

AGREN BLANDO COURT REPORTING & VIDEO INC

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

IN RE:

I-70 MOUNTAIN CORRIDOR - REVISED DRAFT
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING PRESENTATION, OCTOBER 2010

PURSUANT TO NOTICE to all parties in interest, the above-entitled matter came on for public hearing on Thursday, October 7, 2010, commencing at 6:00 p.m., at 426 Fairgrounds Road, Eagle, Colorado, before Gail Obermeyer, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of Colorado.

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14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X

PRESENTATION:	PAGE
Mary Ann Strombitski	3
Jon Stavney	4
Scott McDaniel	7
PUBLIC COMMENTS:	
Ellen Colrick	39
Paula Lallier	40
John Haines	41
Clyde Hanks	43
Rachel Richards	46
Paco Calderon	49

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 THE INTERPRETER: Good evening, ladies
3 and gentlemen. (Untranslated Spanish.) My name
4 is Lilia. I will be your Spanish interpreter
5 tonight. If you need assistance, please let me
6 know. Thank you.

7 MS. STROMBITSKI: Welcome, and thank
8 you for coming out tonight. We appreciate your
9 participation in this public hearing. My name is
10 Mary Ann Strombitski, and I'll be your facilitator
11 this evening.

12 This is truly your opportunity to be
13 heard. If you have not signed up to speak at the
14 microphone, you can still do so for the next ten
15 minutes. Please sign up at the front desk as you
16 enter.

17 I hope that you've had an opportunity
18 to view the displays and ask questions of the CDOT
19 representatives that are on hand this evening
20 during the Open House. These folks will be
21 available during and after this presentation if
22 you would like to ask additional questions. Just
23 remember, any comments that you make to them are
24 not captured as formal comment. You do, however,
25 have several ways to provide formal comment this

1 evening; by completing a comment sheet and
2 dropping it in one of the boxes located in the
3 comment area, by going online at our computer
4 station in the back, by dictating your thoughts
5 privately to the court reporter located at the
6 rear of the hall, by speaking at the microphone
7 just down in front of me at the end of general
8 presentation, or by completing the comment form
9 and mailing it to the address on the back of the
10 form by November 8. All comments need to be
11 received by that deadline.

12 Besides the comment sheet, you received
13 an agenda packet this evening that outlines our
14 schedule of events, a station map of how to get
15 more information, a fax sheet, and a bit of
16 background on the differences between a public
17 hearing and a public meeting. This is truly a
18 listening session for CDOT.

19 Now, joining us tonight is Jon Stavney,
20 Commissioner with Eagle County. Thank you, Jon,
21 for joining us. And if you would, share a few
22 words. Thank you.

23 MR. STAVNEY: Thanks, Mary Ann. Last
24 time I was in here was for a 4-H event. My son
25 got his check for selling his pig. Welcome to

1 beautiful Eagle County. I want to welcome CDOT
2 and their large staff that's here tonight. Thank
3 you for making the trip. We're really proud to
4 have you here and proud to have you in the town as
5 well. On behalf of the Eagle County staff, I want
6 to welcome each of you as well to this event.
7 It's really your event.

8 Eva Wilson, our County Engineer, who
9 helped arrange this. Sara Fisher couldn't be with
10 us tonight; she's County Commissioner. Peter
11 Runyon especially would have liked to have been
12 here. He's been involved in the collaborative
13 process that's gone on since 2007. He chairs the
14 Intermountain Transportation Planning Region and
15 spends a lot of time with the folks in the back of
16 the room there.

17 You know, I just wanted to comment, how
18 many of you came here after seeing the headliner
19 here in the Mountaineer, as far as CDOT being your
20 only chance to weigh in on a \$20 billion plan? I
21 don't think that got anybody out of the woodwork.
22 But I like that.

23 The comment I want to make is if anyone
24 wants to accuse CDOT of not listening, I got to
25 tell you, I got to correct you on that. This

1 entire process is sort of a redo of a process that
2 went on in 2004 when the first Draft Environmental
3 Impact Statement was put out. And that, to make
4 it extremely simple, was an answer of, "We have a
5 freeway of lanes; we need more lanes," I think is
6 a very, very simple two-minute explanation.

7 This process that has led to being here
8 today is a result of CDOT basically taking a step
9 back, after getting a lot of opposition to that
10 first plan, and saying, "We need to include a
11 whole lot more people, a lot more groups;
12 everybody up and down the I-70 Corridor in the
13 mountains, environmentalists, local jurisdictions,
14 and we need to talk about this in a larger
15 context."

16 And so that's what's brought us here
17 today. And I'm thinking it's something that they
18 should be complimented on. But it is -- tonight
19 is your chance to speak up. This is a 60-day
20 comment period that's ending November 8, I think I
21 heard earlier. So please make a point of keeping
22 track of what's going on there. Ask a lot of
23 questions and give as much input as you can. CDOT
24 does listen. That's why we're here today.

25 Next up, more importantly, is Scott

1 McDaniel, and he's the program engineer for this.

2 Thank you, Scott.

3 MR. McDANIEL: Thank you, Commissioner.

4 And I hope this is going to be my best
5 presentation, because I also feel at home in 4-H,
6 was involved, and my kids are in 4-H camp, so I
7 feel real at ease here.

8 I also want to thank all of you and
9 welcome you all here tonight to take time out of
10 your day to learn more about I-70. We're really
11 excited to be here and share what we think is the
12 best solution for the I-70 Mountain Corridor. As
13 the Commissioner mentioned, my name is Scott
14 McDaniel, and I work for CDOT. And I am the
15 program engineer for the I-70 Mountain Corridor.
16 I'm also the project manager for this project.

17 And as he mentioned, this has been a
18 long time coming. We started this project ten
19 years ago, and we never thought we'd come to this
20 day, but excited to be here and share this with
21 you. And I also want to thank all the people,
22 particularly in Eagle County, that have spent
23 countless hours helping us get to this point;
24 because as the Commissioner mentioned, it wasn't
25 just CDOT. We couldn't be here with a solution

1 that we feel is the best for the community without
2 getting that community input. I know there's many
3 people who spent a lot of their own personal time
4 to help us get here. So for that, I want to thank
5 you all.

