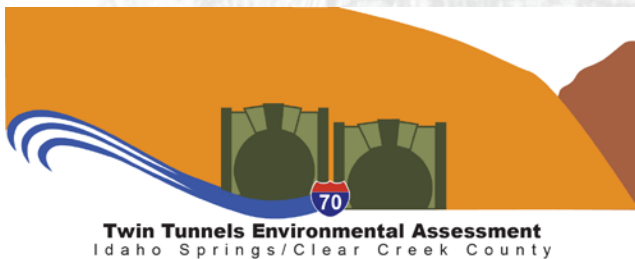


# I-70 Twin Tunnels EA Scoping Report



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## APPENDICES

- A. Summary of Transportation Conditions
  - Summary of previous and current evaluations, critical issues and problem areas, and constraints for each of the following: roadway, structures, geotechnical, tunnel, traffic, safety, bicycle/pedestrian conditions
- B. Summary of Environmental Resources in the Project Area
  - Resource-by-resource summary of conditions, Tier 2 commitments, and methodologies
- C. Agency Scoping Meeting Materials
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## Executive Summary

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### Introduction

This Scoping Meeting Summary Report summarizes the notification methods and issues raised at the agency and public scoping meetings conducted in support of the I-70 Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA). The purpose of the meetings was to elicit comments that would help establish the scope of the Environmental Assessment. The agency scoping meeting was held on September 26, 2011, and the public scoping meeting was held on September 27, 2011.

The Colorado Department of Transportation is proposing to make improvements to the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) is a Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that builds on the I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEIS) Record of Decision, issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on June 16, 2011. Improvements must be consistent with the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Record of Decision and I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions process.

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

### Purpose and Need

The project is needed to address:

- **Safety.** A high number of crashes occur in the project area related to tight curves, poor sight distance, and congested traffic conditions. Emergency response is hampered by congestion.
- **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 between Georgetown and Floyd Hill is largely controlled by the lane capacity of 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.

### Proposed Action

Permanent improvements currently planned include adding a third eastbound travel lane plus shoulders between East Idaho Springs interchange and base of Floyd Hill (approximately 3 miles), widening the eastbound tunnel bore, flattening curves, improving sight distance, adding median/retaining walls, replacing the eastbound bridge over Clear Creek just west of Hidden Valley, lengthening the US 6 ramp, and permanent water quality BMPs.

Construction actions will include building the transitions to and using approximately a one-mile segment of CR 314 (frontage road) as potential construction detour, temporary trail detours or closures, fencing, staging areas, rock removal (tunnel excavation) and removing the detour transitions and restoring the disturbed area.

## Summary of Comments

### Agency Scoping Comments

#### Agency Comments

##### **Purpose and Need**

- Clarify in the Purpose and Need that the action is not the ultimate solution but rather an initial action to address an immediate problem.

##### **DRCOG RTP**

- Adding three miles of through lane capacity is regionally significant. The project is within the DRCOG Transportation Planning Region and this capacity addition must be depicted on the DRCOG Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (PVRTP). CDOT Region One will need to submit an RTP amendment during one of DRCOG's biannual plan amendment periods.

##### **Relationship to other I-70 Mountain Corridor improvements**

- How will this project affect the AGS?
- How does CDOT's current pacing project interact with the Twin Tunnels EA?

##### **Tolling**

- When the RTP amendment is submitted to DRCOG, include an analysis of the tolling options studied and were/weren't carried forward.
- The EPA recommends CDOT evaluate and address the concerns that tolling operations could affect safety and mobility due to weaving vehicles.
- Don't limit time period for tolling by stating that CDOT is considering "peak period pricing". Leave more flexibility for tolling.
- May need to extend study farther west to accommodate tolling option.
- Alternatives chapter of EA should carefully describe the evaluation process for different tolling options and explain why some options were eliminated and why CDOT carried one tolling option forward in the EA.

##### **Environmental resources**

- Water quality
  - Will permitting for stormwater discharge be handled with an individual permit?
  - Need to address Total Maximum Daily Loads for Cadmium
- Air quality
  - Will need additional air quality modeling for EA if ozone boundary is revised to include Clear Creek County, CDHPE-APCD has recommended that it not include Clear Creek County and will have final decision from EPA within six months.
- Historic Property
  - SHPO noted they were pleased with the approach and progress of the Twin Tunnels EA in regards to Section 106 consultation.

- Endangered Species
  - No endangered species exist in the project area. The Twin Tunnels EA should ensure that the ALIVE MOU is followed.
  - Water depletions should be addressed.

### **Construction impacts**

- USFS identified the potential for a short-term construction impacts on Air Quality, Cultural/Historic, Recreation, Water, Wildlife/Fisheries
- Long Term Air Quality in the James Peak and Mt. Evans Wilderness Areas
- Long Term impacts on Clear Creek Ranger District Work Center Historic Property
- Long Term Impacts on wildlife movement over the Twin Tunnels land bridge
- The EPA recommends that CDOT apply for an individual stormwater construction permit.
- A separate construction noise assessment may be needed. The EPA recommends performing this noise assessment because the plans call for construction 24/7.
- Will need to develop specifics related to what is needed from CDPHE for a Construction Permit for fugitive dust.
- Clear Creek County has no county ordinances for fugitive dust. The County follows state guidelines.
- How will emergency vehicle access (in response to accident/incidents east of the Twin Tunnels be handled during construction of this project?
- What is planned for the detour when the construction is completed?
- Two offers of use of private property as a construction staging site.
- How will the construction work and schedule on CR 314 impact access to our site?

