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Subject: SH 103 Issues Task Force Meeting

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Client: CDOT Region 1

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Project: I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane

Project No: 215164

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Meeting Date: October 11, 2013

Meeting Location: Idaho Springs City Hall

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Notes by: Lorena Jones/Tammy Heffron

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**ATTENDEES:**

CDOT:	David Singer, Andi Schmid, Jim Bemelen, Neil Ogden, Steve Yip
HDR:	Gina McAfee, Tammy Heffron, Steve Long, Terrance Powers, Lorena Jones
THK:	Kevin Shanks
FHWA:	Melinda Urban, Matt Greer
ITF Members:	Jack Morgan (Idaho Springs) Phyllis Adams (Idaho Springs) Mike Hillman (Idaho Springs) Tim Mauck (CCC BOCC) Tom Hayden (CCC BOCC) Mary Jane Loevlie (Idaho Springs) Jo Ann Sorensen (CCC) Art Ballah (Colorado Motor Carriers Association)

**DISTRIBUTION:** Attendees, ITF Members, Project File

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

(Action items are in **bold**.)

1. Steve Long started the meeting. Self-introductions followed. Today we are going to try to figure out what the constraints are and what we want to do at the SH 103 interchange.
2. Kevin Shanks recalled the previous meetings that have been held and the discussion about what to do with SH 103 and the issues that were raised. Need to understand how this interchange is used and how land use interacts with each other.
3. As far as economics and tourism, it's hugely important from the standpoint of access to historic Idaho Springs, but also important to regional destinations, hunting opportunities, mountain climbing. We know that from a historic standpoint—gold. The obvious things like the Water Wheel, the greenway, the Superfund site, the Forest Service building.
4. This is a very tight spot. We have a town, the interstate, the creek—probably the tightest spot in Clear Creek County.
5. Emergency response is pretty important.
6. Mary Jane Loevlie stated this area calls for some major redoing—the highway could be moved up to the side and back down. Could be this whole area. Long term we are talking about a

major development here. The vision is there to work with the school district, the Forest Service.

7. Mary Jane Loevlie added that for AGS, the discussion is to build a whole community around it or work with the community that exists. Georgetown makes sense for high-speed rail.
8. We don't know exactly how the transit side works. If there is a transit facility, it would be good if people could walk, so we keep in mind pedestrian safety.
9. Mary Jane Loevlie commented this interstate could look a little prettier. What makes it ugly are the CDOT fence, buildings adjacent to the interstate, school bus barn...
10. Tim Mauck noted that there are major cycling and recreational events along SH 103 one is the most-attended in the county.
11. David Singer noted that this is a major put-in for the rafters in this area also.
12. An access issue with the fence blocking the area where fishing is popular.
13. Art Ballah asked about bicycles. SH 103 is a very popular bicycle route. Under Colorado law, trucks have to give 3 feet clearance to bicycles. There is a very tight stretch of road two miles south of I-70 heading southbound that needs to be corrected for bicyclist safety.
14. There is a desire to have a lot of pedestrian activity around this interchange and make this interchange safer.
15. Jo Ann Sorensen noted the two community service organizations that are found here—the food bank and the Rock House for Kids (teen organization that reach out to teens in the community to give them a safe place to hang out, and they provide mentoring).

Phyllis Adams added that the Rock House for Kids used to be downtown, but as the organization grew, they outgrew their downtown location, so they had to relocate to their current location now. So kids walk a lot in this area to get to this organization.

16. Steve Long mentioned the pedestrian connection around each side.
17. CDOT took away the trail across Clear Creek that used to go under the bridge and there was a trail to the Water Wheel. At one time there was a scenic pull-out and CDOT did away with that. Ever since I-70 was built, there was that pull-out, and that trail was really well used.
18. There is also a recreation center. Their rafters program is growing. A lot of kids access this after school. As the greenway gets more developed, the idea of that being a spine to the county—that should be able to get you to your destination in the county.
19. All the events that we have in the community, like the memorial bike ride, we have a lot of people walking all over the place.
20. Mary Jane Loevlie pointed to a location on the map spread out on the table—the beginning of the historic district. There are spots all through town that are historic-designated.
21. Art Ballah stated that truck traffic is mostly on I-70. There is some commercial activity on SH 103, but not as much. He hasn't heard of any specific issues.
22. Tim Mauck commented that when you get off the interstate, making a left turn there is very difficult, you don't see the cars until you see their lights. There is traffic coming down all over SH 103.

