

MYTHS AND FACTS - CENTRAL 70 PROJECT

Re-route Option

Myth: *“There is a chance that the re-route option will happen if there is enough opposition. CDOT hasn’t even studied the re-route so they don’t know whether it will work.”*

Fact: On January 19, 2017 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the 10-mile Central 70 Project as planned, with the highway lowered between Brighton and Colorado Boulevards and a 4-acre park built across the highway between Columbine and Clayton streets, along with myriad of [community commitments](#). If the project is stopped for any reason, the only other alternative would be to rebuild the viaduct in its place.

CDOT has looked at the possibility of the re-route along I-270/76 and it doesn't work for a number of reasons. Here's a fact sheet that explains the reasoning behind it and a [longer explanation](#) in the federal [Record of Decision \(ROD\)](#), the document that approved the project to move forward as planned.

Housing and Business Acquisition

Myth: *“The Central 70 Project is taking one-third of homes in the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods.”*

Fact: There are approximately 3,540 dwelling units in the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods. Construction of the preferred alternative will result in 56 residential and 17 business acquisitions. However, in recognition of the impact of the project to the local housing stock, CDOT is committed to provide \$2 million in funding to support affordable housing in the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods through available programs.

Myth: *“When CDOT acquires a residential property, the owner receives only the value of their property with no additional assistance to find a new home in Denver’s high priced market.”*

Fact: CDOT is required to both provide the fair market value for the cost of the property acquired and to make up the cost difference for a new, similar property. In many cases, CDOT must also find a larger property that better fits the size of the family being moved. To date, 24 community members have become homeowners through this process.

Myth: *“Families being relocated can’t stay in the local area”.*

Fact: CDOT makes every effort to identify homes in the area selected by the resident, whether that means staying in Elyria or Swansea or moving to other communities.

Highway Park and Connectivity

Myth: *“Other cities that have small covers over highways design them for passive use, not as playgrounds for children.”*

Fact: Many major cities throughout the United States build parks over their highways - especially near downtown areas to recapture some open space for people of all ages to enjoy. Some of these cities include Los Angeles, Dallas, Seattle, St. Louis and Cincinnati. [See examples of parks over highways in other cities.](#)

Myth: *“Local residents and other businesses will be disconnected.”*

Fact: The intent of this project is to connect two communities that have been separated for decades. Reconnecting the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods by removing the viaduct was a key core value identified by residents. In addition to the new 4-acre park from Columbine to Clayton streets, the newly lowered highway will improve access and connectivity for pedestrians and motorists throughout the project area, including:

- North-South bridges over the interstate that include sidewalks, lighting and safety features for bikes and pedestrians.
- Connections across the highway at York Street, Josephine Street, Columbine Street, Clayton Street, Vasquez Boulevard, Cook Street and Colorado Boulevard. A rebuilt and redesigned 46th Avenue with sidewalks, tree lawn and lighting built to city standards.
- New sidewalks constructed along Quebec Avenue where Quebec passes under I-70.

Project Drainage

Myth: *“The Central 70 drainage system is dependent on the City and County of Denver Platte to Park Hill drainage project. If opponents can stop the Platte to Park Hill projects, then Central 70 can’t move forward.”*

Fact: The CDOT drainage system requires no improvements to the City and County of Denver’s drainage system to capture and convey water associated with a 100-year storm event. Simply put, the CDOT system assumes no changes in the amount of water flowing toward I-70 today from city streets. At the same time, CDOT’s system is not intended to address existing street flooding within the City of Denver. With the exception of limited incidental protection of the neighborhoods immediately north of I-70, the Central 70 drainage system only addresses the interstate. [Click here](#) to view a fact sheet on the I-70 drainage system.

Due to multiple projects going on in the Central 70 Project area and the City in general, CDOT and the City entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that demonstrates an overall collaborative working relationship between CDOT and the City, while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. The IGA includes a variety of items, one of which is drainage. CDOT will continue to monitor the development of the City’s drainage project and adjust the size of the drainage system needed for Central 70.

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