### **Public Scoping Comments**

#### **Traffic and safety**

- Existing traffic
  - Slow down occurs when cars travel east up Floyd Hill, not at the Twin Tunnels.
  - What was the result of “speed harmonization” tests conducted by CDOT?
  - Drivers “cut the line” of slow or stopped I-70 traffic by driving the Frontage Road from Georgetown (Exit 228) all the way to Exits 241A and 243. This merge slows everyone down.
- Safety
  - Make the left lane US 6 exit (at the base of Floyd Hill) from EB I-70 safer.
  - What is CDOTs plan for improving safety of the traveling public?
  - Can we provide a special access at the dirt road/doghouse bridge intersection for safety vehicles to enter traffic and avoid the congestion likely to exist on I-70?

- Impacts
  - The corridor bottleneck will be in the westbound direction.
  - Concern that this project will just push the “bottleneck” to other locations where level of service and safety will significantly decline.
  - Will this project really solve anything?

### **Bicycle and pedestrian facilities**

- The Vail Pass bike path and the design through Glenwood Canyon should be used as models for the work that will be done in Clear Creek.
- If there is not enough money to do a proper and complete project, wait until funding becomes available.
- Can the transitions – especially the old game check be retained with enhanced facilities to support greenway, bike, ped or other uses of that area including access to the river?

### **Alternatives**

- Non-infrastructure improvements
  - Disagreement with hard shoulder running proposed in this area.
  - Consider speed limit at tunnels in Glenwood Canyon during design of the Twin Tunnels project.
  - Post speed signs or introduce pace cars to eliminate slowdowns.
  - Find other ways to improve through travel such as alternate routes or different travel days. Construction at the Twin Tunnels will be too disruptive to locals.
  - Better signage on the hill east of the Tunnels to encourage drivers to maintain/increase their speed. These signs would cost a few thousand dollars instead of \$60 million.
  - Solution – Have Colorado State Patrol or local police limit access to the Frontage Road during summer and winter weekend rush hours to local residents only. Combine this with CSP driving 45 mph from the Tunnel to Route 40 along with ramp metering and traffic should flow much more smoothly. (More specific details in the Appendix letter).
- Tunnels
  - Blasting the mountain where the Twin Tunnels are would cost less.
  - Remove the entire bottle neck in partnership with the Aggregate Plant at 6/40 by removing the entire mountain and eliminating both tunnels. There might be some revenue generated by the aggregate that would be hauled down to the plant.
  - The main cause of the drastic slowdown at the entrance to the Tunnels is a psychological effect. I suggest alterations to either the entrance or interior.
  - Make a deal with the quarry to cut through and remove the twins all together.
  - The scope of the project ought to be expanded, at a minimum, to make both tunnels three lanes wide.
  - Have there been any discussions about a large tunnel or double-decked tunnels east of the existing Twin Tunnels which could originate near the LaFarge gravel plant?



- Frontage road
  - The Frontage road should be continued from Idaho Springs down to 6/40.
  - Have a parallel access road between Hidden Valley and a point just east of the foot of Floyd Hill, at least for emergency use.
- Other
  - The Twin Tunnels project is consistent with the Consensus Recommendation and work should move forward.
  - Offer my voice in favor of the project.
  - If we want to have improved access to the mountains in the long run, we will have to put up with some inconvenience in the short run.
  - Use the game check road as a detour.
  - Build two year-round, high speed and maximum carrying capacity cable propelled tramways from East Slope parking areas to West Slope mountain town.

### **Relationship to other I-70 Mountain Corridor improvements**

- Several commenters stated that the documentation for this project should demonstrate that the ultimate solution for I-70 and AGS transit (the PEIS Preferred Alternative) can be accomplished through this area and that the Twin Tunnels project could not preclude them.
- The only way to avoid road widening in Idaho Springs in the future is to implement incremental and financially feasible transit on I-70. The Twin Tunnels project will preclude future transit on I-70.
- Support for bus transit on I-70.
- How will the project affect future transit operations?

### **Environmental impacts**

- Natural resources
  - Mineralization of the rock in the area and the potential for that to contaminate Clear Creek. The EA needs to determine the mineral profile of the rock and if found to be a concern, develop mitigation commitments to protect the Creek
  - Effects of disturbing the mine waste that may have been used for a road base and development of mitigation to protect the Creek
  - Potential for enhancement of Clear Creek, working together with the SWEEP team
  - Need to address short term and long term runoff and sediment pollution
  - Need to identify a plan for disposal of solid water from the tunnel
  - Examine impacts of maintenance runoff on water quality.
  - How can we be assured that CDOT's commitment to protecting aquatic resources is followed through?
  - Follow SWEEP commitments

- The plan for disposal of waste products resulting from tunneling should be disclosed.
- The EPA recommends that both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> be monitored. The Draft EA should ensure that the mitigation measures committed to in the I-70 ROD will be implemented by CDOT for the Twin Tunnels project.
- The EA must adequately analyze and mitigate effects of rock mineralization on Water Quality.
- Determine whether toxic materials are in the existing road bed material.
- Provide historical signage on the Frontage Road.
- Social resources
  - Potential for enhancement of raft launch site just east of the Tunnels
  - How will CDOT address impacts to local residents who use the Hidden Valley Interchange or CR314 for vehicular trips?
  - Have full survey of Frontage Road – Hidden Valley to Idaho Springs sewer treatment plant. Also bore test in critical points was done with intent to install sewer line and water.
- Construction impacts
  - Will paved cycling access be available through the project area during construction?
  - Will the bike path be restored to existing or improved conditions after the project?
- Miscellaneous
  - The Frontage Road and Twin Tunnels are not independent projects.
  - Marjorie Bell (owner of the properties closest to Exit 243) would like to be added to the newsletter list and consulted about details of the detour plan.