6 So, again, we're here to receive
7 comments on our proposal alternative here and what
8 we call the PEIS. During tonight's meeting, I'm
9 going to try to give you information that you need
10 to help you formulate the questions and comments
11 you might have about this document. We have a lot
12 of people that are stationed out here to also
13 answer questions you may have. We have a lot of
14 information, and so it's going to be really hard
15 to absorb it all, but we hope that we can give you
16 the information that you need to either comment or
17 give us your support for this project.

18 And as Mary Ann mentioned, there's a
19 number of ways that you can comment on it, and
20 we'll go through that again a little bit later.
21 And I want to remind you, as the Commissioner
22 said, we will take comments up until November 8.
23 However, we're not like the IRS; we do not take
24 post-dated comments. They have to be in by
25 November 8. Okay.

1 So what is a PEIS? That's probably a
2 question in everybody's mind tonight. A PEIS is a
3 National Environmental Policy Act, or a NEPA,
4 document. And NEPA is a law that requires us or
5 any agency that receives federal dollars to
6 consider all kinds of environmental impacts to
7 their programs or projects before any work can
8 begin. So, in other words, before we can build
9 anything, we need to do a comprehensive
10 environmental study first. And a PEIS is what we
11 like to look at as a first tier or a Tier 1
12 decision.

13 So I'd like to get a little bit more
14 specific on what we're doing with I-70. This is
15 the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS. And what we hope
16 to do is we hope to establish a long-term, 50-year
17 vision for the corridor. We hope to identify a
18 program of improvements that we can implement.
19 This project also does define the purpose and
20 need; why are we doing this. We also define the
21 travel mode, capacity, and general location of the
22 transportation solution.

23 One thing I need to remind you of, this
24 study will not result in any construction or any
25 impacts to your natural resources or your

1 communities. That will come in Tier 2. However,
2 the study does consider a range of impacts that
3 might occur. But we also commit to mitigation
4 strategies that we'll implement in the Tier 2
5 studies.

6 So that leads into my next slide, "What
7 is Tier 2?" Tier 2 is the next phase of NEPA that
8 we're required to go into. Tier 1 is kind of that
9 comprehensive, broad overview of what we want to
10 do. Again, we're looking at a 144-mile-long
11 corridor, but we can't build it all in one piece.
12 We're going to break it up into smaller pieces,
13 and so that's where Tier 2 comes in.

14 Tier 2 will identify those
15 project-specific analyses that we need for those
16 projects. We're going to refine the alternatives,
17 and we'll determine specific alignments and design
18 for those projects. We'll also develop
19 project-specific purpose and needs. Now, we did
20 develop a purpose and need for Tier 1, and we're
21 also going to do purpose and need for Tier 2,
22 probably. They could be different.

23 But every project that we do is going
24 to incorporate what we call core values; that, you
25 know, put a high emphasis on our natural

1 resources, our community's safety, and the ability
2 to implement. So those are the core values for
3 this project that will be carried forward for all
4 further studies and projects that we do on the
5 Corridor.

6 Now, here's where we talk about Tier 2.
7 It will result in construction projects, and it
8 will result in impacts. But it will also identify
9 project-specific mitigation. So if there's a
10 wetland, or a wildlife crossing, or anything of
11 that nature that falls within this specific
12 project in Tier 2, we will work on those projects
13 specifically at that point.

14 So I want to give you a little history.
15 How did we get here? We issued the Notice of
16 Intent to prepare the PEIS in 2000. So we've been
17 working a long time at it. We released a draft in
18 2004. And frankly, as the Commissioner mentioned,
19 it wasn't very well received. We got a lot of
20 concern about the process that we followed. We
21 also had a \$4 billion funding limit on it, which
22 limited some of the alternatives that we could
23 consider.

24 And so because of that, we, as an
25 agency, decided to take a step back and really

1 decide what we need to do. And so alongside our
2 stakeholders, we wanted to figure out that process
3 and the way to improve how we were going to move
4 forward. And so because of that, we formed what
5 we call a Collaborative Effort Team. And that
6 Collaborative Effort Team represented a number of
7 people with a variety of interests along the I-70
8 Mountain Corridor. And we had an independent
9 facilitator here to help us get through that,
10 because there's always those challenges and
11 differing of opinions, that we needed somebody
12 that was objective and independent to help us get
13 through that process. And that worked very well.

14 And the result of that was in 2008, the
15 Collaborative Effort Team came to a
16 recommendation. And that recommendation we called
17 the Consensus Recommendation. It makes sense to
18 call it that. And with that recommendation, we
19 are now using that as our Preferred Alternative
20 for this project.

21 So with that, how do we make that
22 Consensus Recommendation work? We worked on
23 trying to go straight into a final, but as we were
24 doing that, we realized that a lot of time had
25 passed since 2004; a lot things have changed, both

1 with our highway, with our communities, with
2 environmental resources, and with federal laws
3 and -- federal and state laws and regulations.

4 So we worked with the Federal Highway
5 Administration to determine what's the best way
6 for this study to proceed. And that's when we
7 came up with the concept of a Revised Draft. It
8 was the best way that we felt that we could do to
9 incorporate everything that has changed since
10 2004.

11 So with the Revised Draft, it replaced
12 the 2004 Draft, and it also addresses comments
13 that were received on the 2004 Draft. It doesn't
14 respond to comments specifically, but it does
15 globally respond to those comments. It also
16 updates all the analysis on our natural resources
17 in our communities, it anticipates impacts of
18 future construction, and it also identifies
19 mitigation strategies and planning for the Tier 2
20 process.

21 This is almost self-answering: Why is
22 I-70 so important? As we all know who live and
23 drive on this Corridor on a regular basis, we know
24 that I-70 is the only east/west interstate through
25 Colorado. And, more importantly, it connects our

1 communities and and recreational areas. It is
2 also important to the quality of our life and our
3 economic base for the state and freight and for
4 tourism as well.

5 And so some people want to know, what
6 happens if we do nothing? Well, you know, with
7 all the growth that has occurred in the Denver
8 metro area, that means a lot more people are
9 coming up I-70. And travel conditions are
10 congested now, and they're expected to get worse
11 in the future.

