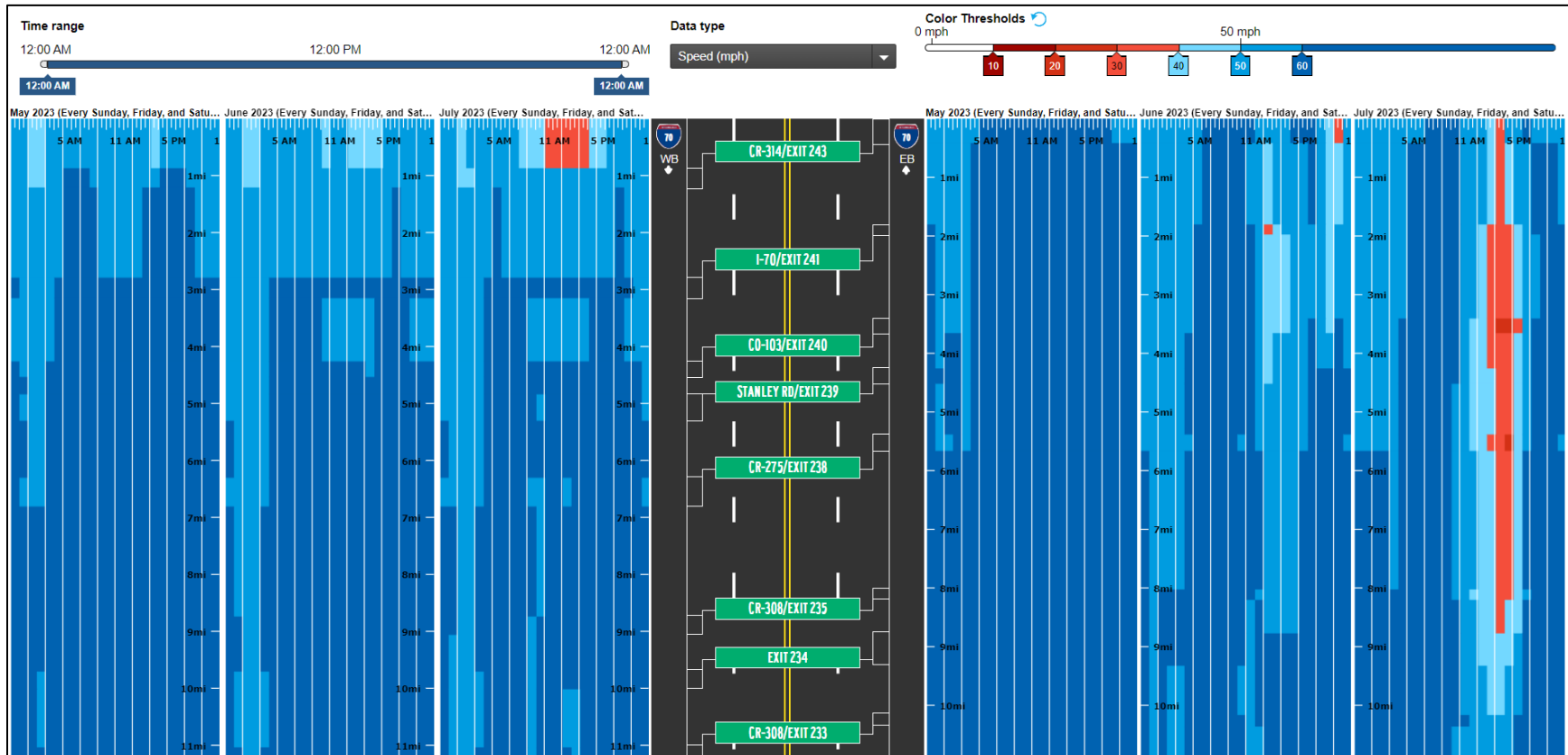
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2022-23 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays



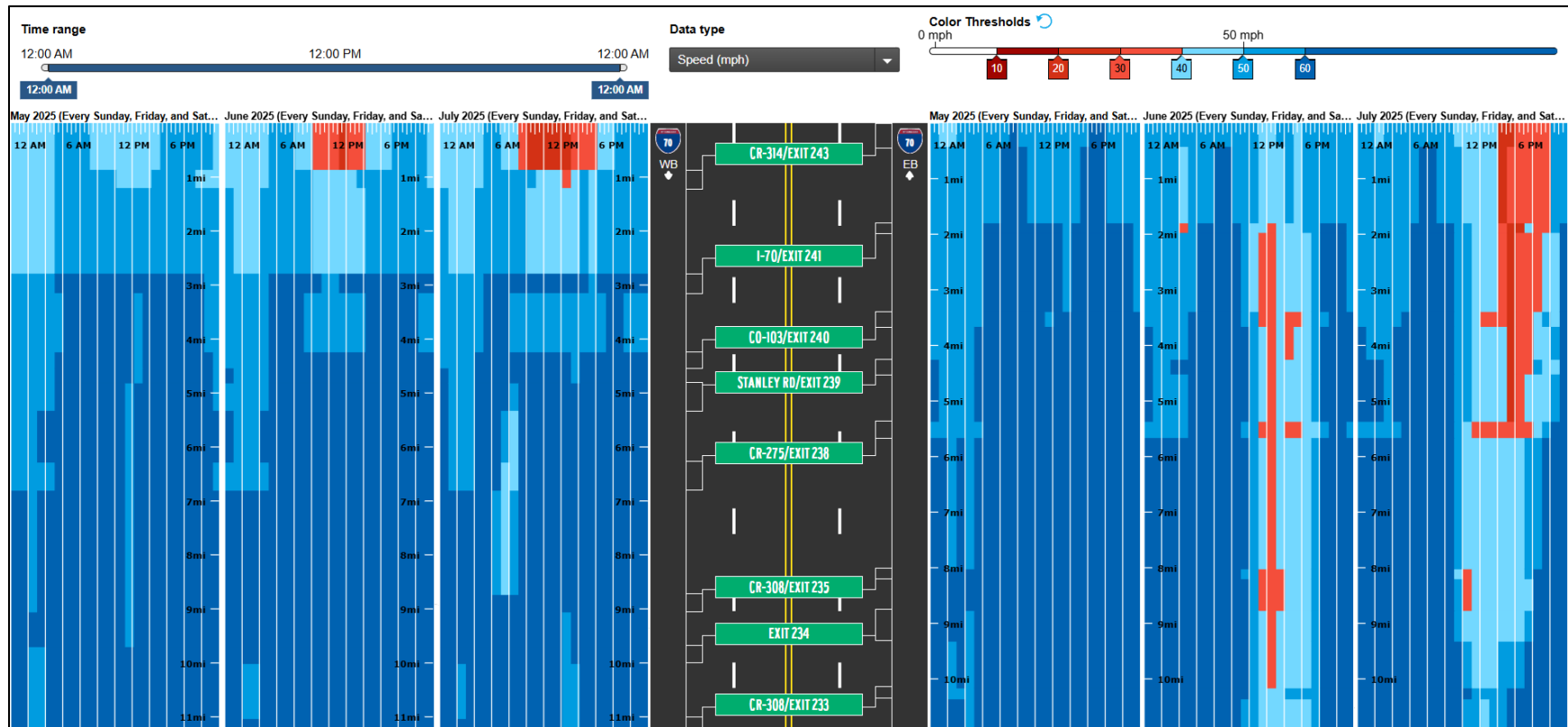
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays



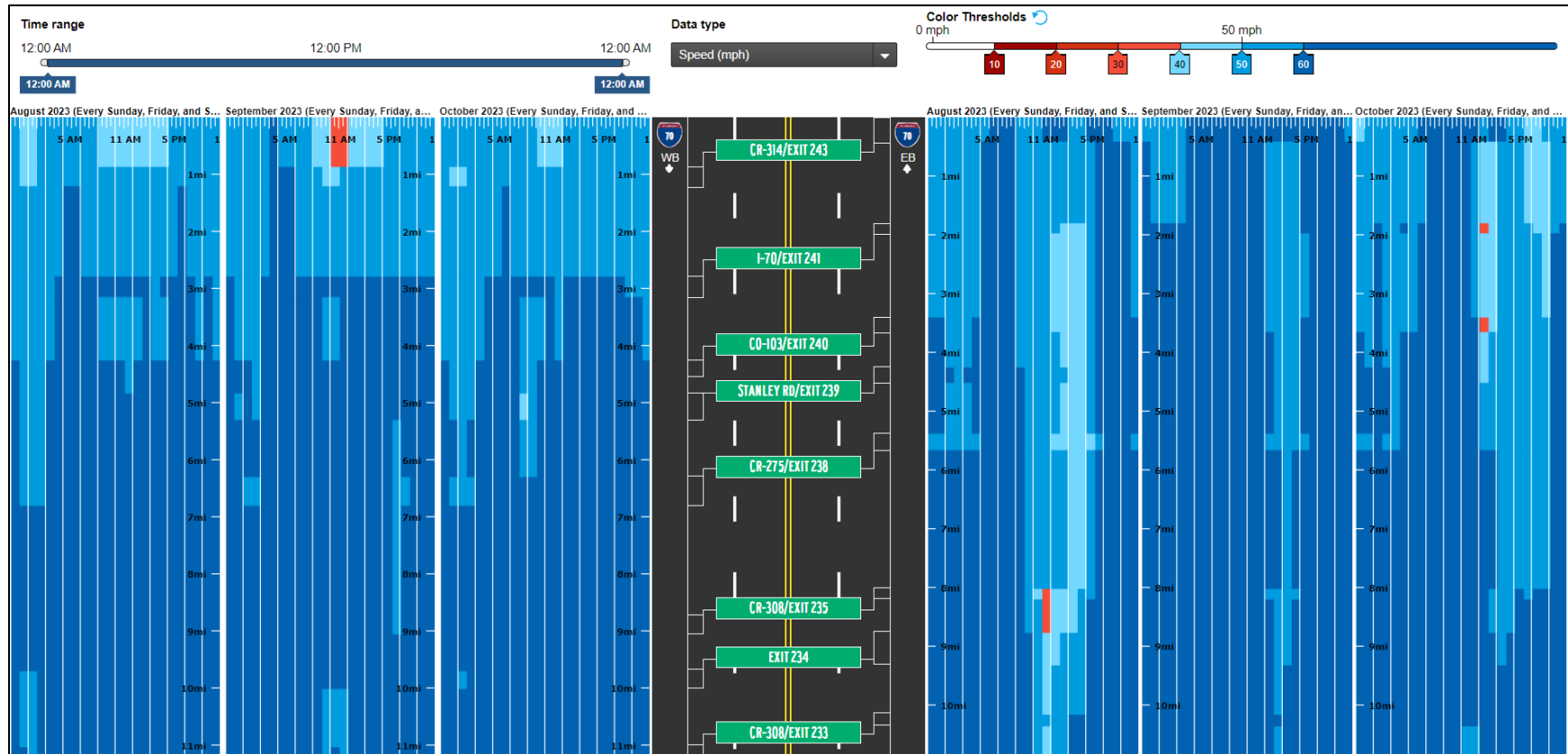
Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2022-23 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays



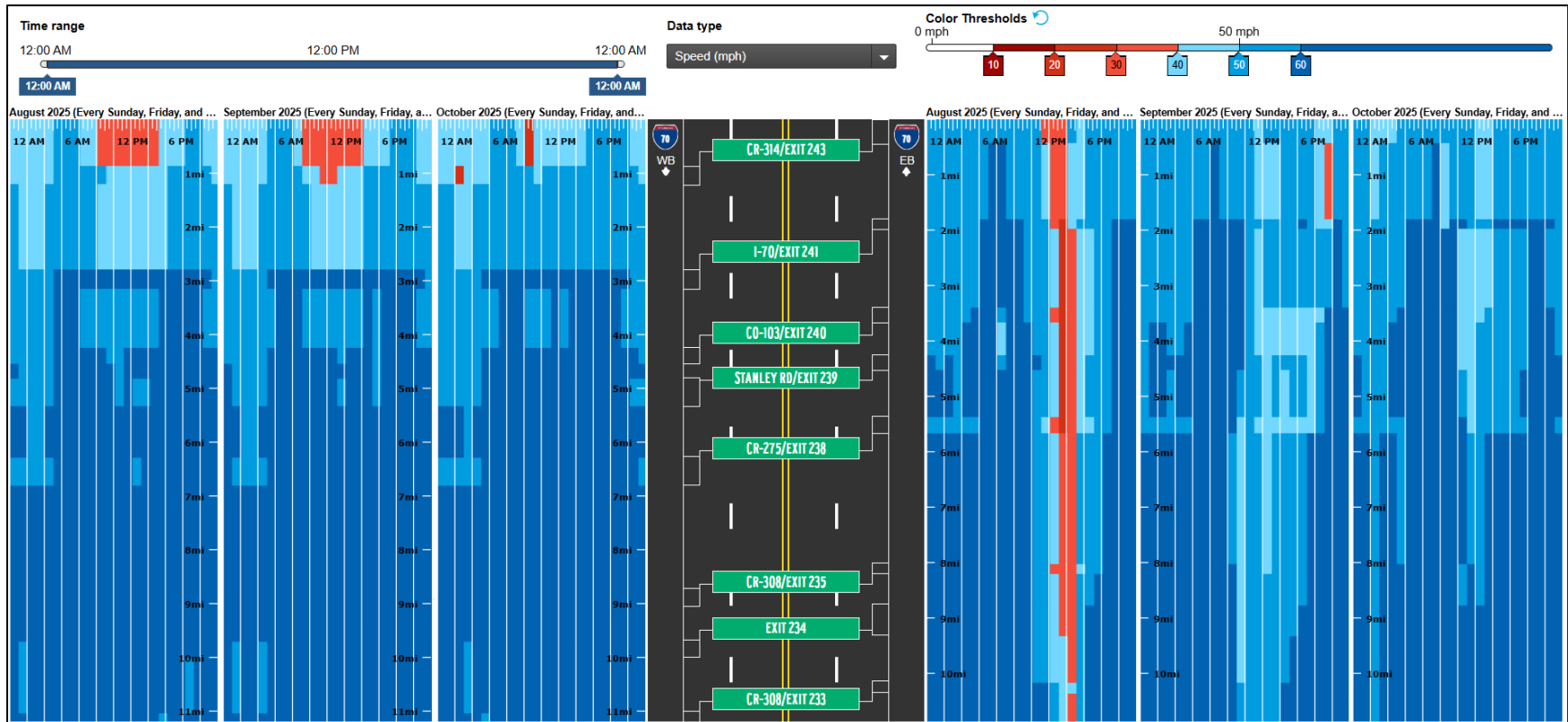
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Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2022-23 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays

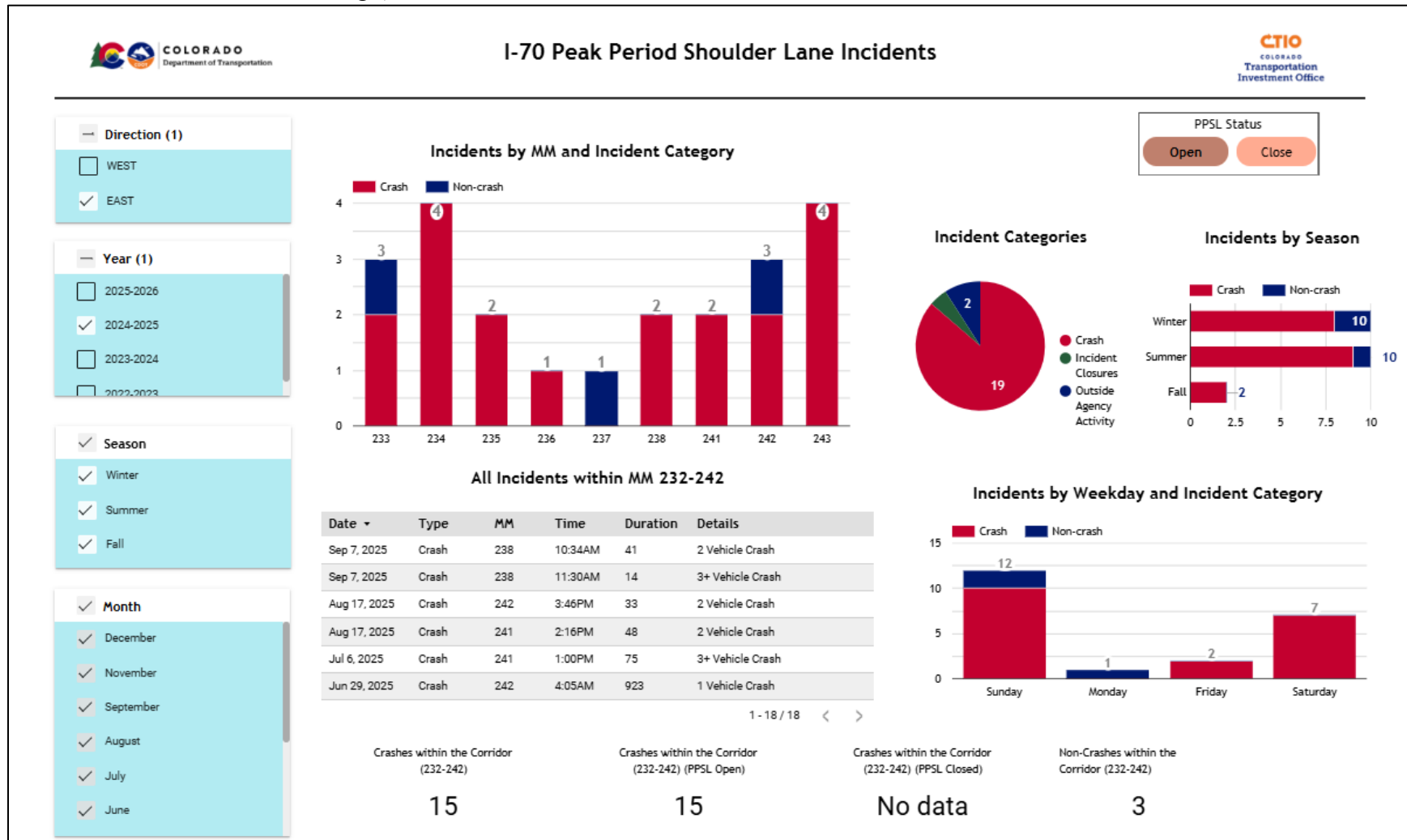


Speed for I-70 between CR-308/Exit 233 and CR-314/Exit 243 using INRIX data - 2024-25 Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays

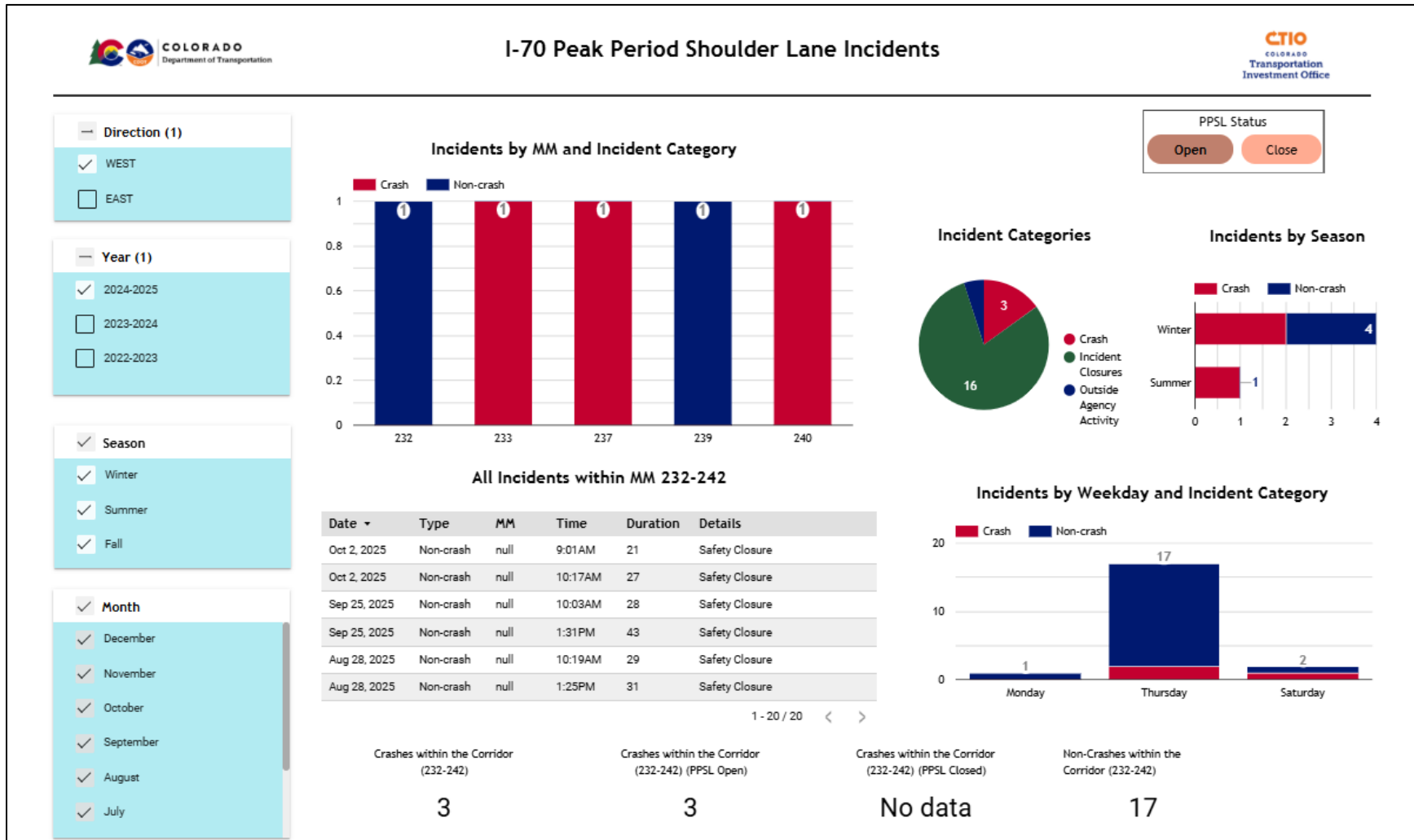


Appendix C. Safety Summary

Eastbound MEXL Dashboard Image, Incidents and Crashes



Westbound MEXL Dashboard Image, Incidents and Crashes



Appendix D. Responder Outreach Questionnaire

FIRST RESPONDER OPERATIONS AND SAFETY EVALUATION (2024-2025)

This is a request for your input on the safety and operation of the I-70 Mountain Express Lanes (MEXL).