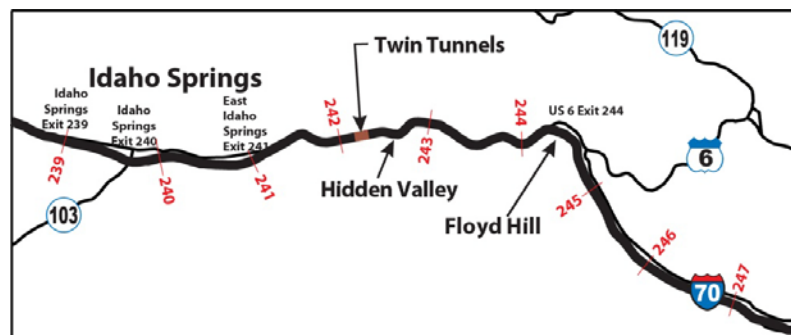
## 1. Introduction

This Scoping Meeting Summary Report summarizes the notification methods and issues raised at the agency and public scoping meetings conducted in support of the I-70 Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA). The purpose of the meetings was to elicit comments that would help establish the scope of the Environmental Assessment. The agency scoping meeting was held on September 26, 2011, and the public scoping meeting was held on September 27, 2011.

### 1.1. Project Background

The Colorado Department of Transportation is proposing to make improvements to the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) is a Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that builds on the I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEIS) Record of Decision, issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on June 16, 2011. Improvements must be consistent with the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Record of Decision and I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions process.

The ultimate improvements in the Twin Tunnels area approved in the PEIS Record of Decision include increased roadway capacity and added transit capacity along the existing I-70 highway alignment. Short-term mobility options in the Twin Tunnels area also were evaluated in late February 2011 when CDOT convened a week-long visioning workshop that included local, national and international design and construction experts.



*The general study area for the Twin Tunnels EA extends from exit 241 in Idaho Springs east to Floyd Hill at approximately milepost 244*

CDOT and FHWA, in coordination with numerous stakeholders, have prioritized making improvements in the Twin Tunnels area east of Idaho Springs as one of the first actions needed to address an area of substantial congestion in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The agencies are preparing this Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) as part of a Tier 2 NEPA process to evaluate alternatives, impacts, and mitigations to address problems along an approximately three-mile stretch of I 70, including the Twin Tunnels, between the existing interchange at milepost 241 east of Idaho Springs and approximately milepost 244 east of the Tunnels where the roadway transitions to three lanes in the eastbound direction.

### 1.2. Context Statement and Core Values

The following Context Statement and Core Values for the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment were developed, and ultimately endorsed, by the participants in the Project Leadership Team, the Technical Team, the Agency Scoping Meeting, and the Public Meeting.

### 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, the Twin Tunnels symbolize Colorado's historic endeavors to improve access to and from the mountains. The tunnels now are a constriction to travel and create a safety problem.

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.

#### 1.2.1. 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 **gateway** to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.
- **Wildlife** habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.
- **Clear Creek**, a quality water source, recreational asset, aquatic resource, fisheries habitat and a defining natural feature of the corridor.
- **Tourist destinations and community facilities**, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, the water treatment plant, the planned Clear Creek Greenway, the frontage road, and Clear Creek.
- **History** as a defining element of Clear Creek County; celebrating mining, mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation as part of the construction of I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.

#### 1.3. Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Twin Tunnels project is to improve eastbound highway safety, operations, and travel time reliability in the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor at the east end 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, and congested traffic conditions. Emergency response is hampered by congestion.
- **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 between Georgetown and Floyd Hill is largely controlled by the lane capacity of 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.

#### 1.4. Summary of Transportation Conditions

This summary addresses a section of Interstate 70 beginning at MP 240.00, just west of the interchange with the I-70 Business Route (Colorado Boulevard) at the east end of Idaho Springs, and extending to MP 247.24

which is just east of Exit 247 (Floyd Hill) from eastbound I-70. The direction of increasing milepost (primary direction) for this section of I-70 is eastbound.

### 1.4.1. Site Conditions

According to CDOT records, the 2009 average annual daily traffic (AADT) was approximately 41,900 vehicles per day (vpd) to 42,700 vpd. As a percentage of the total vehicular traffic volume, the average truck volume across the section is between 7.7 and 10.3 percent.

