

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Project: CDOT Region 3 – SH 82 Grand Avenue Bridge

Purpose: PLT Meeting #13

Date Held: July 12, 2012

Location: CDOT Region 3 Glenwood (Maintenance Video Conference Room)
CDOT Golden (Maintenance Academy Video Conference Room)
CDOT Grand Junction (Monument Video Conference Room)

Attendees:

FHWA:	Eva LaDow (conference call)
CDOT:	Josh Cullen, Roland Wagner, Mike Vanderhoof
City of Glenwood Springs:	Bruce Christensen
Glenwood Springs Chamber:	Suzanne Stewart
Colorado Bridge Enterprise:	Josh Laipply
Eagle County:	Eva Wilson
Jacobs:	Craig Gaskill, Jim Clarke, Mary Speck
Glenwood Hot Springs:	Kjell Mitchell
Historic Preservation Commission:	Gretchen Ricehill
Downtown Development Authority:	Leslie Bethel
Newland Project Resources:	Tom Newland
Pat Noyes and Assoc.	Pat Noyes

Copies: PLT Members, File

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

EVALUATION OF INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW (VE) RECOMMENDATIONS

Colorado 4-Lane

1. Features:
 - a. Acquire Colorado National Bank for 25mph S-curves.
 - b. 8-foot sidewalks at building fronts along Colorado (worse than couplets).
 - c. Removes all on-street parking on Colorado (worse than couplets)
 - d. Could add 60+ diagonal parking spaces on Grand Avenue

- e. Circulation changes similar to all of the couplet alternatives.
 - f. Would be helped by 8th St. west connection over Roaring Fork, but this isn't one of our considerations regarding Purpose & Need.
 - g. Phasing advantage to build new bridge without touching old.
 - h. Had been screened out previously due to Colorado Avenue impacts.
 - i. Big advantage – build bridge off line – construction impacts significantly reduced.
 - j. A lot of challenges.
 - i. Impacts to Colorado Avenue.
 - ii. Reduces frontage on Colorado.
 - iii. City Council and BOCC – had concerns about this one.
 - iv. Higher level of direct property impacts.
 - v. Higher level of potential historic impacts (Garfield County Courthouse).
 - k. On north side – 3 options to connect - Laurel preferred.
 - i. To get to Laurel at a 6% grade, worse than other alternatives.
 - ii. Pine provides a good profile but then results in some increased construction impacts.
2. Craig explained the PWG felt that this alternative didn't provide enough compelling benefits to consider evaluating further, when considered against many of the disadvantages – similar to those that led to screening of couplets. The PLT concurred with this finding.

Diverging Diamond for Alt.3 Connection to 6th

1. Features:
 - a. Possible to Leave Shell Station in place – only access would be to 6th Street.
 - b. Need to acquire Sioux Villa property.
 - c. Possible direct route into pool (same as other Alt. 3s).
 - d. Need careful geometric design and signing to prevent wrong-way traffic movements – may be confusing to drivers.
 - e. May require more parking taken from pool, or the east crossover signal would be on structure.
 - f. Potentially wider bridge than other Alt. 3s, or split structure to align opposing directions.
 - g. 3-phase signal at west intersection is not a traffic flow/capacity improvement over the other Alt. 3 intersection options (same as other Alt. 3s).

- h. Drivers at west intersection see two closely spaced signals in front of them, need optical or louvered signal heads.
 - i. Other potential signal phasing issues.
 - j. Gets traffic to and from US 6; but, most traffic is on SH 82.
 - k. Would leave Shell in place.
 - l. Pedestrian connections from River Trail would be similar.
 - m. Difficult to get to US 6 - but can get to River Road.
2. PWG felt this concept does not compare well against other Alternative 3 intersection options and, for reasons discussed above, recommended not carrying forward for further evaluation. PLT concurred with this finding.

PUBLIC ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 13 (Hauter)

1. Features:
 - a. Similar to Project Alternative 9, but flattens out curve at 9th, which was screened out because of property takes, and this one takes more.
 - b. Included extension of 8th Street to West (doesn't meet Purpose & Need).
 - c. Southbound bridge over river would have sustained 6% upgrade to get over I-70 (same as Alt. 9).
 - d. Circulation and noise/air quality concerns would be the same as Alt. 9 and all other couplets.
2. PWG recommended not carrying this forward as it does not compare favorably to Alternative 9, previously screened out.