12 A trip now that takes a little over
13 three hours will soon take over five hours, and
14 congestion will be unbearable. And people will no
15 longer be able to time their trips to avoid those
16 congested periods. It's going to be congested
17 continuously. We estimate that in the very near
18 future, as many as 9 million people will choose
19 not to drive I-70 Corridor, because they just
20 don't want to deal with the congestion. Remember
21 that 9 million people number. That's a very
22 important number.

23 So one of the things that's really
24 important for this project is, how did the
25 stakeholders participate in this process? Again,

1 I talked about this earlier. Stakeholder
2 involvement was the key to us developing the
3 transportation solution for this project. It took
4 thousands of people to get us to this point. And
5 again, that's how we came up with the
6 Collaborative Effort Team to help us craft the
7 Preferred Alternative.

8 And I can't emphasize enough how
9 grateful we are for all the effort that everybody
10 has put into this study. I can look across the
11 room, and I see numerous people that spent hours
12 and hours helping us get to the point where we are
13 today. Again, I just want to reemphasize the
14 Collaborative Effort Team.

15 And the Collaborative Effort Team is
16 comprised of 27 stakeholders from Garfield County
17 to Denver. And they really do represent a diverse
18 group of people. We have people from different
19 federal agencies; the motor carriers, business
20 communities, and also our local and state
21 representatives as well. And this team really
22 worked hard at crafting what we call the Preferred
23 Alternative for this long-term -- we also
24 formulated a long-term stakeholder involvement
25 process to guide us through this transportation

1 improvements program into the future.

2 And that brings me to Context Sensitive
3 Solutions. We had so much success with the
4 collaborative effort process, that we really
5 wanted to try to figure out a way to duplicate
6 that process. And that's where Context Sensitive
7 Solutions comes in.

8 The Federal Highway Administration's
9 definition of it is: CSS is a collaborative
10 interdisciplinary approach that involves all
11 stakeholders. It seeks to develop transportation
12 facilities that fit the physical setting and
13 preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic, and
14 environmental resources, while maintaining safety
15 and mobility. And, again, that's the Federal
16 Highway Administration's definition, but it really
17 fits, and it works for this project.

18 So that's how we came up with this
19 process. And what we really hope is that through
20 this, we can develop a transportation system that
21 not only works to move cars and people, but it
22 also fits within our communities.

23 Again, one last thing before I move on.
24 I really want to make sure that we are, as an
25 organization, committed to that continuous and

1 meaningful involvement of our public and our
2 stakeholders. We really feel that's the key to
3 success and building a successful project on I-70.

4 Now, we're starting to get into what
5 we're doing. What is it we're going to try to do,
6 and what alternatives did we consider when we
7 analyzed? Every NEPA study, you have a No-Action
8 Alternative. And we did look at that, and we did
9 identify what that would be. But, basically, what
10 the No-Action Alternative is, is what we do today.
11 It's the maintenance projects, some overlays,
12 repairing guardrails, fixing signs. Those are the
13 things that are part of the No-Action Alternative.
14 And there really isn't any major construction,
15 capacity improvements, accel/decel lanes, anything
16 of that nature, included in the No-Action
17 Alternative.

18 The next is the Minimal Action
19 Alternative, and it involves only minor
20 infrastructure and minor infrastructure
21 improvements. And with those, it could be fixing
22 a safety problem here and there, or maybe a
23 climbing lane in certain locations. But it's
24 really -- they're minor in nature and aren't
25 really solving the transportation problems that we

1 have on I-70. All the components in the Minimal
2 Action are included in all the other action
3 alternatives within the study area.

4 Next is Highway Alternatives. And this
5 does add roadway capacity and does fix highway
6 deficiencies, such as sharp curves and safety
7 areas.

8 And then the next is Transit
9 Alternatives. And this one is the exciting one,
10 in my mind. It introduces a dedicated transit
11 service to the Corridor.

12 And then, lastly, we have a Combination
13 of Alternatives. That is, basically, a
14 combination of both highway and transit service,
15 or capacity improvements and transit service in
16 the Corridor.

17 So that kind of leads in, why do we
18 need a multimodal solution? As we went through
19 and developed these alternatives, and we screened
20 through them and evaluated the alternatives, we
21 realized that no single modal can meet the purpose
22 and needs of this project. We realized quickly
23 that the relationship between capacity and
24 congestion is not direct. Just because you add
25 capacity doesn't mean it's going to solve your

1 congestion problems.

2 Remember that 9 million number of
3 people who weren't going to drive? Those are the
4 people who are going to come in, once we widen
5 that section of the highway, and are going to
6 decide, okay, maybe now we might consider making
7 this trip. So just doing highway capacity
8 improvements isn't going to be enough. So,
9 therefore, we do need both transit and highway
10 capacity improvements to meet the purpose of this
11 project.

12 So what I'd like to do is kind of
13 describe to you the Preferred Alternative. And
14 first thing I need to say about it is, this
15 Preferred Alternative for this project is unlike
16 anything that CDOT has ever done in the past. It
17 consists of four different components. It
18 consists of a non-infrastructure component, an
19 advanced guideway system.

20 It also consists of a flexible program
21 of highway improvements. That includes a minimum
22 and a maximum program of improvements. And I'll
23 explain more how that works later. It's very
24 important to why this solution works so well.
25 And, lastly -- and this is part of the Preferred

1 Alternative, and that also makes this very
2 unique -- it also includes a process for future
3 stakeholder engagement, which I feel is really
4 important for this project.

5 So what are the non-infrastructure
6 components? Some examples of the
7 non-infrastructure components could be providing
8 traveler information, like we have on the trip
9 travel time signs. It also could be things like
10 shifting passenger and freight travel demands by
11 time of day and day of week, trying to synchronize
12 those trips and utilize some of the times of the
13 day right now that aren't congested.

14 We also would look at, possibly,
15 morning high occupancy vehicle travel, like HOV
16 lanes, and also public transportation. And we can
17 do a lot of these now within our project and
18 within CDOT, but many of these other possible
19 solutions were non-infrastructure improvements and
20 would take a lot of cooperation and work with our
21 local agencies. Some of those would be, like,
22 land use development; how is your community going
23 to develop. And we need to know how that's going
24 to fit into our Preferred Alternative. Those are
25 things that we would work on as we go through

1 this -- with this solution.