The following observations related to the study corridor were made from the current CORIS file and the CDOT video log:

- A typical cross section includes 10-foot outside shoulders (although they vary throughout the corridor and are as narrow as 2-feet), two 12-foot travel lanes and 4-foot inside shoulders in each direction. However, there is a 5-lane cross section east of the US 6 interchange (MP 244.26) to the Floyd Hill interchange (MP 246.60).
- The median type varies throughout the corridor from either a depressed median of approximately 10 to 20 feet in width to a concrete barrier median.
- Guard rail and concrete barriers are located on the both the inside and outside shoulders throughout the corridor in the vicinity of interchanges, over and underpasses and through curves.
- Other than the very eastern end of the corridor, there are no rumble strips along I-70 within the study segment.
- There are luminaries located in the vicinity of the interchanges along the study corridor.
- There are four interchanges within the study corridor: the I-70 Business Route (Colorado Boulevard) (MP 241.13), Hidden Valley (MP 242.98), SH 6G – Kermitts (MP 244.26) and Floyd Hill (MP 246.60). In addition, the Twin Tunnels are located at MP 242.29 just to the east of Idaho Springs.
- The posted speed limit on I-70 is currently 60 miles per hour (mph) from the start of the study corridor to MP 241.90 (west of the Twin Tunnels), 55 mph from MP 241.90 to MP 244.90 in the eastbound direction and 65 mph from MP 244.90 to the end of the study corridor in the eastbound direction. Westbound I-70 is 55 mph from the east end of the study corridor to MP 241.90.

A more comprehensive summary of the transportation conditions is included in Appendix A.

## 1.5. Summary of Environmental Conditions

Summary of Environmental Conditions is included in Appendix B.

## 1.6. Proposed Action

Permanent improvements are graphically depicted in Appendix E and include:

- Add third eastbound travel lane plus shoulders between East Idaho Springs interchange and base of Floyd Hill (approximately 3 miles)
- Widen the eastbound tunnel bore
- Flatten curves, improve sight distance, add median/retaining walls
- Replace the eastbound bridge over Clear Creek just west of Hidden Valley
- Lengthen US 6 ramp

- Permanent water quality BMPs
- Managed lane details (if included)
- Non-infrastructure improvements

Construction actions include:

- Build transitions to and use approximately one-mile segment of CR 314 (frontage road) as potential construction detour
- BMPs
- Trail detours or closures
- Fencing
- Staging areas
- Rock removal (tunnel excavation) and disposal requirements
- Remove detour transitions and restore disturbed area

## 1.7. Decision Process and Public Involvement Approach

Scoping is the first step in the NEPA public involvement process. The NEPA regulations define scoping as “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying significant issues related to a proposed action” (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping helps to identify alternatives to the proposed action, important environmental issues to be addressed in the EA, and environmental issues that do not require detailed analysis in the EA. Scoping involves the public, agencies, and other interested parties, and often includes public and agency meetings. Scoping also helps to identify public or agency concerns or issues.

The I-70 Mountain Corridor Decision-Making Process, developed by the corridor stakeholders and presented in the website ([www.i70mtncorridorcss.com](http://www.i70mtncorridorcss.com)) is consistent with CDOT’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Manual, CDOT’s Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Program, and the Life Cycle Phases for Project Management.

The CDOT NEPA Manual includes guidance on incorporating Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) in the NEPA process. In Section 3.3, the manual states that "CSS represents an evolution in the philosophical approach to transportation and supports the social, economic, and environmental context of the facility... It should be reflected in the way the NEPA process is implemented."

I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS is built on a commitment to collaborative decision making. The key principles of collaborative decision making are:

- Principle-based
- Outcome-driven
- Multidisciplinary

To achieve a truly collaborative process, the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Team developed a 6-Step Process that can be used for all projects at any phase of the project life cycle. This process is based on the three principles above and uses the constructs of Decision Science to guide effective, collaborative decision making.

### 1.7.1. Development of Project Specific Context Statement and Core Values

Each project team will develop a Context Statement and Core Values for their project. These provide a touchstone for every decision that is made in the corridor to ensure its consistency with stakeholder principles.

### 1.7.2. Team Structure

The Project Leadership Team, Technical Team, and Issue Task Forces were structured to provide multidisciplinary involvement on the Twin Tunnels project. This team structure supports a more robust definition of the issues and desired outcomes and leads to recommendations with broad support by the stakeholders.

Early and continuous involvement of stakeholders in a fair and transparent Decision Making process through these teams and public meetings will promote the development of recommendations with strong support.

### 1.7.3. Public Meetings

Public involvement activities conducted during the scoping period included the agency scoping meeting, the public scoping meeting, meetings with the Project Leadership Team, and the Technical Team. The agency and public scoping meetings are described in detail in Section 3.0 of this report. Scoping comments are summarized in Section 5.0.

Public and agency involvement will continue throughout the development of the EA, and input will be welcomed continuously through the website, the team meetings, and small group meetings.

## 1.8. Project Leadership Team (PLT)

The PLT's primary roles are to:

**Lead the Project:** The PLT will be established and will lead the project throughout the Life Cycle Phases of the project using the 6-Step Process.

**Champion CSS:** The PLT will ensure that the CSS Guidance, the Context Statement, the Core Values, and the 6-Step Process are integrated into the project.

**Enable Decision Making:** The PLT will approve the Project Work Plan for its project and keep the project on track according to the work plan.

When policy issues arise that cannot be resolved within the project teams, the PLT will identify and implement the steps needed to resolve the issue and make a decision. The PLT is not empowered to make policy decisions. Instead, it is responsible for identifying who must be involved in making the decision, bringing the decision makers together, and proposing solutions or approaches to move the project forward.

