



***I-70 Silverthorne/Dillon Interchange Project
PLT Meeting Minutes***

3/17/2011, 1-3:30 PM
Silverthorne Town Hall

Meeting Participants

PLT Members:

Bill Linfield, Town of Silverthorne
Bill Scheuerman, CDOT Resident Engineer, Mountain Residency
Eric Holgerson, Town of Dillon
R.A. Plummer, AECOM
Steve Swanson, Blue River Watershed Group
Thad Noll, Summit County
Tyler Weldon, CDOT Project Manager

Consultant Team Members:

Brian Kennedy, AECOM
Dean VanDeWege, Jacobs
Megan Alderton, InterMountain Corporate Affairs
Tom Schilling, InterMountain Corporate Affairs

Guest:

Jim Buckler, Cutthroat Anglers

1. DISCUSSION

R.A. Plummer began the meeting and briefly reviewed the purpose of the meeting and the meeting agenda.

Old Business/Housekeeping:

The PLT approved the minutes from 11/10/10.

Project and schedule update

R.A. reviewed the following staff changes at CDOT: Scott McDaniel has taken a position with CDOT headquarters, and will be replaced by Jim Bemelen as West Program Engineer. Wendy Wallach has taken a position with CDOT's Transit Unit and will be replaced by Chuck Attardo.



Bill Scheuerman commented that once Jim Bemelen is on-board, CDOT will hire an I-70 Mountain Corridor manager and new I-70 Environmental lead.

Schedule:

R.A. provided an overview of the public involvement process schedule for the Evaluate Phase (See Handout). He explained that the April 21 meeting -- rather than being a meeting of the regular PLT -- will be a meeting of the Technical Team, which will focus on technical issues related to alternatives development. A regular PLT meeting will follow on May 19, and a PLT workshop will be held in June to review the work of the Technical Team. This meeting will focus on alternative screening and identifying alternatives for elimination. A public meeting will be held in July, with Issue Task Force meetings to follow should they be necessary. Another public meeting will be held in the fall to present and obtain input on recommendations.

PLT Updates:

Bill Linfield explained that Silverthorne improvements – including lengthening of the left turn lane from Highway 9 northbound onto Wildernest Road; installation of a traffic signal at Wildernest and Stephens Way; widening Stephens Way from Wildernest back under the interstate; and complete reconstruction of Wildernest Road from Highway 9 back to the crossing over the Blue River, including a new sidewalk on the west side – have been approved and should be completed by the end of summer 2012. These improvements should be included in existing conditions.

In addition to the Town road improvement project, the Lowes development and re-alignment of Wildernest Rd and Buffalo Mtn. Drive will be constructed. A court decision on the Lowes intersection is expected within a few weeks.

Bill also described the Silverthorne Town Center planning effort for the Downtown Core. The planning effort will be having a meeting on March 21, 2011. Tyler and Brian stated that they plan to attend. The redevelopment of the Town core from Rainbow Drive to 6th St. to Adams Avenue will be reviewed by a team of outside planners to help the Town with its vision.

Project Purpose and Need and Relationship to the Alternative Evaluation Criteria:

R.A. explained the updated purpose and need document (Handout: Linking Project Needs, Goals and Issues to Evaluation Criteria Decision Making Process), and related changes that were the result of a meeting with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on February 4th, 2011.

R.A. explained the intent of the handout. In summary, the handout reflects the previously PLT-established mission and goals, as well as the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) core values, and links them to problem statements and project goals. The PLT agreed that the document helps to keep the project focused on solving problems.



R.A. stated that a standalone purpose and need will be prepared for review by FHWA . This document will serve as the purpose and need for any National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation required to clear the project.

The following changes to the handout were proposed:

- Add language that references the need for sidewalks that can be maintained.
- Add “and sustainable” to the end of bullet #3 on trails.
- Add “vehicle, bike and pedestrian” to clarify the mobility goal so that it does not imply vehicle mobility only.

R.A. asked the PLT to review the handout thoroughly and to return comments to Megan Alderton by Friday, March 25th.

Interchange Types:

R.A. provided an introduction to start a conversation about interchange improvement possibilities. R.A. stated that FHWA is open to a variety of alternatives with one exception: partial interchange concepts. R.A. clarified that a partial interchange would be where one or more of the primary interchange movements would not be available. Tyler gave the example of the I-70 Eagle Half Diamond Interchange. Following R.A.’s introduction, Dean provided an overview of the various types of interchanges under consideration for the I-70 Silverthorne/Dillon Interchange Project. The basic types include:

- Tight Diamond interchange
- Single-point urban interchange (SPUI)
- Diverging diamond interchange
- Roundabouts at a diamond interchange
- Split diamond

Dean explained that the SPUI interchange will require a longer signal cycle length and longer clearance intervals in which all lights are red to make up for a lesser skew than is normally required for an interchange of this type. The double roundabout will eliminate the need for two signals, so it will present fewer problems with signal progression. The diverging diamond could be confusing to tourists, but would present only two phases of traffic. This type of interchange has been done by the Utah DOT with success. The split diamond interchange type would require the most work.

