



## **Westbound I-70 Twin Tunnels – April 2014**

### **Project Overview**

The Westbound Twin Tunnel Bore is being widened to accommodate future highway expansion, but is not adding a third lane at this time to westbound I-70. When it opens to traffic in late 2014, the new westbound tunnel (on the right side of the rendering) will include a wider, brighter entrance with two 12-foot wide travel lanes, widened shoulders and future travel lane capacity.



### **Construction Update**

On Tuesday, April 1, eastbound I-70 traffic is scheduled to move back onto the detour route at the Twin Tunnels. The next day, westbound traffic will shift over into the eastbound lanes to start using the new eastbound tunnel bore while the westbound tunnel is widened. Work to shift traffic will begin Monday evening at 5 p.m. and motorists can expect lane closures and traffic delays starting then and continuing until Wednesday morning.

After traffic is shifted, blasting work will begin to widen the tunnel and remove materials from the rock face walls above both portals of the westbound tunnel. Similar to the eastbound project, approximately 80 tunnel blasts will be conducted between April and August to remove enough rock and materials to widen the actual tunnel to a width of about 53-feet.

Additionally, because the westbound lanes of I-70 are adjacent to the mountainside, this project will also require blasting on the rock face walls outside the tunnel. Crews need to remove about 40,000 cubic yards of rock and material from outside the tunnel to accommodate the widening. Most of this material will come from the east side of the tunnel where the rock cut will go up about 140 feet high and about 40 feet back from I-70. On the west side of the tunnel, the rock cut will go approximately 80 feet up and 20 feet back.

It will take an estimated 50 rock face blasts to remove this much material, with blasting on the east rock face continuing until late summer. Blasting on the west rock face should be done in June or July. This blasting has to be done during daylight hours to comply with Federal safety regulations and will mean additional impacts to I-70 traffic. Here is what I-70 travelers can expect:

- Both directions of I-70 traffic will be stopped briefly for tunnel blasts. Crews anticipate doing at least one tunnel blast a day. Once the blast is conducted, eastbound I-70 traffic will resume on



***The rock face walls at both ends of the westbound tunnel will be scaled back to accommodate the tunnel widening. The rock face above the west portal will be cut about 80 feet up and 20 feet back.***

the detour route. Westbound I-70 traffic will be stopped slightly longer while the eastbound tunnel is checked before traffic is allowed to continue.

- Both directions of I-70 traffic will also be stopped for rock face blasting. Crews anticipate doing one or two rock face blasts each week. Following each rock face blast, crews will begin removing large rocks and dislodged materials that could pose a threat to I-70 traffic traveling below. This process, known as rock scaling, will require stopping highway traffic below to maintain public safety. ***I-70 travelers can expect traffic stops at various times for varying length of times throughout the day and should plan for extended delays.***
- Whenever possible, crews will coordinate blasting work to conduct two blasts under one traffic stop (i.e. a tunnel blast and either an east or west rock face blast). This will help minimize the overall impact on travelers.

### **Project Benefits**

Moving forward with this project now will save approximately \$6 million because equipment and resources are already in place. Additional benefits:

- Eliminates the “black hole” effect of the old portal
- New portal design provides added rockfall protection
- Driver safety improved with the added rockfall protection and addition of shoulders in tunnel
- Project enables future low cost, high benefit operational improvements such as peak period shoulder lane

Without first widening the tunnel, it would be impossible to proceed with any efforts to expand the westbound I-70 corridor.

### **Stay Informed**

If you travel the I-70 mountain corridor, you are going to want to stay updated on construction activities that may affect your travel plans:

- Text/Email alerts: To receive text or email alerts with updates on construction activities and traffic impacts, visit [www.coloradodot.info](http://www.coloradodot.info) and click on the icon at the top of the page for email and wireless alerts.
- I-70 mobile application: To download this App to your smartphone, text CDOT to 25827 or search CDOT Mobile in your App store.
- Information hotline: Call the project hotline at 303-327-4034 to listen to recorded construction schedule and lane closure information.
- Variable message signs: Electronic boards all along the I-70 corridor provide information on traffic stops and changing traffic conditions.
- Social media: Before hitting the road, visit CDOT’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/coloradodot](http://www.facebook.com/coloradodot) or follow their @coloradodot Twitter feed using the hashtag #TwinTunnels for the latest construction information.
- Visit the project website at [www.coloradodot.info/projects/i70twintunnels](http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/i70twintunnels). This site includes construction schedule information and a link to listen to the audio recording from the March 13 telephone town hall call hosted by CDOT. As project photos and blasting videos become available they will be posted here as well.