Alternative 14 (Denton)

1. Presented at April 4 public meeting.
2. Focused on getting traffic out of downtown - to and from west on 9th Street.
3. Project team developed engineered concept of this alternative with two-lane bridge, one lane ramps to/from west I-70.
4. Features:
 - a. Assume bridge over mainline railroad and railroad spur track, and over 8th Street.
 - b. South end lands near 9th & Pitkin, significant impacts to school, several homes.
 - c. No connection to 6th Street or pool area, does not meet Purpose & Need.
 - d. To accommodate about half of SH 82 traffic, 9th would need to be widened between Pitkin and Grand, which may require additional property acquisitions.

- e. Still requires rebuilding Grand Avenue bridge for traffic to/from east.
 - f. Comments from PLT that the public had concerns about proximity impacts to the school and neighborhood from the Colorado couplet; these impacts would be worse.
5. PWG had recommended screening, and PLT concurred with this finding.

Alt. 16 (Centennial / Denton)

1. Portions presented at April 4 public meeting.
2. Project team developed engineered concept of this alternative with five-lane bridge, flip-flop I-70 (bottom instead of top) and new interchange (with the Alternative 16 connection on top).
3. Centennial piece is rebuilding the interchange and providing connection across Colorado River and railroad tracks.
4. Combining Denton's and Centennial would meet Purpose & Need although not as well as Alternatives 1 and 3.
5. Features:
 - a. South end lands near 9th & Pitkin, significant impacts to school, several homes. Alignment assumed a future alternate route extension south in the River/ RFTA corridor.
 - b. Key issue is that existing Grand Avenue Bridge would need to be reconstructed first, existing piers are in the way of new Exit 116 ramps.
 - c. Reconstructing Exit 116 would essentially require a full closure of the interchange during reconstruction. I-70 mainline open with detour, ramps in temporary locations.
 - d. To accommodate about half of SH 82 traffic, 9th would need to be widened between Pitkin and Grand, which may require additional property acquisitions.
 - e. Worse at meeting Purpose & Need.
 - f. Greater level of impacts to community.
6. PWG had recommended screening, and PLT concurred with this finding

Alternative 17 (Denton)

1. Craig explained the design concept. Everything is elevated. Three-level structure required on north side. Multi-elevated structure at 8th and 9th.
2. The PWG recommended screening this out as it is very confusing for the traveling public, extremely high cost, extremely high impacts compared to other alternatives, would have extensive structures affecting aesthetics, and was recommended not to carry forward by the Independent Peer Review panel.

3. It was noted that Jim Denton had sound motivation for his concepts – to allow for more redevelopment and job opportunities; create more land area for this to happen. However, the alternative did not do a good job at meeting the project’s Purpose & Need or criteria.
4. The PLT concurred with the PWG recommendation.

Alternative 18 (Holloway) – Direct Connect Ramps from New Bridge to I-70

1. Almost entire interchange is on structure, east ramps would extend as far as Yampa Hot Springs due to elevation gain from I-70 to Grand Avenue Bridge.
2. Grand Avenue Bridge wider to accommodate all turn lanes.
3. Would require relocation of pedestrian bridge.
4. Viaduct-like structure over River Road in front of Hot Springs buildings.
5. Less opportunity for aesthetic treatments.
6. Greater potential impacts, primarily to historic Hot Springs district.
7. The PWG recommended screening out. The PLT concurred with the PWG recommendation.

Discussion

1. Pat Noyes noted that we should consider what items the study team learned from the Independent Peer Review alternatives and the other public alternatives that helped inform the remaining alternatives and/or process.
2. Tom Newland explained the feedback he received from the Farmer’s Market booth.
 - a. Alternative 3D popular – mostly because of its perceived simplicity.
 - b. Most want to keep the pedestrian bridge, primarily because it keeps pedestrians away from traffic.
 - c. Ideas to reuse the highway bridge for markets, events.
 - d. Some people still bringing up bypass but not as many as in the past.
3. It was noted that Alternative 3D might be popular for most since it is the most familiar. Discussion that roundabouts and these types of concepts are not intuitive to the public in plan view; may be a need to provide visualizations from driver’s perspective.
4. It was noted that Alternative 3D would adversely affect the Pool’s development opportunities. This alternative would also result in a very large bridge.
5. It was suggested that this might warrant a conceptual drawing or visual to show the scale of this structure.
6. Discussion on level of detail needed for NEPA. Mike Vanderhoof noted that the basic concept will be identified during the NEPA stage, and design refinements will occur later during the process.