2 The next is the advanced guideway
3 system. And, again, the advanced guideway system
4 consists of an elevated train, mostly in the
5 highway median. It would go from Eagle County
6 Airport to C-470 in the Denver metro area.
7 However, it's not limited just to those locations.
8 There is a vision to connect that transit system
9 beyond the Corridor to other transit systems that
10 exist or could exist in the future.

11 And some examples of the technology --
12 we haven't defined the technology at this point in
13 time. Again, this is a broad overview of what
14 we're doing. We're going to have to look more
15 into what those technologies could be. But some
16 examples are magnetic levitation systems, or
17 monorails, or something of that nature.

18 So just to give you a little bit more
19 information on the advanced guideway system, we
20 did identify a particular technology at this
21 point. There's a lot of things that we need to
22 investigate before we can make those types of
23 decisions. Again, we just want that general
24 Tier 1 decision on, do we agree with the advanced
25 guideway system in the Corridor.

1 But to move forward with the advanced
2 guideway system, we would have to study and focus
3 on certain things, like costs and benefits of the
4 system, safety, reliability. We would look at the
5 environmental impacts. And, again, we would look
6 at the technology that we would need to
7 efficiently work within this Corridor. We'd also
8 look at ridership and other considerations as
9 well.

10 Again, I want to emphasize that
11 anything we do in the future with this study or
12 any of the studies will follow the I-70 Mountain
13 Corridor CSS process as we get that stakeholder
14 input. I know that everybody has different views
15 of what a system could be, and so this, to me, is
16 going to be an exciting and interesting challenge
17 in the future, determining what it is we want and
18 we envision for our communities in the future.

19 Getting on to the highway improvements,
20 I want to talk about the Minimum Program
21 improvements. We do have a flexible program of
22 improvements for this Corridor. We have what we
23 call the Minimum Program improvements. And within
24 that we have what we call specific highway
25 improvements, which have been determined to be

1 high priority projects for the Corridor.

2 In addition to those specific highway
3 improvements, we have more than 20 interchange
4 improvements along the Corridor. We have an
5 additional 25 miles of auxiliary lanes that we
6 plan to look at. We would also have new tunnel
7 bores at the Twin Tunnel and also at the
8 Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnel. We could also
9 do other things, such as truck operation
10 improvements, like chain-up stations that you see
11 along I-70 now.

12 And with those specific highway
13 improvements, I'd just like to read them off to
14 you here real quickly, because they are important,
15 and they have been identified as high priority
16 projects for the Corridor. And, again, the
17 Minimum Program of improvements is something that
18 we use to define how things are going to get done
19 in the future.

20 But just to identify what those are,
21 the first one is six lanes from Floyd Hill through
22 the Twin Tunnel. That's a key point. We would
23 also build new bike trails and frontage roads.
24 Again, you know, we understand the importance of
25 multimodal solutions. We would also look at

1 reconstructing the Empire Junction interchange.
2 We would also build eastbound and westbound
3 auxiliary lanes from the tunnel to roughly Herman
4 Gulch or Bakerville. We would also look at other
5 locations, like maybe doing some improvements to
6 Dowd Canyon as well. So these are what we
7 consider being specific highway improvements as
8 part of the Minimum Program.

9 Next is the Maximum Program. So what
10 is the Maximum Program? It is everything that's
11 in the Minimum Program, plus we would do six-lane
12 widening from the Twin Tunnel to the
13 Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnel; so, basically,
14 through Clear Creek County. We would also do
15 curve safety modifications at Fall River Road.
16 And we would also do -- and we would do four
17 additional interchange improvements within Clear
18 Creek County as well.

19 So here's where that flexibility comes
20 in, and how we decide what we're going to do and
21 when we're going to do it. We have identified --
22 or in the Consensus Recommendation, which is now
23 the Preferred Alternative, we have identified what
24 we call triggers. And so the triggers identify
25 when the Maximum Program would be implemented.

1 And the Maximum Program would only be
2 implemented if the specific highway improvements
3 in the Minimum Program, as identified, are
4 complete and an advanced guideway system is
5 functioning. So once that is complete, we can
6 start looking at implementing the Maximum Program.
7 And the key thing is we can start looking at it.
8 It doesn't guarantee that it gets done, but it
9 means that's the point at which we can start
10 looking at it.

11 The second trigger would be specific
12 highway improvements in the Minimum Program are
13 complete and the study proves that the advanced
14 guideway is not feasible. Now, that is something
15 we have to consider, because it may not be that
16 the technology is available or we have the
17 resources to do it. There's a number of things
18 that could make that not feasible. But we want to
19 make sure that we make the right decision. So
20 that is one of the triggers.

21 And then, lastly, local, regional,
22 national, or global trends or events have
23 unexpected effects on the Corridor. The one I
24 like to throw out there is the Olympics. Now,
25 what if we did get the 2022 Olympics in Colorado?

1 Wouldn't that be great to be able to have a
2 solution ready and be able to implement that, if
3 we needed to? I think that is a really good
4 example of what could be one of those trends.

5 And, again, the last one I just can't
6 say enough about it, because it is the reason why
7 we feel so strongly about this study. And it is
8 ongoing stakeholder engagement. You know, we're
9 going to continue with the collaborative effort
10 process, and it's going to follow the I-70
11 Mountain Corridor CSS process. We've had so much
12 success with that, we just feel like that is the
13 way for us to proceed.

14 We're going to have that Collaborative
15 Effort Team review the Corridor conditions in two
16 years to make sure that we are still doing the
17 right thing. It's important to do that check,
18 because you don't want to just keep going with the
19 assumption that you're still on the right path.
20 You know, if that path needs to change, we have
21 the ability to make that change.

22 And then the team will do a thorough
23 review of the purpose and need of the project and
24 the effectiveness of the improvements that have
25 been done to date. And that will be conducted in

1 the year 2020; basically, another check to say, is
2 this the right thing.

3 So that's why this flexible approach is
4 so important. It helps us focus on the immediate
5 needs that we have on the Corridor, but it also
6 helps us have a long-term vision for the Corridor
7 so that we can serve our community for the long
8 range. When I say "long-term vision," what we
9 hope to have is that, in the end, we have a
10 transportation solution that we can all enjoy and
11 reap the benefits from; or probably in a lot of
12 our cases, I know from mine, my kids and my
13 grandkids. But it is a solution that we want to
14 leave that will be effective for a long time to
15 come.

