

Benefits of the Eastbound I-70 Twin Tunnel Project

This project addresses a system-level problem with the constraints of the tunnels, improves mobility and safety, has public support, and offers opportunities to enhance the natural and social environment through improved travel, aesthetics, and environmental mitigations.

Immediate Operational/Safety Benefits

- The project will flatten the curve with the highest concentration of accidents in the project area and will improve stopping sight distances at existing curves. These improvements are predicted to result in an immediate 22% to 36% reduction in crashes.
- During the first winter, the extra lane will result in a reduction of approximately 5-10 minutes in travel time (5%-8% reduction) during the peak of the peak time for a winter Sunday afternoon. During the shoulder periods after the peak the benefit is even more, approximately 20-40 minutes in savings (25-50% reduction).
- The annual Travel Time and Fuel cost savings to Sunday travelers is estimated to be \$11.4 million in 2014.
- Allows other potential operational improvements to be considered for the corridor. (Eastbound Peak Period Shoulder Lanes, for instance.)

2035 Safety Improvement

East Idaho Springs Interchange (Exit 241) to US 6 Interchange (Exit 244) – both directions

- No Action – estimated 100 crashes per year
- Proposed Action – estimated 65 to 80 crashes per year (20% to 35% reduction)

2035 Congestion Reduction

The analyses were performed for a typical peak Sunday between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., from Georgetown to the top of Floyd Hill.

- Total travel time savings (vehicle hours of travel – the Proposed Action has a 15% improvement compared to the No Action Alternative
- Reduction in peak travel times – 162 minutes (No Action) reduced to 137 minutes (Proposed Action)
- Percent of time that vehicles will be travelling at 20 mph or less – 75% (No Action) reduced to 60% (Proposed Action).

Improved wildlife movement

- Greater clearance under the new bridge for large mammals to traverse below I-70
- retrofitting outlet of existing box culvert to allow easier animal movements

Improved water quality

- new sediment control facilities to treat storm-water runoff
- new spill containment facilities to capture hazardous materials

Improved aesthetics

- will reflect the context of the area with a 21st Century design
- reduce sign clutter
- simple elegant design of tunnel, bridge and roadway
- new vegetation along creek, portal and game-check area

Improved recreational and tourism opportunities

- from creation of trailhead at the game-check station

Improved aquatic habitat

- partnership with Colorado Parks & Wildlife and Clear Creek County to improve creek functionality