ALTERNATIVES REFINEMENTS

Alternatives 3A – Local Roundabout

1. Off ramp needs to be signed.
2. Have at least a block between intersections.

Alternative 3E – Signal, Stop Access

3. Queues at 6th and US 6 to line up for double left-hand turns are a concern. This will be investigated further.

Alternative 3E – Add Northbound Left from River Road Then Right Turn at Laurel

1. Reduced effectiveness of operations at 6th and Laurel. Adds additional complexities to intersection area. Reduces area for entrance treatments. Reduced opportunities to widen I-70 off-ramp in future. Does provide opportunity for additional movement out of Pool area.

Alternative 3F – 1 ½ Roundabout

1. Alleviates merge condition from 6th on east side.
2. Fewer lights/stop signs.
3. Input that this concept seems simpler and more intuitive. Also input that this seems more confusing for those who dislike roundabouts.
4. Need to consider items besides traffic operations as we evaluate these, such as:
 - a. How it will work as a gateway;
 - b. Aesthetics/landscaping opportunities in the “green space”.
 - c. Bike/pedestrian connections.

General Discussion

1. Need to consider bike/pedestrian movements through Alternative 3 intersections.
 - a. Pedestrian connection to Glenwood Canyon Trail is important.
2. There is less congestion on 3A due to the roundabout.
3. Business owners west of US 6 – have concerns about pedestrians accessing the pool. Signage can mitigate this.
4. Comment that it would be good to make improvements to Exit 116 by removing the existing “slope of dirt under the bridge”.
5. Discussion about how we communicate this information to the public:
 - a. Tom is hearing we need to show how traffic flows through the intersection options (simplicity). There are also questions about cost.
 - b. Need to better show the size of the bridge at the T-intersection on Alternative 3D.

- c. We need to screen unreasonable alternatives – if they stay in too long, could hurt credibility in our ability to evaluate.
 - d. On the other side, people think we're moving too fast in the screening.
 - e. How do we tie the process to NEPA? We need to communicate that we're listening to the public and the process is still going on. We are moving forward and will still be gathering input. Until the decision document is signed, we do not have hard line decisions. In terms of presentations to the public, we did evaluations that shed light on what are most viable based on the project criteria. We are asking input from the public on what they think. The project team is making recommendations, not final decisions. We need to look at how well the public believes in the process.
 - f. There are lots of people on vacation in August– will enough people have seen everything they need to provide input? Repeating information is good; we need to continue to say how we got here, where we are and where we are going.
 - g. Clarify where we want to be in August – and what happens after that.
 - i. Down to two alternatives now. Plan is to get to one alignment by end of August or early September.
 - ii. NEPA – get to Preferred Alternative. Has to have enough definition so we can properly evaluate impacts.
 - iii. DDA also looking at potential for redevelopment under the two remaining alternatives.
 - iv. The PWG won't screen anything out until there is confidence there is enough documentation to justify it.
 - v. Will a decision be made before August 22nd? Could present recommendations, but still present why. The PWG is not planning on making a recommendation before August 22nd, as they would prefer to get public input first.
6. What detail will we include at this stage?
- a. The project team will try to identify an intersection design that is acceptable in the NEPA Decision Document.
 - b. Need to provide more detail on pedestrians on the north side.
 - c. It was noted that this is a good opportunity for the City to partner with some improvements on this project.

SOUTH END PEDESTRIAN ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Apply to both Alternatives 1 & 3.
 - a. Minimize bridge width – add ramps along 7th Street.
 - i. All bikes and pedestrians use ramp and stairs at 7th Street.
 - ii. 24.5 feet between buildings and edge of bridge.

- iii. Ramp/stairs could connect to existing pedestrian bridge or to new pedestrian/bike facility on new bridge.
- iv. DDA consultants will look at how this ramp might tie into their concepts.
- b. Or add sidewalk along Grand Avenue in this area.
 - i. Around 19 feet between buildings and retaining wall.

