

Telephone Town Hall Questions and Answers
Central 70 Pre-RFP Transparency Meeting
Feb. 15, 2017

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

1. What about the impact on the community? What will be done?
 - Identified 300 homes that will receive a series of improvements designed to reduce the impacts of noise and dust during construction—includes storm windows, air conditioning units, furnace filters.
 - CDOT also contributing to affordable housing and fresh food access and is funding major renovations at Swansea Elementary School.
2. *How do I find out if I'm one of the 300 homes that qualifies for an air conditioning unit?*
 - You can call the Central 70 information line at 303-757-9413.
3. *What does the 'cover' mean?*
 - There will be a 4-acre park built over I-70 between Clayton and Columbine streets adjacent to Swansea Elementary as part of the project. This space was designed by the community and will include areas for soccer games, small concerts and a splash park.
4. What about air quality and noise impacts?
 - First, in order to receive approval from the Federal Highway Administration to build the project CDOT had to demonstrate that the project, once built, would not cause or contribute to any of the stringent health-based air quality standards set by the EPA.
 - CDOT also has helped establish an air quality monitor at Swansea Elementary School which will operate before, during and after the construction period. In addition, the contractor is prohibited from staging equipment near homes or schools and must use modern construction equipment that meets EPA's latest standards or install pollution controls on older equipment
5. *How will students who live along the corridor be affected?*
 - In CDOT's outreach with the community we heard loud and clear that Swansea Elementary is an active center of the community. To honor this, we are investing in improving the school in its current location—including installing new doors, windows, and an HVAC system. We will also move the playground farther away from the construction. Once the project is complete, the cover will include a sports field for the school as well as a new playground.

DRAINAGE

1. *How will you build the highway below the ground and stop flooding, and why is so much money required for drainage in this area, both for City and CDOT projects?*
 - *In proposing a design that lowers I-70 below grade, CDOT had to develop a stand-alone drainage system that would capture and convey water associated with a 100-year flood event. This includes a series of large pipes and detention ponds—very similar to the system in place for the lowered portion of I-25 in Denver. More information is available at <https://codot.gov/projects/i70east/fact-sheets-8-2.16/drainage-fact-sheet-english-updated>*

- *The City of Denver has proposed its own flood control system to address larger flooding and drainage issues in Denver. CDOT's cooperation with the City of Denver results in overall efficiencies and savings to taxpayers.*
2. *Will the natural water flow be changed like on the TREX project that destroyed trees? Will this area flood like other areas? What is the plan to avoid flooding in low areas?*
 - *CDOT's responsibility is to protect I-70 from flooding and implement water quality measures per our MS4 requirements (<https://www.codot.gov/programs/environmental/water-quality/stormwater-programs.html>). Questions about the City's plans to address drainage across the Denver metro area are best directed to the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (<http://udfcd.org/about-us>) or the City of Denver (<http://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/platte-to-park-hill.html>)*
 3. *Why is so much of that money required for drainage around I70, City Park and other nearby projects?*
 - *I-70 is a separate project with its own budget and its own drainage requirements. This includes designing and constructing a system that protects the highway from water that falls directly into the lowered highway (rainfall) and water that flows from city streets toward I-70. Both systems must handle a 100-year storm event. See <https://codot.gov/projects/i70east/fact-sheets-8-2.16/drainage-fact-sheet-english-updated> for more information*
 4. *How are you going to build at York Street where it regularly floods? How are you going to do all this underground?*
 - *See the map available [here](#) for a basic overview of the location of drainage ponds and underground pipes. This system is very similar to the one in place along the lowered portion of I-25.*