16 So next is the getting back into the
17 NEPA part. This study, the PEIS, we did a lot of
18 work to try to determine what the impacts of this
19 project are. You know, one of the things we know
20 as a goal for the PEIS was to take into account
21 the needs of the people, and the natural resources
22 in the Corridor, and to preserve the best of
23 Colorado. --

24 However, the PEIS doesn't look at every
25 possible site-specific impact. Like I said, we

1 don't know what those site-specific impacts are,
2 so we just have to take a general overview of that
3 and then just prepare those impacts to the
4 different alternatives that we have identified.

5 So really what we tried to do when we
6 looked at the impacts was to focus on the bigger
7 picture. We also tried to identify which of those
8 resources are most important to the communities.
9 We also tried to identify where some of the
10 Corridor bottlenecks are and where some of those
11 sensitive resources are as well.

12 And so what did we do when we did that?
13 How did we analyze the various impacts? We
14 compared all of the alternatives. As I mentioned,
15 we came up with 22 alternatives, including the
16 No-Action and also the Preferred Alternative.
17 What we did is we compared each of those
18 alternatives and their impacts to our resources.
19 And so we developed -- if you look at the PEIS,
20 there's hundreds of these charts that identify,
21 how do our alternatives compare against each
22 other.

23 And we also looked at what type of
24 impacts can we expect. Obviously, any
25 construction that we do is going to disturb our

1 resources. Even the minor projects will have some
2 impacts. And so what we did is we tried to
3 identify the range of impacts and relate it to the
4 size and scope of those projects.

5 So when we talk about impacts, there
6 are a number of different impacts that we've had
7 and that we considered when we looked at the PEIS.
8 The first one is direct impacts. And direct
9 impacts occur when a transportation facility
10 expands into areas next to the Corridor. So,
11 basically, anytime you widen the current roadway
12 that you have, you're going to be impacting
13 directly those resources.

14 The next is impact -- indirect impacts.
15 That one gets me every time. I'll probably mess
16 it up a couple of times before I'm done with this
17 slide. And the indirect impacts occur when a
18 transportation facility changes the Corridor
19 conditions or character. Some examples of that is
20 induced growth. If you make it easier for people
21 to get there, you're going to make it more
22 desirable for people to be there. So that induced
23 growth is one direct impact from highway widening.
24 Some others are noise and visual conditions as
25 well.

1 Next, we also looked at cumulative
2 impacts. Cumulative impacts occur when impacts
3 from our projects combine with impacts from other
4 actions on the Corridor, such as ski area
5 expansion or other resource development. And so
6 what we did is we took all that information, and
7 we used it to measure our Preferred Alternative.
8 And we felt that the Preferred Alternative that's
9 identified in the PEIS best fit the best
10 opportunity for us to meet the purpose and need of
11 this project.

12 And it truly relies on the 50-year
13 vision. This, to me, is very important, because
14 you don't want us to continually be working on
15 improvements -- little improvements here and
16 there. We want to build a transportation solution
17 for the Corridor, and we want it to last for a
18 long time. So that 50-year vision is very
19 important.

20 And, again, the flexibility of the
21 Preferred Alternative helps us meet our future
22 needs. And with that multimodal component, it
23 meets both capacity and congestion demands for the
24 Corridor. And, again, during this comparison, we
25 looked at how the Preferred Alternative compares

1 to other options. And when you look at that,
2 generally, the Preferred Alternative is a little
3 bit higher. It is higher than the Minimal Action
4 and the single-mode alternatives, but it's also
5 generally less than the other combined
6 alternatives. So it really falls within that
7 range of impacts from all the alternatives that we
8 analyzed for the Corridor.

9 One thing to keep in mind, when we look
10 at impacts, we look at them before mitigation.
11 And so when we go into Tier 2, we're going to look
12 at mitigation strategies to minimize those impacts
13 to our natural resources and our community. We're
14 going to do things like minimize footprints in the
15 Tier 2 process. We're going to look at
16 program-level and project-specific commitments
17 that are made in Chapter 3 of the PEIS.

18 And we also have, which is another
19 thing that's very unique to this Corridor, four
20 agreements and commitments that are included in
21 the PEIS that will help us move well into the
22 future. These commitments are going to be in
23 writing with many numerous agencies. And I'll
24 describe them a little bit more next.

25 The first one -- and again, I can't

1 speak enough about this -- is the I-70 Mountain
2 Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions. And it's
3 the guide for all Tier 2 processes, based on the
4 CSS principles. And it is how we're going to
5 build things in the future. It looks at the
6 context statement for the Corridor, it looks at
7 the core values, and it follows a six-step
8 decision-making process.

9 We also have a Programmatic Agreement
10 that will establish a process for evaluating
11 historic properties in Tier 2 studies. And this
12 agreement includes details for all steps of
13 historic property evaluations. And this is --
14 this was a major feat in itself. It was signed by
15 more than 20 agencies and organizations, which
16 really makes for a strong commitment by everybody
17 involved for this Corridor.

18 The next one is the Stream and Wetland
19 Ecological Enhancement Program. We refer to it as
20 SWEEP. What SWEEP does is it protects and
21 enhances the water quality of streams and riparian
22 habitats, and the quality of wildlife. It also
23 defines a process for complying with local, state,
24 and federal laws and regulations. And it
25 considers the watershed context. It focuses on

1 sustainability. And, again, this agreement will
2 be signed by ten signature agencies and
3 organizations, and it will be included in the
4 final agreement and the record decision, as will
5 all of them.

6 The next one is what's called A
7 Landscape-level Inventory of Valued Ecosystems, or
8 what we call ALIVE. We're very creative in
9 tailoring our name to the acronym. What ALIVE
10 does is long-term preservation and restoration of
11 wildlife linkage areas that intersect the
12 Corridor. When you have a 144-mile Corridor, you
13 can imagine that there's a lot of wildlife
14 crossings in those areas. And I'm sure most of
15 you are very familiar with those. Especially here
16 in Eagle County, you can see why there's a lot of
17 wildlife fencing and a lot of innovative ways of
18 making sure we protect our wildlife. That's what
19 this agreement does as well. It ensures that we
20 continue that type of commitment to our
21 environment.