23. Mary Jane Loevlie stated that closing I-70 at Floyd Hill stops people from coming into Idaho Springs, and CDOT's excuse is the SH 103 interchange. The trucks can't turn around easily around here, and there is no place for them. During a snow storm, they want people to be able to come into town.
24. Tom Hayden stated that if trucks want to turn around to Denver, this exit is the only place to do it.
25. Our Colorado weather — we may have a snowstorm at Floyd Hill and a snowstorm in Georgetown, but beautiful in Idaho Springs; people can't get in here.
26. What the Colorado Motor Carriers Association has done in passive management is incredible—educating the drivers.
27. Jo Ann Sorensen stated that on the issue about turning traffic around—that's part of the incident management plan that CDOT is doing. Maybe we should talk about what's going on with that. Jim Bemelen replied CDOT did hear that there are some issues with that, but this is not the place to talk about it.
28. David Singer noted that the team talked about pedestrian safety and talked about deceleration/acceleration lanes. Are there deficiencies in this area? If there are no constraints, what would this interchange look like?
29. Mary Jane Loevlie replied it would be a big interchange.
30. Steve Long suggested looking for opportunities at the same time. In order to get a PPSL lane through here, the bridge is really a big constraint, and constraints along the creek. The issue is more space is needed, and we don't have it. These two sites are the challenge. (Top of the hill way past the Water Wheel would be the biggest issue). How can we get past this narrow area—move the highway this way and get the extra space or move it this way and get extra space?

### **SH 103 BRIDGE DISCUSSION**

1. Tammy Heffron laid out a map of the existing structure for everyone to see. The existing structure has a sufficiency rating of 62. Sufficiency rating is what CDOT and FHWA use to quickly understand what shape the bridge is in. The shoulders on this structure are too narrow making it functionally obsolete. To put a PPSL here, the southern pier needs to go. This would create plenty of space to get the width for the additional lane.
2. Matt Greer commented that the bridge appears to be in good condition for traffic but of course it doesn't function.
3. Tammy Heffron stated that the shorter the span, the skinnier the girders. The longer the span the deeper the girders.
4. Steve Long noted that the issue always comes back to the rating of 62. It doesn't mean it's going to fall down, but we have to consider that this bridge is nearing the end of its life. Do we use the existing bridge or build a new bridge?
5. Melinda Urban asked if we use half the bridge, is that possible? No, we still don't have enough clearance.
6. Phyllis Adams asked if we went with a new structure, what would access be like as opposed to the pier/suspension idea?

7. Terrance described what it would be like if the bridge was totally replaced.
8. Tammy Heffron: We put just two spans in with the same depth; we keep the structure depth similar to existing but spanning a longer distance.
9. Steve Long: We are at a conceptual level right now. Need to figure out how to make the existing structure financially and functionally viable. The biggest opportunity on this thing is how to improve pedestrian safety. There are a lot of advantages to replacing the bridge versus retrofitting the existing bridge.
10. Melinda Urban: What is the cost of the new bridge? Closer to between \$2 million and \$3 million dollars. Part of it is the improvements that need to happen around the interstate.
11. Steve Long: Where we are today is looking for your input. Would the group support replacing this?
12. Jack Morgan: My concern is I want to see the total interchange, the total impact of replacing that bridge, what you anticipate will happen. To do some serious engineering investigation to see if putting a new span in would work—looking into the drainage. Can you handle the acceleration/deceleration ramps? That is a huge issue. I'm saying look at the possibility of spanning the whole I-70.
13. Tammy Heffron: The cost of spanning the whole I-70 would be significantly more versus if we replace the bridge with a two-span structure.
14. Jack Morgan: There is a consensus agreement that was signed by FHWA and Clear Creek County. You need to take a look at that.
15. Steve Long: When we laid this out, we thought about how to make this flexible to handle future improvements but not make it a huge interchange.

### **SHIFTING I-70 NORTH OR SOUTH**

1. Steve Long: If we move it north, we need to move the median over. If we don't move it at all, there would not be a PPSL.
2. Jack Morgan: There is strong movement right now that about having a PPSL eastbound and a PPSL westbound because there is as much problem going westbound as there is going eastbound.
3. Neil Ogden: For movement north, we are constrained at this point here (pointed to map). We need 5 feet or 6 feet. We can leave acceleration lane exactly as it is. We do not impact the bike path or Water Wheel park, but we begin encroaching into the parking lot.
4. Jack Morgan: Parking is so critical in this town from the business perspective and the citizens. You try to come in and take that, we will use all the resources we have to try and stop you.
5. Steve Long: Your negotiating point here is parking and trail. Neil Ogden: We would not impact any of the south side of the creek.
6. Phyllis Adams: Moving north we don't have to take any property that CDOT doesn't already own. That is at least one positive with moving north.
7. Steve Long: There is drainage which needs to be moved and that would be costly. There is fiber optic along that line that needs to be relocated. Anything below-ground would need to be impacted. So let's hold this right here, and let's discuss our option about moving to the south.