The PLT will facilitate formal actions required by councils, boards, and/or commissions to keep the project moving forward. These are anticipated to be Clear Creek County Commissioners, Jefferson County Commissioners, Idaho Springs City Council, and the Transportation Commission. The PLT will also be informed on the status of local elected officials.

For The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Project the PLT will have an added responsibility to lead the completion of the NEPA process, with the complete project, including potential design and construction, in mind.

## 1.9. Technical Team

### Roles and Responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of the Technical Team include:

- Assuring that local context is integrated into the project
- Recommending and guiding methodologies involving data collection, criteria, and analysis
- Preparing and reviewing technical project reports
- Supporting and providing insight with respect to community and agency issues and regulations
- Assisting in developing criteria
- Assisting in developing alternatives and options
- Assisting in evaluating, selecting, and refining alternatives and options
- Coordinating and communicating with respective agencies

## 1.10. Issue Task Forces (ITF)

### Section 106 Issue Task Force

This ITF will focus on the issues, processes, documentation, mitigation, and agreements needed around all historic issues. This includes compliance with Section 106 PA, 4(f), and meeting with Consulting Parties.

### SWEEP Issue Task Force

Compliant with the SWEEP MOU, this ITF will develop recommendations consistent with the MOU in matters related to water issues within the project area.

### ALIVE Issue Task Force

Compliant with the ALIVE MOU, this ITF will develop recommendations consistent with the MOU in matters related to wildlife crossing issues within the project area.



## 2. Notification of Scoping

Multiple methods of communication were used to notify the public and agencies of the scoping meetings. For the agency scoping meeting, agencies with permitting review responsibilities, CDOT Environmental Programs Branch staff, and other interested parties were invited to the meeting held September 26, 2011. Section 2.1 below describes the agency scoping meeting notification and outreach process in greater detail.

For the public scoping meeting, notification outreach efforts included a press release, postcards, emails, calendar alerts. A legal notice and advertisements were published in local newspapers. The meeting information was also posted on the project website. Section 2.2 below describes the public scoping meeting notification and outreach process in greater detail.

### 2.1. Agency Scoping Notification and Outreach

Agencies with permitting review responsibilities and other agencies with potential interest or expertise were invited to the agency scoping meeting held on September 26, 2011. Appropriate CDOT Environmental Programs Branch and engineering staff were also invited to the scoping meeting.

Agencies were notified by letter, shown in Appendix B. Letters were sent to all agencies on September 2nd.

Invited Agencies
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8
Federal Aviation Administration
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Denver Regulatory Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
CDPHE-Air Pollution Control Division
Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife
Colorado State Historic Preservation Office
CDPHE-Colorado Water Quality Control Commission
Denver Regional Council of Governments
Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Transit Administration
Jefferson County
Clear Creek County, Road and Bridge Department

#### 2.1.1. Native American Consultation

Letters were sent to Native American Tribes on September 30, 2011 inviting them to part of the Section 106 Consultation process. Letters are included in Appendix C.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma responded although no cultural or religious sites have been identified in the affected area, they may exist and any findings of significant archaeological origins should be reported to the Tribes immediately.

### 2.2. Public Scoping Notification and Outreach

Outreach efforts for the September 27, 2011, public scoping meeting included a press release, postcards, emails, calendar alerts. A legal notice and advertisements were published in local newspapers. The meeting information was also posted on the project website. Copies are included in Appendix D.

A press release was distributed to the CDOT media distribution list, which includes media outlets in the Denver metropolitan area.

Postcards were mailed on September 15, 2011 to 6,457 residents in Gilpin, Denver and Clear Creek Counties.

Email invitations and calendar alerts were sent out on September 16, 2011 to relevant CDOT distribution lists.

The legal notice ran in the Denver Post on September 11, 2011

Advertisements ran in the following newspapers:

Clear Creek Courant, Columbine Courier (Evergreen) and High Timber Times (Conifer) on September 14, 2011 and September 21, 2011

Arvada Press, Golden Transcript, Wheat Ridge Transcript and Lakewood Sentinel on September 15, 2011 and September 22, 2011

Gilpin County News/Weekly Register on September 15, 2011 and September 22, 2011

Advertisements were also run in Spanish Newspapers: El Semanario on September 15, 2011 and September 22, 2011 and La Voz on September 14, 2011 and September 21, 2011

## 3. Scoping Meetings

This section summarizes the venues for the agency and public scoping meetings, and presents the meeting format and materials used for exhibits and handouts to agencies and the public.

### 3.1. Locations and Attendance

#### 3.1.1. Agency Scoping Meeting

The agency scoping meeting was held at the FHWA offices in Lakewood, Colorado on Monday, September 26th. Attendees are noted below.

Agencies Invited to Scoping Meetings

Invited Agency	Attendance
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8	Yes
Federal Aviation Administration	No
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	No
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Denver Regulatory Office	No
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	No
U.S. Forest Service	Yes
CDPHE-Air Pollution Control Division	Yes
Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife	No
Colorado State Historic Preservation Office	No
CDPHE-Colorado Water Quality Control Commission	No
Denver Regional Council of Governments	Yes
Federal Railroad Administration	No
Federal Transit Administration	No
Jefferson County	Yes
Clear Creek County, Road and Bridge Department	No

#### 3.1.2. Public Scoping Meeting

The public scoping meeting was held at the Buffalo Bar and Restaurant in Idaho Springs, Colorado on Wednesday, September 28th from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Approximately 75 people attended the meeting

### 3.2. Meeting Format and Content

#### 3.2.1. Agency Scoping Meetings

The Agency Scoping meeting followed the agenda with an open discussion. The meeting notes, which include the agenda, are in Appendix C.