Alternative 1A – Keep existing pedestrian bridge, no pedestrian facilities on new bridge

- 1. Don't preclude ability to add pedestrian/bike facilities to new bridge in future.
- 2. Discussion on bike connections and the need to look at greater connectivity for bikes. If putting lanes on Grand Avenue Bridge isn't doable, consider connecting to existing connections, such as bridge at confluence. Bicyclists would be willing to travel an extra couple of blocks for a better connection.
 - a. Considering handicapped people represent such a small percentage of users, elevator would accommodate this need and is much less intrusive than ramps. Need to consider.
 - i. Data on amount of pedestrian traffic on bridge?
 - ii. Elevator preferences?
 - iii. When trains come in, pedestrian bridge is loaded. Elevator feasibility?
 - iv. Most everyone takes stairs.
 - v. For these types of items where there might be joint responsibility, Joe Elsen had mentioned that CDOT needs to consider pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding with the City and others, as needed.
 - vi. If the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Document include a concept like the ped ramps but it was later decided that an elevator is wanted and feasible, CDOT would need to reevaluate the EA. This process would generally be made easier if impacts are being reduced – not increased.

Alternative 1B – Remove existing ped bridge, all ped/bike facilities on new bridge, improved aesthetics

- 1. Better addresses project context statement, critical success factors and aesthetic criteria.
- 2. Discussed the different ADA standards for recreation vs. transportation facilities. Discussion regarding the fact that FHWA agreed that, from a 4(f) standpoint, this was a transportation facility. Jim noted we need to look at the different criteria in determining transportation vs. recreation for ADA and 4(f), and make sure we're consistent.
 - i. 5% ramp vs. 8% ramp.
 - ii. Ramps system vs. adding lanes or path next to bridge.
 - iii. Keep bridge/path options narrower.

- iv. Is the ramp wide enough for bikes? Could be, but some think that existing pedestrian bridge is not signed for bikes.
- b. Although ramps are long, they might not be visually opposing if it has thin width, vertical railings, etc. Consider whether to draw concepts to illustrate.
- c. There is no good data for bike traffic although options to obtain this are being looked at. Signage can better direct bikers which way to go. The Wayfinding study did address this.
- d. Might make more sense to make improvements elsewhere to accommodate bikes, rather than trying to create a connection off of this existing facility.
- e. If the solution isn't on the bridge, we need to make sure it's consistent with plans.
- f. There was a plan for a bike path along river the north side of the Colorado River. It didn't get the funding.

PLT OPEN LETTER

1. Tom presented the draft letter. PLT members provided several comments. Tom will revise and resend.

DDA VISUALIZATIONS

1. Leslie presented renderings their consultant developed that show urban design and redevelopment opportunities associated with Alternatives 1 and 3.
2. DDA Board funded the visualizations to look at opportunities within the neighborhoods, and to look at development potential. These were done to better inform the team and the public.
3. Better safety with diagonal parking along 7th Street.
4. Under bridge at 7th Street - opportunities:
 - a. Retail.
 - b. Bridge pylon - bridge could be more pedestrian scale at north and south end of it. Put dollars where we actually will see something - detailing.
 - c. Food trucks.
 - d. Parking.
5. Traffic calming circle/oval n 7th Street to slow traffic down.
6. Space between bridge and businesses.
 - a. Planters, arches, railing, median.
 - b. Possibly a wall - stone wall.
7. Between 8th and 9th.

- a. Parking, medians.
8. Working with Access Control Plan team on how these concepts might look.
9. Overlooks – can these be incorporated into the pedestrian bridge?
10. Alternative 3.
 - a. Look at narrow cross section.
 - b. Consider parking in rear of buildings.
 - c. “Village center” on north side of bridge.
 - d. Big concrete T intersection on bridge – similar to Evans and Santa Fe (Alternative 3-D).
11. July 31 Open House
 - a. With Access Plan and Grand Avenue Bridge project.
 - b. No presentation, open house.
 - c. Input on visuals.
 - d. Separate stations for the three projects.
 - e. Recorders at stations.
 - f. Press release before Open House; Post Open House press release.
 - i. Why doing it, what specifically looking for.
 - ii. Supporting this process, public awareness, public information, build interest and support for what is going on. Also looking for feedback.
 - iii. Strategic reasons – CSS process – PWG - what is important in making recommendations?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

1. Push Public Open House to September? PLT concluded that August 22nd was the best date to hold it.
2. Combined meeting on 30th. Decided not needed.
3. DDA is not making a recommendation. Wants process to lead the way.
4. Process engages everyone along the way – so public understands that best solution has come from the process.
5. City Council has a large role – we need their support. Engagement now is critical that everyone is supportive of the decision. City Council workshop is scheduled for August 16th.
6. “Taking a position” implies it’s outside of the process.

Attachments

Sign-in Sheet

Presentation

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