The goals for the MEXL are to improve mobility and safety by increasing the overall throughput of traffic and provide reliable travel times. The operation and safety of the MEXL are evaluated annually.

Input from the first responders for the corridor is a critical element of the operation and safety evaluation. First responders include law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, courtesy patrol, heavy tow and EJMT control room personnel. The purpose of this document is to facilitate first responder input by providing a framework to report on the operations and safety of the MEXL.

Below is a series of topics to guide your input. Please respond in the blank space after each question to provide an assessment on each category with which you are familiar. You can also send an email summary of your observations.

Send your response by **December 20, 2025**, to:

Alex Frank, Program Manager, Colorado Transportation Investment Office
Alex.Frank@state.co.us

1. Driver Confusion and Misuse of the Lanes

In the past year, have you observed drivers misusing the lanes? For example, drivers using the toll lane for a passing lane or using the express lane when it is closed. Have you responded to or are you aware of any incidents in the toll lane when the lane was closed? Any other general misuse observations? Have you observed driver confusion?

2. Days and Hours of Operation

Are the hours and days of operation sufficient? Should there be more or fewer hours of operation? Eastbound is generally open Saturday, Sunday, and holidays 8:00 am to 9:00 pm. Westbound is generally open Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Do the varying days and hours cause confusion for the drivers?

3. Traffic Control Signage and Lane Markings

Do you have any specific concerns about any of the signage or lane markings? Do the current signage or markings improve operations? Are they confusing? Any other signage or lane marking observations or comments? Do drivers respect the signs and lane markings?

4. Variable message signs (VMS) and toll rate signs

Are all electronic signs working as expected? For example, have you noticed toll rate signs not displaying the toll rate clearly? Is the electronic variable message signage helpful? Is the signing relating to the open or closed status of the express lane adequately conveying the

message? Are there any messages on the electronic variable message signs that cause driver confusion? What mile marker are these signs at?

5. Trucks and Trailers

Trucks and trailers are not allowed in the express lanes. Have you observed trucks or trailers in the express lanes?

6. Communications

Are you receiving adequate communication from other responders and the EJMT? Do you have suggestions for improvement? What is working well?

7. Incident Management

Is the Incident Management program effective? Is responder safety given adequate attention and resources? What is working well? What needs improvement?

8. Roadway Conditions

Are snow removal operations and pavement conditions adequate?

9. Law Enforcement

What are some of the challenges for enforcement? Has enforcement been able to adapt to the limited physical space on the corridor?

10. General Safety

Please provide any other thoughts or comments on the safety and operations of the MEXL.

Responder Outreach Compilation of Responses December 2025

1. Driver Confusion and Misuse of the Lanes

Question: In the past year, have you observed drivers misusing the lanes? For example, drivers using the toll lane for a passing lane or using the express lane when it is closed. Have you responded to or are you aware of any incidents in the toll lane when the lane was closed? Any other general misuse observations? Have you observed driver confusion?

Response:

No

yes, I have seen people using the PPSL when is it closed

No personal observations of this

Yes. Generally, it is not used as a traffic lane for the most part. I have seen several instances of it being used as a breakdown/emergency lane.

yes, I have seen drivers use the lane when closed

typically only during standstill or exceptionally heavy traffic volumes.

Yes. Both used when closed and used as passing lane.

Last winter season I saw a fair amount of abuse jumping into the lane at times driver's weren't supposed to or using it to pass.

Yes

No

Yes, I have seen drivers use the shoulder lane for passing between Dumont and IS and swerving out of the toll lane to pass someone they think is driving to slowly in the toll lane. I have heard drivers in the toll lanes honk at other drivers thinking the toll lane is actually called "express" because it is a speed lane. I have observed confusion as to where the toll lane ends east bound in the area of the Veteran Memorial Tunnels .

Yes, I have seen people in the toll lane when closed, used as a passing lane, etc. I do not believe this has anything to do with driver confusion at all - it is impatient or entitled drivers.

very few, sometimes used for passing.