GENERAL PROJECT

1. *How are you going to fit the planned highway in where I-70 is now?*
 - *The details on construction phasing and approach are up to the selected contractor team. However, the presence of a large rail yard to the south of the viaduct requires that the project be constructed along the northern edge of the viaduct—see map [here](#) for more detail.*
2. *What is the overall project schedule?*
 - *Construction will begin in early 2018. The selected contractor team will set the precise schedule however CDOT is requiring the project to be completed in 5 years or less and the contractors will be scored on that criteria. In addition, CDOT will set milestone payments to ensure sections of the roadway are delivered quickly.*
3. *When does the project start?*
 - *Minor utility work will begin in 2017. Official construction will begin in early 2018.*
4. *Why are you going lower the highway and not let it stay on level ground where it used to be? Doesn't make sense.*

- CDOT looked at numerous alternatives, and after 14 years of study this alternative had the most acceptance in the community and provided an opportunity to help reconnect neighborhoods. The design is very similar to the lowered portion of I-25 in Denver (known as TREX). The major difference being that I-70 will include a 4-acre cover over a portion of the interstate.
5. *How far east and west does this project go-- from where to where?*
 - *The project will extend from Brighton Boulevard to Chambers Road—approximately 10 miles.*
 6. *How long will this project take to build?*
 - We won't know for sure until a contractor is on board, however CDOT's estimate is that it will take 4-5 years.

CONSTRUCTION

1. *It doesn't look like there is room for the planned project - can you explain?*
 - a. The project will include the area where I-70 is currently as well as an area to the north. See map at this [link](#) for more detail.
2. *What about rerouting to 270?*
 - a. Over the course of the 14 year environmental study CDOT has had the opportunity to consider every feasible option. One of the alternatives considered was moving all or a portion of I-70 out of Denver—along I-270 and I-76. In addition to being completely infeasible from a cost perspective (a complete reroute would cost approximately \$3 billion—nearly triple the cost of the current project), moving I-70 also causes major impacts to local streets and would require hundreds of freight-dependent businesses to navigate the local street network to reach their destinations. A full explanation of these and other concerns is provided in the Record of Decision, available at www.i-70east.com.

PARTNERS

1. *Can you discuss Denver's response to the CDOT proposal?*
 - a. We've worked with Denver throughout the project planning and will continue to do so throughout construction. The City is supportive of the Project. Letters stating the City's position are available at www.i-70east.com.
2. *How can I find out what is going on with the Commerce City portion of this?*
 - a. Adams County has been a partner in the study of I-70 East since the study was initiated in 2003. The County has provided numerous letters of support for the Central 70 Project—available at www.i-70east.com.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

1. *How do the folks who have to move out of their property get a fair price so they can move to a new home?*
 - a. CDOT knows this is a difficult process. We follow the Federal Uniform Relocation Act, which requires a set process and set of benefits. In addition to providing fair market value for properties, the Uniform Act also provides for making up the cost difference for a new property. This benefit applies to renters as well as homeowners. More information is available at www.i-70east.com or central70.codot.gov.
2. *How many residents affected by eminent domain?*

- a. All businesses and home properties purchased to date have been willful acquisitions and not under eminent domain authority. The Central 70 project requires the acquisition of 56 residential properties and 17 businesses.

TECHNOLOGY/ALIGNMENT

1. *Why can't you use the same right-of-way and use high-speed trains? Especially if it is above ground. Has anyone ever done a study of a subway like Boston?*
 - RTD recently opened a commuter rail train between downtown and the airport, running adjacent to I-70. Ridership projections provided by RTD were factored into the modeling used to determine future vehicle use along I-70. In general, rail transit results in about a 10% reduction in vehicle use.
2. *Why do you want to go underground? Will this be a tunnel like going from Jersey to New York? Isn't this unsafe? Why don't you just leave it above ground?*
 - The I-70 viaduct must be replaced. This 50-year old structure has far exceeded its original design life and has now reached the point that earlier repairs to the bridge and now needing repair. CDOT did consider options that would replace the current viaduct with another bridge (see the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Final Environmental Impact Statement available at www.i-70east.com). However, the alternative to remove the viaduct and replace it with a lowered and partially covered interstate received strong support from the community and stakeholders.
 - The lowered section will be an open cut, similar to south I-25, except the section between Columbine and Clayton Streets where the cover park will be built. This section is about 1000 feet.
 - The highway will be built to modern safety standards set by the Federal Highway Administration, including shoulders, lighting, and emergency ventilation.
3. *We need to get away from dependence on fossil fuels and use trains instead of just roads.*
 - CDOT agrees that it is important to consider multi-modal options as we look to the future and the enormous population growth expected in the coming years. Many of CDOT's recent projects have been conducted in partnership with RTD so that transit is provided in concert with improvements to highway infrastructure (e.g. I-225, US36 and I-25). Along I-70 East, RTD recently opened the A-line. In addition, CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail has been working to identify future passenger rail development across the state.