8. Neil Ogden: Matching existing. Shift a couple of feet if we are replacing the bridge. Would have small impacts to the park. Steve likes this alignment because there is an opportunity to make something better. First line would be edge of pavement and the second line would be the north side of the bike path.
9. Kevin Shanks: We are starting to come up with some criteria here that we can put into our matrix. There have been some good things that have been brought up. This isn't about design yet at this point—but rather talking about what opportunities we have moving toward the creek.
10. Kevin Shanks laid out some maps with cross sections for everyone to see. Certainly traffic noise is part of the experience when you walk along this trail. These cross sections were taken at different locations—that show existing and what it would be if we move the paving a little bit. First one is at the ramp and existing condition right now is the noise is not quite as bad because you are down below the roadway a little bit. We show how the 100-year flood level is just for reference—that is the blue line on the map. Noise is a huge issue along here. Maybe we can change the elevation for the trail—lowered enough, the noise goes over our head—about four feet. It could be just sloped. In this location, it would still be above the 100-year flood line. This is not final design. Next time we meet together, we can provide more details as to what we can do here.
11. Kevin Shanks: Next section starts to move into the pinch point. This is the area were you feel like a truck can land in your lap at any time. We can look at lowering this trail—depending on what barrier we can use, that would help with improving noise in this area. We have the opportunity to make access to the creek better for fishing.
12. Kevin Shanks: There is nothing magical about the 100-year floodplain. This was just a criterion that was defined by the federal government—that if you are under the 100-year floodplain, you can get insurance; if you are above, then you can't. We need to design this so that we avoid this being flooded.
13. Kevin Shanks: Next one is at 848, still in a tight spot, though not as tight. If the interstate gets moved, we still have space. As we moved down to the Water Wheel Park, there is a huge opportunity here. We have a lot of space. Maybe lowering the wall, do an interpretive wall; it would really be nice. As far as type of guardrail—maybe this is one location we don't do the Type 10 (open) guard rail. Maybe we do a closed guard rail, because that would help with noise as well. There would be a way to make the guard rail and barrier look like one wall so it looks visually appealing.
14. Steve Long: Should we take out the option of moving to the north? The consensus was yes. Shifting to the south is preferred.
15. Gina McAfee: The issue here with the Water Wheel Park is it is within the CDOT right-of-way, and it's been used as a park for 20 years maybe. At this point, we are thinking there is probably a lease agreement between CDOT and the town. If there is a lease agreement, it could complicate things. It may mean this is a Section 4(f) property—which is a very stringent federal regulation. If there is a lease agreement—it may be a park and we have to follow the federal regulation.
16. Nancy Johnson is the point of contact at the Historical Society. Mary Jane Loevlie will call her to get documentation about whether there is a lease agreement.
17. Gina McAfee: If the city and the county all agree that this is a better alternative, there might be some agreement we can come up with that this is not a Section 4(f) resource, and that would

replace the lease agreement if there isn't one. We can describe what impacts are and see if they fit into the prudent and feasible regulation.

18. At this point, we really need to find out if there is a lease agreement and get that agreement.
19. Steve Long provided a summary of the meeting. The project team would take a look at the bridge option and document why we can't lower I-70. We will continue to develop an alternative to moving to the south. We will continue to document the Section 4(f) requirements.
20. The next SH 103 ITF meeting is on October 24, 2013, at 9:00 a.m. in CDOT Golden Homestead conference room.

## FLIP CHART NOTES

1. Front door to interstate—primary exit
2. Entrance to Forest Service/recreation—Mt. Evans scenic byway
3. Tight spot
  - Interchange
  - Creek
  - Park
4. Emergency response
  - Ambulance barn (Kramer parking)
  - Citizen ambulance
5. Major improvement long term
  - Highway relocation
  - AGS
6. Transportation hub
7. Economy
  - 60 percent to 65 percent revenue
8. Redevelopment driven by transportation
9. Context—Interim
10. Ugly—feels like a “backdoor”
11. Idaho Springs visioning plan
12. Bring Creek back into the community
  - Fishing and zip line
  - Aesthetics
  - Rafter “put in”
13. Barriers
  - To creek—fishing
  - To town
  - To park
  - Bikes
  - Rec Center
14. Bike route—Colorado law: 3-foot access/clear
15. Improve safety—multi-modal
16. Food Bank and Rock House
  - South of interchange on SH 103
17. School property future
18. Elementary school

19. Greenway spine
20. Ride share (N.W. quadrant)
21. Truck
  - Lay-over for trucks—eastbound off ramp
22. Floyd Hill Closure (I-70)
  - Difficult SH 103 turn around
  - East exit closure first?
  - Incident Management Plan
23. Quality today vs. future could redefine use

### **Narrow Area**

1. Bridge 1958—bridge construction
  - 62 rating (scale 1-100)
  - 50 rating would qualify for federal funding
  - Function is obsolete
  - SH 103 shoulders insufficient
2. 35 ft. +/- on I-70; need 38 to 40 feet
3. Concepts for bridge
  - Cable stay; towers with existing
  - New bridge—flexibility
  - Use existing to construct the future
4. Concerns of Replacement
5. Consensus agreement and limit throw-away

### **North**

1. Takes parking “sacred cow”
2. Short walk may be required
3. No impacts to park
4. Infrastructure conflicts
  - Storm sewer
  - Fiber

### **South**

1. Could provide path enhancements
  - Lower path
    - Noise
    - Under SH 103 (path desirable)
    - Better creek access
    - Interpretive walls

### **Widening Criteria (North or South)**

1. Future west bound PPSL
2. Parking is critical for downtown
3. Economic impact
4. Use existing CDOT right-of-way
5. Look for opportunities to make things better

19474 - P.P.S.L.

SH 103 - ITF # 10/11/13

SIGN IN SHEET

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