#### 3.2.2. Public Scoping Meeting

The Public Scoping Meeting began with 30 minutes of open house where participants could review the display boards and ask questions of the project team. This was followed by a formal presentation given by Jim Bemelen, CDOT I-70 Corridor Manager. After the presentation questions from the audience were

addressed by CDOT leadership. The display boards were left up after the formal presentation and the Q & A session was completed.

### Display Boards and Handouts

Display boards were used at the scoping meetings to visually illustrate project concepts and resources in the study area. Handouts provided more detailed information on the study to meeting attendees.

#### 3.2.3. Agency Scoping Meeting

Handouts distributed at the agency scoping meeting included the following topics and are included in Appendix C):

- Background & Schedule
- Purpose and Need
- Context Statement & Core Values
- Proposed Action
- Environmental Resources Considerations

#### 3.2.4. Public Scoping Meeting

Display boards used at the public scoping meeting included the following topics (see Appendix D for illustrations):

- How we got here
- What we are doing
- Proposed Action
- How does this Project Affect AGS?
- Resources Evaluated in the EA
- Natural Resources & Issues that will be Evaluated
- Social & Community Resources that will be Evaluated
- How to stay Involved

Handouts were available at the public meeting attendees to provide more detailed information on the study (see Appendix D). These handouts were designed to supplement the information stations and provide information on the following topics:

- Project fact sheet
- PEIS fact sheet
- On-line resources fact sheet
- Comment form

## 4. Scoping Comments

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Agencies and members of the public provided numerous comments during the scoping period at the agency and public scoping meetings and via the project Web site and comment forms. The sections below summarize the comments received at the scoping and small group meetings.

### 4.1. Agency Scoping Comments

#### **Purpose and Need**

Clarify in the Purpose and Need that the action is not the ultimate solution but rather an initial action to address an immediate problem.

#### **DRCOG RTP**

- Adding three miles of through lane capacity is regionally significant. The project is within the DRCOG Transportation Planning Region and this capacity addition must be depicted on the DRCOG Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (PVRTP). CDOT Region One will need to submit an RTP amendment during one of DRCOG's biannual plan amendment periods.
- Relationship to other I-70 Mountain Corridor improvements
- How will this project affect the AGS?
- How does CDOT's current pricing project interact with the Twin Tunnels EA?

#### **Tolling**

- When the RTP amendment is submitted to DRCOG, include an analysis of the tolling options studied and were/weren't carried forward.
- The EPA recommends CDOT evaluate and address the concerns that tolling operations could affect safety and mobility due to weaving vehicles.
- Don't limit time period for tolling by stating that CDOT is considering "peak period pricing". Leave more flexibility for tolling.
- May need to extend study farther west to accommodate tolling option.
- Alternatives chapter of EA should carefully describe the evaluation process for different tolling options and explain why some options were eliminated and why CDOT carried one tolling option forward in the EA.

#### **Environmental resources**

- **Water quality**
  - Will permitting for stormwater discharge be handled with an individual permit?
  - Need to address Total Maximum Daily Loads for Cadmium
- **Air quality**
  - Will need additional air quality modeling for EA if ozone boundary is revised to include Clear Creek County, CDHPE-APCD has recommended that it not include Clear Creek County and will have final decision from EPA within six months.

- **Historic Property**

- SHPO noted they were pleased with the approach and progress of the Twin Tunnels EA in regards to Section 106 consultation.

- **Endangered Species**

- No endangered species exist in the project area. The Twin Tunnels EA should ensure that the ALIVE MOU is followed.
- Water depletions should be addressed.

### **Construction impacts**

- USFS identified the potential for a short-term construction impacts on Air Quality, Cultural/Historic, Recreation, Water, Wildlife/Fisheries
- Long Term Air Quality in the James Peak and Mt. Evans Wilderness Areas
- Long Term impacts on Clear Creek Ranger District Work Center Historic Property
- Long Term Impacts on wildlife movement over the Twin Tunnels land bridge
- The EPA recommends that CDOT apply for an individual stormwater construction permit.
- A separate construction noise assessment may be needed. The EPA recommends performing this noise assessment because the plans call for construction 24/7.
- Will need to develop specifics related to what is needed from CDPHE for a Construction Permit for fugitive dust.
- Clear Creek County has no county ordinances for fugitive dust. The County follows state guidelines.
- How will emergency vehicle access (in response to accident/incidents east of the Twin Tunnels be handled during construction of this project?
- What is planned for the detour when the construction is completed?
- Two offers of use of private property as a construction staging site.
- How will the construction work and schedule on CR 314 impact access to our site?

## **4.2. Public Scoping Comments**

### **Traffic and safety**

- **Existing traffic**

- Slow down occurs when cars travel east up Floyd Hill, not at the Twin Tunnels.
- What was the result of “speed harmonization” tests conducted by CDOT?
- Drivers “cut the line” of slow or stopped I-70 traffic by driving the Frontage Road from Georgetown (Exit 228) all the way to Exits 241A and 243. This merge slows everyone down.