A lengthy discussion occurred in relation to a split diamond and some unconventional possibilities. One primary idea included a collector/distributor road system in the northwest quadrant linked to a split diamond on-ramp. The roads system would connect to the new signaled intersection to be constructed near the planned Lowes retail outlet. Various ideas involving one-way and/or two-way routes for motorists were discussed. Dean and others



marked up an aerial photograph on the wall to clarify how this aspect of the split diamond approach could work. The group discussed the importance of handling Wildernest traffic efficiently and how the split diamond could help. Other benefits of the split diamond approach were discussed along with phased implementation strategies.

The technical meeting would try to identify possible ideas and narrow down the options while documenting decisions. Tyler commented that the team should be able to ensure that they are not surprised by an option late in the process causing us to revisiting the screening. Tyler brought up Bill Linfield's comment about businesses wanting a direct ramp access to hotel areas off of the I-70 westbound off ramp. This idea has been raised by the public in the past. The primary benefit of this possibility would be to make local access more efficient. This is an example of an option that could be screen out for various reasons. So if the question comes up in the future as a team we would have the documentation that we looked at it and moved on.

Bill Scheuerman stated that an eastbound auxiliary lane from SH 9 Frisco interchange to the Silverthorne/Dillon interchange is planned and noted that a split diamond approach would add another lane to this anticipated expansion of I-70 west of the interchange. There was discussion about the need for through lanes on the bridges over SH 6 & 9. Bill emphasized that whether or not to preclude in the preferred alternative should be documented. We need to be consistent with the PEIS alternative and an auxiliary lane from Frisco to Silverthorne is definitely part of it and needs to be accommodated for any solution chosen for Silverthorne.

In general, the group discussed that handling more local traffic in peripheral locations may be advantageous in terms of travel on SH 9 and US 6 in the vicinity of I-70.

It was suggested that access control, signal operation, interchange combinations, and the elimination of signals should be addressed and considered. A goal of handling trips to and from the Wildernest area more efficiently was identified as a project challenge.

Bicycle travel under I-70 via SH 9/US 6 was also discussed. Tyler, Bill Linfield, and Bill Scheuerman discussed CDOT's applicable bicycle policies and existing shoulder conditions.

Potential Solutions by Category:

The PLT discussed potential solutions by categories – bike/pedestrian, safety, transit, I-70 ramp/mainline improvements, traffic flow on US 6/SH9 and interchange types.

With regard to bike/pedestrian, Bill Linfield commented that the crossing for the median improvements will be eliminated with the Town median improvements. He highlighted on the bike/pedestrian map the crossings he would like to protect, and he explained that he would like paths to detach from the road wherever possible. Discussion included the need for minimum 6' sidewalks on both sides of US 6&9. Existing may be wider and will be determined. Tyler asked whether the sidewalk could be consolidated to one side, but the PLT all agreed people will still



walk on both sides of the highway no matter what -- similar to the Dillon Ridge worn path. People walk the shortest route. Dean asked if pedestrians and bikes use the same path. It was commented that most cyclists use the Blue River Path not the highway to ride. Tyler commented that there is a new CDOT bike and pedestrian chapter to guide us. Thad said it would be appropriate to create a paved shoulder for cyclists wherever possible as well. Accommodate existing paths, but there is not a need for anything new.

Transit

Tyler asked the PLT members involved with the I-70 PEIS about the Park-n-Ride that is outlined in the document. Again this is an issue that needs to be documented with the same not to preclude process.

Therefore, there is also no need for anything new regarding transit.

Safety

With regard to safety, Bill Linfield suggested it will be important to look at lighting and visibility, as well as design elements such as striping and overhead signing – especially for winter travelers and tourists. Tyler mentioned that the lane drop exit configuration that currently exists on WB and EB exits is not consistent with driver expectation that drivers in the right through lane have a choice to exit or proceed. However, the lane drop is well signed this could explain some of the safety issues with the interchange crash statistics.

Environmental Issues

With regard to environmental issues, Bill Linfield explained that all new Silverthorne developments are required to address storm water drainage. He would like to incorporate opportunities – within existing constraints -- for cleaning storm water before it reaches the creek and river. Eric suggested vaults, with which he has had success. Bill Scheuerman explained that CDOT has a strong desire to address water issues in projects on the programmatic level. A local example is the Straight Creek Sediment Control Action Plan (SCAP). It's a thought out plan instead of piece meal water quality devices. There are likely opportunities to partner on an approach to water quality issues and if needed; maybe a Blue River SCAP would be a future idea if the Department moves in that direction

Jim Buckler, Cutthroat Anglers:

Guest Jim Buckler, Cutthroat Anglers, and retired sanitary and storm water municipality head in Kansas City, expressed concern that deicers and other pollutants are allowed to directly discharge into the Blue River from the bridges -- a highly valued natural resource. He has sent Tyler a detailed e-mail regarding this issue. Jim realized while looking at the aerial maps that the impervious area around the Blue River is a major issue compared to the minor issue of the bridge drains over the Blue.



Next Meeting (Thursday, May 19th, at Town of Silverthorne):

The PLT will not hold an April meeting. The next PLT meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 19th, from 1-3:30 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

- The PLT will return comments to Megan on the purpose and need document by March 25, 2011.

Minutes prepared by: M. Alderton, 3/18/11

Last Rev: 3/31/11