22 So this is the one that I think is
23 mentioned in the newspaper, and it's got
24 everybody's attention. You know, I know, right
25 now, the Preferred Alternative is estimated to

1 cost between 16- and \$20 billion. I know that
2 \$20 billion seems like a big number. And it
3 creates a lot of sticker shock for everybody. But
4 one thing to point out is, we don't need the
5 20 billion right now. What we hope is that we can
6 build things as we get money.

7 So the Preferred Alternative is
8 flexible, so that we can work on those short-term
9 needs and then have a vision for the long term.
10 So when you see that \$20 billion, it's not like
11 we're going -- you know, if we don't get the
12 20 billion, we can't do anything. That's not at
13 all true. We have the flexibility to do whatever
14 we can generate funding for.

15 And one thing is when you look at the
16 funding source that we have right now, we do have
17 a \$20 billion solution. Right now, we only have a
18 little over 1 billion identified for the Corridor
19 for 25 years. That's not enough, obviously, to do
20 what we want to do. So we're going to also look
21 at other ways to generate revenue, such as
22 public/private partnerships. We're also going to
23 look at tolling and possibly (inaudible) or loans.
24 And we might also have some local government
25 investment as well.

1 In the meantime, CDOT is committed to
2 implementing phases of the Preferred Alternative
3 as funding becomes available. That is the key to
4 this flexible approach. We got to do something
5 now, and we will do something now. And then we
6 got to plan for the future.

7 So what are the next steps? Well,
8 we're nearing the end of the PEIS. It's been a
9 long ten-plus years. But this is still a very
10 critical time for everybody to be involved with
11 this. We're in the public comment period right
12 now. The public comment period ends on
13 November 8. And we are very interested in your
14 thoughts; and of particular interest, your
15 thoughts of the Tier 1 decision that we're making.
16 Obviously, we want to know all your concerns; but
17 right now, we're really focusing on, do you agree
18 with the long-term vision solution that we have
19 for the Corridor.

20 Once we get these comments, we're going
21 to address those comments in the Draft that we
22 have now, and we're going to make a Final
23 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that
24 will respond to those comments that we receive.
25 during this period. And we hope to get to that

1 point and complete that by the winter of 2011.

2 Once we have a final document, we're
3 going to have a 30-day comment period on that as
4 well, and then we're going to move into what's
5 called a record decision. A record decision is
6 really the document that solidifies the decision
7 that we make here on the Corridor.

8 What it will do is it will outline how
9 the material decisions will be carried out. It
10 will identify how we're going to prioritize
11 projects in the future. It's going to identify
12 that relationship of the Tier 1 decision with the
13 statewide planning process. And this is where
14 your local leaders come in. They're the ones who
15 are going to determine what is most important for
16 your community. And we're going to do it on a
17 Corridor-wide basis and have that vision in mind
18 as we do it.

19 And, again, I need to remind you that
20 this Tier 1 decision does not result in any
21 construction. We still got a lot of work to do
22 before we can start breaking ground. But we do
23 expect to have a record decision by the spring of
24 2011. So that's right around the corner. And
25 then once we get this record decision, we're going

1 to go directly into the Tier 2 processes.

2 So with that, I'd like to wrap up the
3 presentation part of tonight. I hope I was able
4 to present some information that will be helpful
5 for you. We are very interested in receiving your
6 comments tonight and knowing what your thoughts
7 are for the project.

8 What I'd like to do is turn the
9 microphone back over to Mary Ann, who will explain
10 more about the oral comment process, which is what
11 we're going to be doing next. If you haven't
12 signed up, I think we can probably squeeze you in.
13 And you can go back to the table and sign up if
14 you'd like. And, again, I encourage you-all to
15 visit with us afterwards, ask questions, and
16 hopefully we can all move forward with a solution
17 for I-70 in the future. So with that, thank you,
18 and I'll turn it over to Mary Ann.

19 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you, Scott.
20 All right. Just a quick reminder. This is the
21 conclusion of the general presentation. We're
22 about to take oral comment. If you have not
23 signed up yet, and you would like to make a
24 comment at this front microphone, please do so
25 now. Leif, over on the side, will be glad to take

1 down your name.

2 What I would love to ask is those --
3 let me start over. Those of you who have signed
4 up, I would ask you to speak slowly and clearly as
5 you're at the microphone. I would like you to
6 know that there is a three-minute limit on your
7 comments. Any questions that you ask from the
8 microphone will not be responded to tonight.
9 Those will be captured and addressed in the final
10 document. We're here to listen.

11 And I would also like to let you know
12 you'll have some visual cues to watch. You have
13 three minutes to talk. For two-and-one-half
14 minutes, the screen will be green. The last
15 30 seconds, it will go to yellow. And then when
16 your time is completed, it will go red. And if
17 you're still talking, I will ask to you wrap up
18 your comment, whatever sentence you're in. And
19 then if you have still further thoughts that you'd
20 like to share, we'll have you go to the court
21 reporter in the back of the hall to make any
22 additional statements. All right.

23 Right now, we have four people signed
24 up. If you do want to sign up, please see Leif
25 now. And if I could ask Ellen Colrick to step to

1 the microphone. And, Ellen -- right here. And if
2 you will state your name, spell your name, and
3 give your address, that would be wonderful. Now,
4 if you look that way, you don't see what your time
5 limit is.

6 MS. COLRICK: I won't be that long.

7 MS. STROMBITSKI: Very good.

8 MS. COLRICK: Thank you. My name is
9 Ellen Colrick, and I live at 4506 Spruce Way,
10 Unit 3, in East Vail. What I would like to say is
11 that the problem with the I-70 Mountain Corridor
12 is that there are only two lanes from the
13 Eisenhower Tunnel to Floyd Hill, which is the
14 Corridor for traffic from eight ski areas to get
15 to Denver. The speed differential going uphill on
16 Vail Pass eastbound, as the study claims, is not
17 the problem. Until 1978, there was only one lane
18 going uphill. Taxpayers funded a second lane in
19 both directions, so there is a slow lane for
20 trucks and a fast lane for cars. Most accidents
21 happen on the top of Vail Pass, where it is flat,
22 and are caused by speeding too fast for the
23 conditions. Although increased fines have
24 alleviated greatly any problems caused by the
25 truckers, there has been only one state trooper

1 checking for chains. And many gasoline trucks are
2 racing up the pass, in the worst snowstorms, at
3 80 miles per hour in the fast lane, sneaking by.
4 Again, speed is the problem.