I have observed misuse for passing single and multiple vehicles even when traffic is not heavy.

2. Days and Hours of Operation

Question: Are the hours and days of operation sufficient? Should there be more or fewer hours and of operation? Eastbound is generally open Saturday, Sunday, and holidays 8:00 am to 9:00 pm. Westbound is generally open Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Do the varying days and hours cause confusion for the drivers?

Response:

More

it seem good

I think the lane either needs to be open or closed.....the varying times is confusing and frustrating

Suggest keeping both directions open at the same time.

- No Response -

yes

I don't think the variation of time is as confusing as people have never heard of "peak period lanes MEXL". They could be Colorado drivers or out of state and many are unaware.

- No Response -

Yes

I don't see the rationale for closing it? Just leave it open? If there is traffic, people will use it. If there isn't, they won't.

Some days the toll lanes are open when not needed. CTIO appears to be refining that and the days are sufficient. Those of us who live here and travel this road constantly know that congestion is probably less than 10% of the time. The lanes are clearly marked open or closed. Knowing when a lane is closed may become very difficult when a separate toll lane is opened on Floyd Hill westbound.

Perhaps sign as such.

I think the locals are very aware, general tourists not so much.

I think the hours and days are sufficient. The open/closed status is clearly communicated.

3. Traffic Control Signage and Lane Markings

Question: Do you have any specific concerns about any of the signage or lane markings? Do the current signage or markings improve operations? Are they confusing? Any other signage or lane marking observations or comments? Do drivers respect the signs and lane markings?

Response:

None

no

Signage is good, however again the times of open/closing are the confusing part

No problem

I think they are good

The main problem with the signage , which is a public safety matter in my opinion, is the number of signs that do not work at any given time. Right now, I-25 seg2/3 are an example. No excuse to have so much equipment out of service.

The signs/markings seem adequate to me.

- No Response -

Vague, tourists don't understand

No.

The markings on eastbound around VMTunnels are still not clear as to when the 'toll' lane actually ends. The restrictions on vehicles permitted are hard to see on WB entering the VM Tunnel.. Good signage on use restrictions will be vital when FH opens as the restrictions differ from the FH toll lane to the PPSL toll lane

See comments under 1.

I think for the most part the signage is sufficient, most drivers do respect the sign.s

There should be signs stating fines for speeding are double in the express lane. There should be speed limit signs for the express lanes, with a maximum speed 10 MPH under the regular traffic lanes.

4. Variable message signs (VMS) and toll rate signs

Question: Are all electronic signs working as expected? For example, have you noticed toll rate signs not displaying the toll rate clearly? Is the electronic variable message signage helpful? Is the signing relating to the open or closed status of the express lane adequately conveying the message? Are there any messages on the electronic variable message signs that cause driver confusion? What mile marker are these signs at?

Response:

They are very easy to understand

some are off line

No personal observations to note

No problem

all working VMS are working as expected

Again, if everything installed was in working order, I think we would be in good shape....but everything is not in working order.

- No Response -

I think more chain and traction law information on the signs early season before traffic builds up would be beneficial.

- No Response -

Yes./

VMS are dominant and clear on price

There have been a couple of times where one sign has said that the lane is closed, and then when you get to the entrance it says that it is open.

232 EB sign has been out for awhile

Occasional technical issues that are typically quickly corrected.

5. Trucks and Trailers

Question: Trucks and trailers are not allowed in the express lanes. Have you observed trucks or trailers in the express lanes?

Response:

Not recently. I did in past years.

- No Response -

No

I have seen semis and trailers in the lane during incidents.

no

yes - I believe some reworking of the rules may help this but I haven't thought through it in detail at this time.

I have not.

Some trailers.

No

Yes.

Very rarely eastbound, but those lanes are so narrow and without shoulder that they are scary. WB no semi trucks but an occasional trailer, this may change with opening of FH

Not on I-70.

I have seen CMVs and camp trailers in the express. Luckily few and far between

I have noticed occasional use by "outdoorsman" with recreational toy trailers, not so much camper trailers.

6. Communications

Question: Are you receiving adequate communication from other responders and the EJMT? Do you have suggestions for improvement? What is working well?

Response:

- No Response -

- No Response -

Communication issues have not been noted

Communications between the tunnel and TOC to first responders can be improved, specifically the timing and speed of notifications.

- No Response -

Comms could be better with the maintenance department, perhaps that will improve over the winter.

NA

NA

Yes

Not really receiving much, but not sure if I need to?

Don't know

7. Incident Management

Question: Is the Incident Management program effective? Is responder safety given adequate attention and resources? What is working well? What needs improvement?

