

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is CDOT proposing for the Twin Tunnels area?

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) proposes widening the interstate to three eastbound lanes between Idaho Springs and the base of Floyd Hill, enlarging the eastbound bore of the tunnels and addressing safety issues on the eastbound highway curves between the tunnels and Floyd Hill.

What is the purpose of the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment?

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) will define the proposed improvements, provide information on impacts to environmental and community resources and determine appropriate mitigation to minimize any impacts, following the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It will be conducted by CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA is expected to issue a decision by the fall of 2012. CDOT is required by law and the FHWA to complete the NEPA process before any construction occurs.

When will the project be built?

If the project receives the federally required approvals, construction would begin in the spring of 2013, with completion expected approximately six months later. During this construction period, eastbound interstate traffic would be rerouted around the Twin Tunnels.

How will the process work?

This environmental assessment is expected to take about a year to complete. Tonight, CDOT will present background information about the proposed action, as well as gather input about the NEPA process and timeline and the environmental and social resources in the project area. The project team will study the proposed action's impacts on environmental and community resources and evaluate measures to avoid or minimize impacts. A public hearing on the study's findings and recommendations will occur in summer 2012. The FHWA is expected to issue a decision document by fall of 2012. The EA will honor all commitments in the I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) Record of Decision (ROD) and will comply with the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) guidance.



Welcome to the I-70 Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Public Open House September 27, 2011

Agenda

- 5:30 – 6:00 Open House
- 6:00 – 6:30 Presentation and Questions and Answers
- 6:30 – 7:30 Open House

Objectives of tonight's meeting:

- Provide information on the proposed improvements
- Solicit input from the public and other stakeholders

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Twin Tunnels project is to improve eastbound highway safety and operations, and travel time reliability in the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor east of Idaho Springs.

The project is needed to address:

- **Safety.** A high number of crashes occur in the project area related to tight curves, poor sight distance, narrow shoulders, and congested traffic conditions.
- **Mobility.** Slow and unpredictable travel times in peak traffic periods (Saturday and Sunday afternoons) frustrate travelers, affect economic conditions, and decrease safety.
- **Operational characteristics that slow travel.** Capacity in the most congested portion of the I-70 Mountain Corridor east of Georgetown is largely controlled by the Twin Tunnels. Real and perceived narrowness of the tunnels causes drivers to slow down and reduces capacity by up to 30 percent. Curves in the project area between the tunnels and Floyd Hill (east of the tunnels) also cause drivers to slow down.

What is CDOT proposing?

The Twin Tunnels project proposes to add a third eastbound travel lane between the Idaho Springs East Interchange (milepost 241) to the base of Floyd Hill (milepost 244) where a three-lane highway section currently exists. The project is approximately two and a half miles long and includes widening the eastbound bore of the Twin Tunnels.

Schedule

	2011				2012								
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Project Initiation and Scoping	★												
Purpose and Need													
Affected Environment													
Alternatives													
Impact and Mitigation Analysis													
EA Documentation													
Section 4(f) Documentation													
Public and Agency Review													
Section 4(f) Review													
Review Comments/Decision													

★ = Public Meetings

How to Stay Involved

- Provide comments tonight & give us your contact information
- Follow the Project at: <http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/i70twintunnels>
- Participate in the Public Hearing
- For More Information contact:
 - James Bemelen, I-70 Mountain Corridor Manager: James.bemelen@dot.state.co.us or 303-365-7010
 - Ben Acimovic, CDOT Project Manager: Benjamin.acimovic@dot.state.co.us or 303-512-5814
 - Bob Wilson, CDOT Public Relations: bob.j.wilson@dot.state.co.us or 303-757-9431
 - Mandy Whorton, Consultant Project Manager: mandy.whorton@ch2m.com or 303-987-5940
- Mail comments to I-70 Mountain Corridor Program, c/o Ernestine Meadows, Program Assistant, CDOT Region 1, 18500 E. Colfax Avenue, Aurora, CO 80011-8017

I-70 Twin Tunnels Context Statement

I-70 is Colorado's only east-west Interstate, providing a link over the Continental Divide, interstate commerce and mountain access.

Blasted through a geological feature and contained within a narrow canyon, the Twin Tunnels symbolize Colorado's historic endeavors to improve access to and from the mountains. Currently occupying this canyon are Clear Creek, the Frontage Road, and I-70. The vision for the future includes an Advance Guideway System with these transportation facilities.

The Twin Tunnels are a gateway for arriving and departing the mountains, provide a natural crossing for wildlife and connect local communities to national and regional services. Running parallel to I-70 is Clear Creek, a natural and recreational resource. The tunnels now are a constriction to travel and create a safety problem.

Core Values

- **Safe** travel for people and goods. **Safety** for emergency responders and maintenance workers. A **safe** crossing for wildlife.
- Mobility through **safe** and reliable transportation facilities.
- A primary access and visual **gateway** to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.
- **Wildlife**, wildlife habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.
- **Clear Creek**, as a clean, high-quality water resource, a recreational asset, an aquatic resource with sustainable fisheries' habitat, a drinking water source, and a defining natural feature of the corridor.
- **Tourist destinations and community facilities**, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, the waste-water treatment plant, the planned Clear Creek Greenway, the frontage road, and Clear Creek.
- **History** as a defining element of Clear Creek County. Celebrating the cultural resources associated with mining and mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation as part of the construction of I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.