5 The downhill lane is more dangerous due
6 to speed and loss of control and brakes. If a
7 lane was to be built from the East Vail exit, it
8 would be a waste, in my opinion, of the taxpayers'
9 money, as all of Vail is narrow valley is built
10 next to I-70, and eminent domain would be very
11 expensive.

12 If it is deemed necessary that it
13 should be built, I would certainly hope that the
14 engineers would, instead of taking out our homes,
15 do it on the north side of the highway, where they
16 would not be influencing so many homes, or in the
17 center lane. Thank you very much.

18 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you, Ellen.
19 Our next speaker is Paula Lallier. Paula, if you
20 will spell your name, state your name.

21 MS. LALLIER: My name is Paula Lallier,
22 P-a-u-l-a L-a-l-l-i-e-r. And my address is Post
23 Office Box 399, in Salida, Colorado. I'm really
24 overwhelmed at all of this project. It looks like
25 many, many years and a lot of work have gone into

1 it. It's a bit too much to absorb or comment on.
2 But it seems to be flexible as to meaning and as
3 to financing available.

4 My particular inquiry is as to the
5 SWEEP program, involving sediment control and
6 stream restoration on Black Gore Creek. That
7 particular creek, the original course of it, has
8 been diverted by a beaver dam. And I didn't know
9 whether, as part of the stream restoration
10 portion, restoration to the original course of
11 Black Gore Creek might be a possibility. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you very much,
14 Paula. Our next speaker is John Haines. John, if
15 you'll state your name, spell it, and give an
16 address.

17 MR. HAINES: Mary Ann, how does Scott
18 talk for 45 minutes, and we're allowed 3?

19 MS. STROMBITSKI: This is actually part
20 of a federal process. It's very defined rules.

21 MR. HAINES: We're under allotment here
22 now, right? My name is John Haines. I live in
23 Glenwood Springs, 28 Fairway Lane. And I haven't
24 started yet. (Inaudible.)

25 You guys talk about being able to do a

1 Minimal Program. It sounds to me like you're
2 talking about building for today, not tomorrow.
3 Six lanes from Floyd Hill to the Tunnels is not
4 near enough. The other thought that I have is, a
5 lot of you folks remember when Stapleton Airport
6 was there. They had the runway that ran right
7 over I-70. You know what it was like Monday,
8 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday mornings?
9 All kinds of traffic jams. You know what happened
10 when they took the tunnel out? No traffic jams.

11 That's what they need to do in Idaho
12 Springs, take those two tunnels out. Don't look
13 at putting six lanes there, just take them out.
14 Give the aggregate, the guy who's got that rock
15 corridor right at the bottom of Floyd Hill. And
16 you know what? People won't slow up any more.
17 Because when you look today, when you get to the
18 other side of the tunnel, there's no traffic jam.

19 You're also getting people in from the
20 Central City Highway -- Parkway. That adds even
21 more traffic that goes through the tunnel. And it
22 doesn't slow anybody up. Get rid of the tunnels,
23 that will solve some problems.

24 I think the other thing you have to
25 look at, is imagine Eisenhower, 1952. Everybody

1 saying, "Not in my backyard. Not in my backyard."
2 Can you imagine our highway system today being
3 like US 6 from San Francisco to New York? We have
4 to learn to give. And if this project were in
5 Detroit, Chicago, Atlanta, D.C., it would be
6 called urban renewal, and it would just be done.
7 We wouldn't be worried about what we're worried
8 about.

9 And you have to look at building for
10 the future. We all have to give something; me
11 included, everybody else. And if we do that, it
12 will probably go a whole lot quicker, and we'll
13 have a whole lot more problems solved. But I
14 think if you just fix the tunnel, it will solve
15 the immediate needs. Thanks a lot.

16 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you, John.
17 Clyde Hanks.

18 MR. HANKS: My name is Clyde Hanks. I
19 live at 4258 Wild Ridge Road, in Avon. I also
20 have two grown daughters that live in the Valley
21 and one who lives in Denver. Somebody in my
22 family is driving between Denver and Avon, on an
23 average, of once a week. We have a lot of
24 experience with this Corridor.

25 I'd like to commend CDOT and everybody

1 involved in this for the amazing work. Having
2 pulled up that study and looked at it, I was
3 overwhelmed at what was done. And I think the
4 input of everybody is to be highly commended.

5 I have to say that when I looked at the
6 various solutions considered and the preferred
7 solution you came up with, I was in agreement with
8 what everyone came together over. The preferred
9 solution is really a combination of improving the
10 highway and giving us a new way to get up and
11 down.

12 I think the values of the system are
13 threefold. One, it will get better access to the
14 mountains for folks that can come up here and
15 experience a beautiful place, where many of us get
16 a chance to live. And I think that is a great
17 benefit to all the visitors who come to Colorado
18 or might live in the Front Range. Also, those
19 folks, once they see this beauty, would be much
20 better advocates for preserving it.

21 Secondly, I think having the railway of
22 some sort, which has to be figured out, is really
23 a great solution. It will reduce people driving
24 cars in getting up here and will help preserve the
25 environmental quality that we live in.

1 And, third, I think these improvements
2 will be a tremendous economic driver for both the
3 Mountain Corridor and the Front Range. It becomes
4 highly attractive to live in the Front Range when
5 you can get to the mountains so easily and
6 conveniently. All then all along the Corridor
7 there will be development. Wherever there's been
8 rail development in various communities across the
9 country, there's always been fairly rapid economic
10 development along with it.

11 I have kind of two suggestions. One is
12 to very aggressively communicate the problem; what
13 the projections are for the congestion, the drive
14 time. I mean, five hours from here to Denver is a
15 staggering amount of time. And I think that's
16 important to really communicate that, and that
17 will help build support for the solution.