TOLLS

1. *Is the tolling you are talking about going to be administered by the State or a private company? And will it be a set time tolling or forever?*
 - Toll revenues collected along I-70 East are not part of the public-private partnership and will come to the state. Toll rate prices will be set to help mitigate congestion and provide a reliable travel time. There is no identified end date. As Colorado's population grows, the Express Lane will be priced to guarantee reliable travel times.

2. *Why more tolls? Won't single drivers still be stuck in traffic?*
 - Colorado's population is expected to increase by 47 percent over the next 20 years. CDOT knows it can't build its way out of congestion and Express Lanes help to add much needed capacity that provides a reliable travel time, while using the toll revenue to help offset the costs of the added infrastructure and ongoing operations and maintenance costs.
 - CDOT's Express Lanes are always a choice and offered in addition to the free general purpose lanes. Also, in corridors that have Express Lanes, all lanes, including the free general purpose lanes benefit in better travel times.
 - CDOT is funded through the gas tax, which hasn't been raised since 1981. We help finance roads through Express Lanes, the tolls help to offset the costs and pay back the debt for added capacity. There are currently Express lanes in the I-70 Mountain Corridor, on I-25 North, and US 36, with new lanes being added on Central 70, and southern C-470.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Will this help traffic on 36?

- *The Central 70 Project will not have an impact on US 36. The US 36 Express Lanes offer multi-modal solutions including Bus Rapid Transit, carpooling, toll-use and a commuter bikeway. The mobility choices and added capacity are providing options and improved travel along the corridor.*
2. *With the increased traffic after construction, what is the accommodation in the design today?*

Long term traffic forecasts show that two additional lanes in each direction will ultimately be needed on I-70 to accommodate the growth in vehicle miles traveled. The first phase Central 70 Project will add one additional lane in each direction, but will provide this new capacity as an Express Lane which will guarantee travel times and encourage carpooling (HOV-3). Future phases are currently unfunded.

VOTER APPROVAL

1. *It's been proven that you cannot pave your way out of traffic. Can you put it to a public vote for project?*
 - The reason CDOT is providing new capacity as Express Lanes for corridors across the metro area is to be able to manage congestion over the long term. These lanes can also encourage carpooling and accommodate bus transit, helping to create a sustainable corridor.
 - A governor-appointed Transportation Commission oversees CDOT's budget and determines project priorities across the state.

WORKFORCE

1. *Will local companies be used for construction?*
 - a. The four shortlisted teams all have local contractors on their team. CDOT also is requiring that a percentage of small and disadvantaged businesses be hired as part of the team. A local hire program, which requires that a set percentage of the workforce be from the local community also is designed to help ensure that the economic benefits of the Central 70 project are provided to local residents.

2. *With each new project, there is always the promise for new employment in the community but all fall short for the local neighborhoods. What training programs to be used so locals can be hired?*
 - a. CDOT received special permission from the Federal Highway Administration to pilot local—or geographic-based hiring for the Central 70 Project. CDOT has set a local hire area and will require the contractor to hire approximately 20% of its workforce from this area. In addition, a \$400,000 federal grant and \$200,000 in project funds has been allocated for workforce training and supportive services programs to help provide a pathway to careers, including journey trade positions. More information is available at central70.codot.gov.

OTHER

1. *Please repeat the website address?*
 - a. Central70.codot.gov