



EB I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: What is a Peak Period Shoulder Lane?

RESPONSE: A Peak Period Shoulder Lane is an upgraded shoulder that will function as an optional, tolled express lane during peak driving periods. During non-peak times, the lane will function as an extra-wide shoulder. The existing two lanes will remain operational at all times to the traveling public.

QUESTION: Is this just an extension of the Twin Tunnels project?

RESPONSE: No. The east end of the Peak Period Shoulder Lane Project is just west of the Twin Tunnels Project. Both projects are part of CDOT's comprehensive plan to improve travel in the I-70 Mountain Corridor.

QUESTION: Where is the eastbound I-70 PPSL project area?

RESPONSE: The eastbound I-70 PPSL will stretch from Exit 232 at Empire Junction 13 miles east to MP 243.5, just east of the Twin Tunnels.

QUESTION: What are considered peak hours and peak days? Won't this just push the traffic around to create a peak in another area?

RESPONSE: The PPSL is anticipated to operate during historically heavy travel times such as weekends, holidays, and during special events. The PPSL will reduce congestion, allowing more vehicles to flow through the eastbound I-70 Mountain Corridor when demand is at its greatest, therefore improving travel times for ALL motorists. CDOT is also maintaining flexibility should peak times vary, allowing the PPSL to account for those changes.

QUESTION: Idaho Springs and other areas in Clear Creek County are very impacted by traffic exiting off of I-70 and driving through town to bypass the congestion. Will this help that situation?

RESPONSE: Yes. Based on information in the Feasibility Study, this project is anticipated to result in less traffic and congestion on adjacent city and county roads. In some places (such as Idaho Springs), traffic may go down by as much as 50 percent.

QUESTION: When the shoulder is open for travel, what should drivers of disabled vehicles do?

RESPONSE: With six on/off-ramps and two new emergency pull-off areas, there will be locations for disabled vehicles to pull out of traffic roughly every mile when the shoulder is open for travel. Outside of peak periods, it will continue to be available for use as a breakdown area, like it is today. Using cameras along the corridor, the highway will be continuously monitored at our traffic operations center while the PPSL is active. The Operations Manager at the traffic operations center will communicate with the Colorado State Patrol and courtesy patrol to quickly assist any disabled vehicles.

QUESTION: Is the tolled lane an express lane?

RESPONSE: The eastbound Peak Period Shoulder Lane project is part of CDOT's statewide Express Lane program. Unlike other express lane projects in the program that are adding permanent new lanes to highways, the PPSL project is unique in that it is upgrading the shoulder of the highway so that it can function as an express lane when roadway capacity is needed most. This takes full advantage of CDOT's existing highway right-of-way, instead of permanently expanding the highway footprint.

QUESTION: Why is the PPSL tolled?

RESPONSE: The primary reason the PPSL is tolled is to provide CDOT with the flexibility to manage travel. By varying the toll rate based on traffic needs, CDOT can provide a reliable trip. The increased reliability of travel better serves I-70 motorists as travel demand continues to increase. The managed lane offers a sustainable choice for travelers so that a congestion-free option is always available during peak periods. The tolled lane also provides better operations for emergency vehicles.

QUESTION: What will be done with the money collected from the tolled lane?

RESPONSE: The toll revenue will be applied towards the capital and operating costs of the project.

QUESTION: How will the locals benefit from this?

RESPONSE: Local residents and business owners will benefit from decreased traffic on the frontage road and other local roads during peak periods. Air emissions associated with congestion will decrease. Emergency response times will improve during peak periods. Construction planned for SH 103 and Exit 241 will provide updated bridge infrastructure and easier access in and around each interchange. There will also be architectural and landscape improvements to historic Charlie Tayler Waterwheel Park.

QUESTION: What is being done at Exit 241?

RESPONSE: Construction crews will reconfigure the interchange on the south side of Idaho Springs and ultimately reconstruct the bridge to help ease on-ramp and off-ramp congestion and modernize the bridge structure. Specific construction timing and operational details will be updated as they become available.

QUESTION: How will construction affect traffic?

RESPONSE: The project team worked closely with local stakeholders (elected officials, business owners, etc.) to ensure the traveling public experiences "business as usual" during construction. Slower speeds in work zones and intermittent closures may delay travel time, so people are encouraged to take advantage of the numerous tools CDOT offers to help plan your trip. You can sign up for free email and text alerts with CDOT's [GovDelivery](#) service or call the PPSL project line (303-223-6581) to listen to the most recent lane closure report. For current road and weather conditions call 511 or visit www.cotrip.org.

QUESTION: What is being done to the SH 103 Bridge? When will construction start?

RESPONSE: As part of the PPSL project, the SH 103 Bridge will be replaced. This will include upgraded on-ramps and off-ramps and a left-turn lane as well as widening bridge piers to provide a more comfortable experience for drivers on I-70. Construction will begin on October 13, with the bridge closure beginning October 20th. The closure is anticipated to last 6 weeks, weather dependent.