Response:

- No Response -

- No Response -

This is always a cost/benefit consideration for individual events. Often times throughout the state, we are pressured to open travel when it is unsafe, and close when it isnt appropoate. A clear path to who the decision maker is (LE or CDOT) could clear confusion in volatile situations

No problem

- No Response -

yes

NA

NA

Yes

Not enough exposure to comment.

Don't know

NA

Lack of coverage on holidays is concerning

The Incident management team is helpful and should be retained.

8. Roadway Conditions

Question: Are snow removal operations and pavement conditions adequate?

Response:

Yes

- No Response -

Snow yes/pavement no

We can always use more CDOT plows.

yes

yes

There has been rough asphalt leading up to the construction. New construction sections are huge improvement. WBExit 241 into Idaho Springs collects a large pool of water/ice which is a hazard.

NA

Absolutely not

Yes

Pavement has been greatly improved over the past several years

Yes.

No, plows tend to be pushed towards the approach of EJMT and Berthoud during major storms.

A subject that should have a focused discussion.

9. Law Enforcement

Question: What are some of the challenges for enforcement? Has enforcement been able to adapt to the limited physical space on the corridor?

Answer:

- No Response -

- No Response -

Extreme challenges to get responders to scenes in heavy traffic. No other significant observations

The corridor is too small. It should be at least 4 lanes wide between DIA and Avon. We adapt the best that we can.

- No Response -

I believe the lanes are more of a benefit than a challenge to LE.

NA

Law enforcement needs to do an early season traction and chain law inspection near Morrison and issue citations for the laws to be taken seriously. This should occur in October when traffic volumes are light to send a message to drivers. Secondly, they must issue citations for violations on anything they incident they help clear for traction and chain law violations or they will continue to be disregarded throughout the season.

No

N/A

CSP has told us we are lucky if there is one officer in the county. ISPD is filling IS coffers but has slowed the traffic.

NA

no opinion, I think they adapt well on MEXL

N/A

10. General Safety

Question: Please provide any other thoughts or comments on the safety and operations of the MEXL.

Answer:

- No Response -

- No Response -

- No Response -

N/A

- No Response -

In road lighting, perhaps on the fog line and on the jersey barriers or on both lines, I believe could increase safety and help drivers distinguish between lanes in limited visibility.

Thank you for reaching out for feedback!

From the perspective of mountain residents, The MEXL is a flawed premise. I-70 traffic is worse than ever, and a mostly empty lane isn't helping that. As far as revenue generation, the condition of I-70 in the mtns is horrible, and the ruts caused but truck chains is extremely dangerous for passenger cars when roads are slick. We experience regularly 100 miles of deteriorating I-70, yet only foothills and city get meaningful repairs.

I have driven this road constantly for 50 years. The general speed on I 70 has increased to between 72-85. The eastbound Peak Period Shoulder Lane is so narrow it is a hazardous drive and this seems to actually slow the traffic when the lane is open. Fear apparently works as a

traffic calming device. WB has a bit more space (except across the bridges) but is a white knuckle raceway which does have an alerting factor.

NA

express speeds can be impacted when heavy congestion is present. Have to watch out for impatient drivers that cross the line into the ETL.

Excess speed in the express lanes is the biggest risk hazard.

Appendix E. Certification

DATE

Mr. John Cater, Division Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
12300 W. Dakota Avenue
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

RE: Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado Transportation Investment Office
I-70 Mountain Express Lane Annual Report, 2024-25 Annual Report

Dear Mr. Cater:

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO) have jointly developed the I-70 Mountain Express Lanes Annual Report for 2024-25. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between FHWA, CDOT and CTIO, the report provides an assessment of the 2024-25 operating year and identifies recommendations to improve performance for the next operating year.

CDOT and CTIO hereby certify that this annual report provides an accurate assessment of the operational performance of the I-70 Mountain Express Lane for the 2024-25 operating year. Additionally, the results of this assessment have been provided to Clear Creek County (CCC) as part of the ongoing assessment of the I-70 Mountain Express Lane project as part of the CDOT/CCC Quarterly Coordination Meetings. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the Annual Report as submitted herewith, fairly, and accurately presents the operation of the I-70 Mountain Express Lane.

If you have any questions or desire additional information, please contact Piper Darlington at 303-757-9380 or piper.darlington@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

CTIO Director
Piper Darlington

CDOT R1 Traffic Engineer
Alazar Tesfaye

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**I-70 PEAK PERIOD SHOULDER LANE
Annual Report 2024-2025**

November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025