- **Safety**

- Make the left lane US 6 exit (at the base of Floyd Hill) from EB I-70 safer.

- What is CDOTs plan for improving safety of the traveling public?
- Can we provide a special access at the dirt road/doghouse bridge intersection for safety vehicles to enter traffic and avoid the congestion likely to exist on I-70?

- **Impacts**

- The corridor bottleneck will be in the westbound direction.
- Concern that this project will just push the “bottleneck” to other locations where level of service and safety will significantly decline.
- Will this project really solve anything?

### **Bicycle and pedestrian facilities**

- The Vail Pass bike path and the design through Glenwood Canyon should be used as models for the work that will be done in Clear Creek.
- If there is not enough money to do a proper and complete project, wait until funding becomes available.
- Can the transitions – especially the old game check be retained with enhanced facilities to support greenway, bike, ped or other uses of that area including access to the river?

### **Alternatives**

- **Non-infrastructure improvements**

- Disagreement with hard shoulder running proposed in this area.
- Consider speed limit at tunnels in Glenwood Canyon during design of the Twin Tunnels project.
- Post speed signs or introduce pace cars to eliminate slowdowns.
- Find other ways to improve through travel such as alternate routes or different travel days. Construction at the Twin Tunnels will be too disruptive to locals.
- Better signage on the hill east of the Tunnels to encourage drivers to maintain/increase their speed. These signs would cost a few thousand dollars instead of \$60 million.
- Solution – Have Colorado State Patrol or local police limit access to the Frontage Road during summer and winter weekend rush hours to local residents only. Combine this with CSP driving 45 mph from the Tunnel to Route 40 along with ramp metering and traffic should flow much more smoothly. (More specific details in the Appendix letter).

- **Tunnels**

- Blasting the mountain where the Twin Tunnels are would cost less.
- Remove the entire bottle neck in partnership with the Aggregate Plant at 6/40 by removing the entire mountain and eliminating both tunnels. There might be some revenue generated by the aggregate that would be hauled down to the plant.
- The main cause of the drastic slowdown at the entrance to the Tunnels is a psychological effect. I suggest alterations to either the entrance or interior.
- Make a deal with the quarry to cut through and remove the twins all together.

- The scope of the project ought to be expanded, at a minimum, to make both tunnels three lanes wide.
- Have there been any discussions about a large tunnel or double-decked tunnels east of the existing Twin Tunnels which could originate near the LaFarge gravel plant?
- **Frontage road**
  - The Frontage road should be continued from Idaho Springs down to 6/40.
  - Have a parallel access road between Hidden Valley and a point just east of the foot of Floyd Hill, at least for emergency use.
- **Other**
  - The Twin Tunnels project is consistent with the Consensus Recommendation and work should move forward.
  - Offer my voice in favor of the project.
  - If we want to have improved access to the mountains in the long run, we will have to put up with some inconvenience in the short run.
  - Use the game check road as a detour.
  - Build two year-round, high speed and maximum carrying capacity cable propelled tramways from East Slope parking areas to West Slope mountain town.

#### **Relationship to other I-70 Mountain Corridor improvements**

- Several commenters stated that the documentation for this project should demonstrate that the ultimate solution for I-70 and AGS transit (the PEIS Preferred Alternative) can be accomplished through this area and that the Twin Tunnels project could not preclude them.
- The only way to avoid road widening in Idaho Springs in the future is to implement incremental and financially feasible transit on I-70. The Twin Tunnels project will preclude future transit on I-70.
- Support for bus transit on I-70.
- How will the project affect future transit operations?

#### **Environmental impacts**

- **Natural resources**
  - Mineralization of the rock in the area and the potential for that to contaminate Clear Creek. The EA needs to determine the mineral profile of the rock and if found to be a concern, develop mitigation commitments to protect the Creek
  - Effects of disturbing the mine waste that may have been used for a road base and development of mitigation to protect the Creek
  - Potential for enhancement of Clear Creek, working together with the SWEEP team
  - Need to address short term and long term runoff and sediment pollution
  - Need to identify a plan for disposal of solid water from the tunnel
  - Examine impacts of maintenance runoff on water quality.



- How can we be assured that CDOT's commitment to protecting aquatic resources is followed through?
- Follow SWEEP commitments
- The plan for disposal of waste products resulting from tunneling should be disclosed.
- The EPA recommends that both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> be monitored. The Draft EA should ensure that the mitigation measures committed to in the I-70 ROD will be implemented by CDOT for the Twin Tunnels project.
- The EA must adequately analyze and mitigate effects of rock mineralization on Water Quality.
- Determine whether toxic materials are in the existing road bed material.
- Provide historical signage on the Frontage Road.
- **Social resources**
  - Potential for enhancement of raft launch site just east of the Tunnels
  - How will CDOT address impacts to local residents who use the Hidden Valley Interchange or CR314 for vehicular trips?
  - Have full survey of Frontage Road – Hidden Valley to Idaho Springs sewer treatment plant. Also bore test in critical points was done with intent to install sewer line and water.
- **Construction impacts**
  - Will paved cycling access be available through the project area during construction?
  - Will the bike path be restored to existing or improved conditions after the project?
- **Miscellaneous**
  - The Frontage Road and Twin Tunnels are not independent projects.
  - Marjorie Bell (owner of the properties closest to Exit 243) would like to be added to the newsletter list and consulted about details of the detour plan.