18 And, secondly, funding is obviously the
19 big challenge. And I hope that one of the things
20 that is actively considered is some sort of toll
21 system on the highway that will provide a funding
22 source. It won't pay for everything, but it will
23 provide an ongoing funding source and will
24 encourage people to ride the rail system. And I
25 think that's something you ought to be looking at

1 hard.

2 I think the technology is here and
3 emerging, that you don't really need a toll booth.
4 Whether you have an electronic tag in your car or
5 whether a system reads your license plate and
6 sends you a bill, we won't need to have toll
7 booths, we won't need to stop, but we can still
8 have a toll system. Thank you.

9 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you very much,
10 Clyde. Leif, one more, right? Rachel Richards.
11 It's your turn, Rachel. Rachel, if you'll state
12 your name and spell it and provide your address.

13 MS. RICHARDS: Do I face -- which way?

14 MS. STROMBITSKI: You can face whatever
15 way you'd like.

16 MS. RICHARDS: My name is Rachel
17 Richards. It's spelled R-a-c-h-e-l
18 R-i-c-h-a-r-d-s. I'd like to thank CDOT for
19 hosting this event this evening and everyone who
20 has turned out. I am a Pitkin County
21 Commissioner. I work on issues, often water
22 related, with Jon. And I served on the I-70
23 coalition for a number of years and was involved.
24 I am speaking as an individual. My board has not
25 taken a formal position on this or anything.

1 But I wanted to commend you for the
2 great work, the diligence in building the
3 collaboration that's going forward, and to say I
4 am in full support of this proposal. I have a
5 history in the Aspen Pitkin County area with mass
6 transit. And when I was mayor, I helped form the
7 original Regional Transportation Authority in that
8 area. And I just know you cannot build your way
9 out of these sort of problems.

10 Taking care of some (inaudible) points,
11 taking care of some shorter-term, early-action
12 items, yes, that makes a lot of sense. But as I
13 understand, in comparison to the alternatives, if
14 you were to simply try to build laneage without a
15 multimodal solution, because of the complexity of
16 the I-70 Mountain Corridor and the mountainous
17 terrain, it would probably take 25 years. And by
18 the time it is complete, it would be as congested
19 as it is today. And so I think we have to plan
20 for the future, even with the knowledge that they
21 have a system that works currently.

22 I also think the environmental benefits
23 are huge. And as someone very interested in water
24 issues, the facilitation and the runoff from
25 constantly trying to put mag chloride, sand, and

1 rock on the road, keeping them open in difficult
2 times, is not good for our rivers and our water
3 quality.

4 So I, again, commend everyone who
5 participated. And I realize there's been some
6 very difficult compromises made. And I think one
7 of the most important things to bear in mind is,
8 if you were the residents of Georgetown, and
9 you're looking at a six-lane coming through your
10 historic area or Idaho Springs, and knowing that
11 once that's built, the company could come back and
12 want an eight-lane, then ten-lane, it just -- it
13 wipes their communities out. And in a process
14 like this, if you don't take all people's
15 interests into some consideration, you'll be tied
16 up with no solution, and you will fail through
17 NEPA, you will have lawsuits. And the delay,
18 itself, is really deadly for all of us moving
19 forward with a safe solution. So that's my
20 comment.

21 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you very much,
22 Rachel. Unless there are others, this will
23 conclude the oral comment for this evening.
24 However -- oh, we do have one more. Very good.

25 MR. CALDERON: Hello, everybody. My

1 name is Paco, P-a-c-o, Calderon, C-a-l-d-e-r-o-n.
2 I've been in this Valley for 16 years and love it.
3 And going back to Denver on the weekends, I'm so
4 thankful that I'm actually coming the other way,
5 as we see the people going down or coming up
6 either way.

7 My first question to my former
8 girlfriend, when I was doing that trip, was, "Why
9 isn't there a train here?" It's just -- you know,
10 that was my first question. "Why is not a train
11 here?" I hope with goodwill, Scott, that you have
12 in your budget a trip to Germany or Hong Kong and
13 experience --

14 MR. McDANIEL: I'd be happy to go.

15 MR. CALDERON: -- and experience what
16 it's like to get on a train over there. It's a
17 lot easier to be in Hong Kong and take a train 200
18 miles away and be there in half an hour on the mag
19 lev, than getting out of DIA and trying to get
20 over here, a hundred miles away.

21 And, you know, the mountains are in the
22 way. Switzerland didn't have an excuse. Germany,
23 the Alps, did not have an excuse to put in
24 high-speed trains or to even go under the ocean
25 between France and England. It was not an excuse.

1 And you can be there in 45 minutes. So I hope all
2 this works out. Because more cars, I mean, even
3 if you have six lanes, where are you going put all
4 those cars here? We already have a problem with
5 parking, where to eat, where to stay, and where to
6 park all those cars on the frontage road in Vail.
7 There's just no room for more cars. So thank you.
8 I hope everything works out here.

9 MS. STROMBITSKI: Thank you, Paco. Any
10 last speakers? Thank you very much for your
11 participation tonight. Our Open House continues
12 until 8:00. If you haven't submitted a comment,
13 please consider doing so tonight in one of the
14 comment boxes, at the computer station with our
15 private court reporter in the back of the hall, or
16 by mailing this comment sheet in by November 8, so
17 that it's received by that date. Thank you so
18 much.

19 (The public hearing concluded at
20 7:00 p.m., October 7, 2010.)

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1 STATE OF COLORADO)

2)ss. REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

3 COUNTY OF DENVER)

4 I, Gail Obermeyer, do hereby certify
5 that I am a Registered Professional Reporter and
6 Notary Public within the State of Colorado.

7 I further certify that these
8 proceedings were taken in shorthand by me at the
9 time and place herein set forth and were
10 thereafter reduced to typewritten form, and that
11 the foregoing constitutes a true and correct
12 transcript.

13 I further certify that I am not related
14 to, employed by, nor of counsel for any of the
15 parties herein, nor otherwise interested in the
16 result of the within proceedings.

17 In witness whereof, I have affixed my
18 signature and seal this 13th day of October, 2010.

19 My commission expires May 10, 2011.

20

21 _____
Gail Obermeyer, RPR
22 216 - 16th Street, Suite 650
Denver, Colorado 80202

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