#### 4.2.1. Web site, and Other Comments

Comments received verbally at the public scoping meeting and received via the project website are included in Appendix D.

#### 4.3. Approach to Addressing Comments

Comments, not including suggested alternatives, will be considered as we refine the Proposed Action. Many of the comments will be addressed through the project's Issue Task Forces: The Section 106 Issue Task Force will focus on the issues, processes, documentation, mitigation, and agreements needed around all historic issues; the SWEEP Issue Task will develop recommendations related to water issues within the project area; the ALIVE Issue Task Force will develop recommendations in matters related to wildlife crossing issues within the project area.

Consistent with the CSS process the Core Values, a summary of the values expressed by the stakeholders, will also be used to refine the Proposed Action. The following table characterizes how the EA will consider and address the Core Values.

TABLE 1: ADDRESSING TWIN TUNNELS CORE VALUES AND FEDERAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Core Values	How the Twin Tunnels EA Addresses and Evaluates Core Values (factors)		
		Relevant to the Tolling Option	Relevant to the Road Cross Section
<b>Safe</b> travel for people and goods. <b>Safety</b> for emergency responders and maintenance workers. A <b>safe</b> crossing for wildlife.	Include safety in NEPA Purpose and Need		
	Crash history analysis and crash predictions for future conditions	✓	✓
	Ability to accommodate emergency vehicles	✓	✓
	Evaluate Proposed Action's ability to meet Purpose and Need	✓	✓
	Application of State and Federal design standards ALIVE Issue Task Force to evaluate wildlife crossings and make recommendation	✓	✓
<b>Mobility</b> through safe and reliable transportation facilities.	Include safety and need for reliable transportation facilities in NEPA Purpose and Need	✓	
	Analysis of travel reliability, vehicle hours of travel, vehicle miles of travel, travel time, traffic density, line and screen line volumes, vehicle hours of delay, hours of congestion, queuing, recurring and non-recurring congestion, diversion to other routes, speed, level of service/other measure of congestion, energy consumption	✓	
	Ability to alter travel behavior to encourage off peak travel, suppressed trips	✓	
	Consistency with current CDOT practices for highway capacity projects in or adjacent to the DRCOG region	✓	
	Evaluate Proposed Action's ability to meet Purpose and Need	✓	
	Application of State, Federal, and I-70 Mountain Corridor design standards and operational improvements	✓	
A primary access and visual <b>gateway</b> to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.	Application of the CSS Design Guidance	✓	✓
	Application of the CSS Mountain Mineral Belt Aesthetic Guidance	✓	✓
	NEPA resource evaluations of visual impacts, historic property effects, and transportation conditions	✓	✓
	NEPA evaluation of mitigation strategies and commitment to effective strategies in decision document		✓
<b>Wildlife</b> , wildlife habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.	ALIVE MOU and Issue Task Force to review wildlife crossings and barriers		✓
	Review of ALIVE Recommendations		✓
	NEPA resource evaluation of wildlife and riparian area impacts		✓
	NEPA evaluation of mitigation strategies and commitment to effective strategies in decision document		✓
<b>Clear Creek</b> , as a clean, high-quality water resource, a recreational asset, an aquatic resource with sustainable	Application of SWEEP MOU		✓
	SWEEP Issue Task Force recommendations		✓

TABLE 1: ADDRESSING TWIN TUNNELS CORE VALUES AND FEDERAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Core Values	How the Twin Tunnels EA Addresses and Evaluates Core Values (factors)		
		Relevant to the Tolling Option	Relevant to the Road Cross Section
fisheries' habitat, a drinking water source, and a defining natural feature of the corridor.	NEPA resource evaluation of water quality, recreation impacts, aquatic resource impacts, wetland impacts		✓
	NEPA evaluation of mitigation strategies and commitment to effective strategies in decision document		✓
Tourist destinations and community facilities, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, wastewater treatment plant, planned Clear Creek Greenway, I-70 frontage road (CR 314), and Clear Creek.	Application of the CSS Decision Process to identify issues and facilities of community concern	✓	✓
	Application of the CSS Design Guidance	✓	✓
	Consultation with Idaho Springs, Clear Creek County, and local stakeholders	✓	✓
	Section 4(f) evaluation of need for and ability to avoid transportation use of recreation facilities		✓
	NEPA resource evaluations of land use, economic impacts, social impacts, recreation resource impacts, freight traffic	✓	
	NEPA evaluation of mitigation strategies and commitment to effective strategies in decision document	✓	✓
<b>History</b> as a defining element of Clear Creek County. Celebrating the cultural resources associated with mining and mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation on I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.	Engagement of the I-70 Mountain Corridor Section 106 Consulting Parties (Historic Issue Task Force) through all phases of the Section 106 process		✓
	Application of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement		✓
	Historic properties survey to identify/confirm important historic properties within the project effects area		✓
	Section 4(f) evaluation of need for and ability to avoid transportation use of historic properties		✓
	NEPA resource evaluation of historic properties, including direct and indirect effects such as noise, visual, access, or tourism effects		✓
	NEPA evaluation of mitigation strategies and commitment to effective strategies in decision document and Memorandum of Agreement		✓