

Meeting Notes



I-70 Floyd Hill to Veterans Memorial Tunnels

Date: March 20, 2019
Location: CDOT – Golden

Technical Team – Meeting #16

Introductions and Overview

Taber Ward, CDR Associates, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. Self-introductions followed. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendees.

Other Project Efforts

Westbound PPSL has been advertised and expected to begin construction in June or July.

Fall River Road Bridge is under contract with SEMA Construction.

Geohazard Mitigation Program in the US 6 canyon will be completed by its April 1st deadline.

Bridge deck repair at Soda Creek and Floyd Hill Bridges is beginning and will be mostly night work in Jefferson and Clear Creek Counties.

Region 3 Vail Pass had a public meeting in December and is finishing up its Issue Task Forces (ITFs). The project will reconvene in early summer.

Idaho Springs Transit Center Idaho Springs is beginning a managed parking plan and demographics study, which may impact the Transit Center design

Floyd Hill SWEEP (and other ITFs) are concluding work until funding and/or direction is available.

Project Status

Contractor Procurement Delayed

Contractor procurement for Floyd Hill CM/GC is delayed due to funding.

Opportunities with New Administration and Legislature

Senate Bill 51 is moving through the legislature. This bill would dedicate \$250 million for transportation improvements.

At this time, the priorities and resources of the new CDOT Administration are to be determined.

Position Project to Move Forward Once Funding is Identified

The Floyd Hill project will resume once transportation priorities are established and funding becomes available.

Q: Once funding is identified, will NEPA rev-up again, or are we close enough to the end of NEPA?

A: No, we have approximately 18 months left of NEPA. At this point, we're finalizing the Existing Conditions reports, but lack the funding to complete NEPA.

Section 106 ITF Meeting

Discussed Preliminary Eligibility Findings

Vanessa Henderson, CDOT, updated the group on Section 106. A Section 106 ITF meeting was held on February 28, 2019. The meeting discussed preliminary eligibility findings for historic properties within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) (area where Project may directly or indirectly affect cultural / historic resources). One property in Jefferson County at the top of Floyd Hill was found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The residential property is located off of US 40 and is not expected to be affected by the Project.

Colorado Central Railroad

The Central Colorado Railroad is an NRHP-eligible linear resource but the segment within the APE lacks integrity to convey its historic importance or association with the railroad.

Comment: Floyd Hill is a wonderful story in the history of transportation in Colorado. The railroad, the first road alignment, and the highway could all be part of an interpretive history.

Floyd Hill Subdivisions

The Floyd Hill subdivisions include some properties that are more than 50 years old (or would be at the time of construction) but there is no relevant historic context for these properties – that is, no way to evaluate whether these properties are significant examples of mountain area subdivisions. The subdivisions in these mountain communities are eclectic. CDOT is continuing to research whether other states (like California) have developed a context to evaluate mountain subdivisions but the ITF agreed that additional data regarding representative examples of these types of properties were needed to conduct the evaluation. The team agreed to treat these properties as eligible; all are located far from the project and are not expected to be directly affected.

Section 106 Next Steps

The eligibility report will be distributed to consulting parties and the State Historic Preservation Office within the next month.

Comment: The archaeological surveys are not yet complete because of snow-related delays. The surveys should be complete in mid-Spring.

Public Outreach

Website Updated

The website is up-to-date with a general status update.

CDOT distributed a project status informational flyer to the PLT, TT and project email lists.

20% Design Update

Anthony Pisano, Atkins, provided an overview on the main components of the 20% design and showed that they are consistent with the concepts developed through the CSS process. He walked through the design from west to east, and the group reviewed roll plots of the 20% design. The design would continue to evolve if the NEPA phase is reinitiated.

Proposed Concepts: Floyd Hill, Homestead Interchange, US 6 Interchange, Wildlife

As previously discussed, new roundabout intersections are planned for the interchanges at the top of Floyd Hill along US 40 between CR 65 and Homestead Road. The group reviewed the potential location of the new wildlife overpass bridge. Between the top of Floyd Hill and the US 6 interchange, all widening is planned along the EB lanes of I-70. In many places, there is not room for a drainage ditch and offsite flows would need to be conveyed in a storm drain system. The offsite and onsite flows would have separate systems since the on-site flows need to be treated before being released into the adjacent creeks. Several cross culverts were determined to be plugged and may need to be re-instated to improve drainage and reduce the size of the pipe system conveying the offsite flows. This would be investigated in the next phase of the project. Issues with drainage and erosion are evident after storm events.

Q: The wildlife crossing is very close to the show home property, which appears to be building out. That needs to be factored into the location.

A: This location is very conceptual and we will look at it in more detail once we're able to move forward again. But, if there are any plans available for the additional build-out, those would be helpful to get. Jo Ann Sorensen will see if she can find anything and pass it along.

US 6 Interchange and Wildlife Bench / Undercrossing

At the US 6 Interchange, the design would reuse much of the existing exit ramp from I-70. A new entrance ramp would be constructed from US 6 to EB I-70. An auxiliary lane would also be included to connect this ramp to the exit at Homestead Road at the top of Floyd Hill.

There are 4 bridges at this interchange. Each bridge will have a bench for wildlife to cross under the bridges through the interchange. The benches would be adjacent to the greenway trail and under the bridges.

Q: Does the right-of-way at the Homestead Interchange still exist? Does the design include the turnaround for trucks and improved parking lot south of the interchange as previously discussed?

A: CDOT still owns the right of way and the parking lot. CDOT may need to verify if recent land development would affect plans but the team will consider these types of community requested elements during the next phase of design.

Q: Do the roundabouts accommodate the turning requirements for semi-trucks?

A: Yes.

Q: What is being done for semi-trucks crossing the bridge at the top of Floyd Hill and trying to turn around?

A: CDOT is aware that this is an issue but no decisions have been made at this point in the 20% design.

Q: What is the grade in the EB I-70 auxiliary lane just before Homestead Road and should we extend the lane beyond the exit to allow trucks more time to merge? Do trucks have enough time to merge from the auxiliary lane into I-70 at the top of the hill? Is there enough signage? A lot of the conflicts with trucks at the top of Floyd Hill are due to signage and grade issues.

A: The crest of the hill is just east of the ramp gore . Therefore, the grade at the exit ramp where trucks would be merging with through traffic is around 1-2%. The 20% design decision not to extend the lane beyond the ramp was based on the traffic models, which found no difference between the auxiliary lane and an extended lane. Furthermore, the lane cannot be extended very far without impacting wetlands.

Q: Has there been any progress on the development adjacent to the high school?

A: The developer had issues finding a permanent water supply. His case has been suspended for the time being.

Q: Can we include a bridge at the terminus of the Greenway that connects it to the parking lot at the planned trailhead near the intersection of US 6 and US 40?

A: CDOT noted that this request will be consider as funding permits.

Proposed Concepts: Tunnel Layout

Anthony Pisano introduced the proposed tunnel concept layout. The team used a software program (sketch up) to model the portals and set the length of the tunnel. The tunnel requires a certain depth of rock cover for stability along with an additional 20 ft factor of safety. We will look to optimize and reduce the overall length of tunnel in the next phase of design.

Q: Has the tunnel location changed?

A: No, the tunnel is in the same location – what we've done is located the entrance and exit portals where there is competent rock. This will minimize the overall tunnel length and provide an entrance where rocks are not falling on the portal. The goal is to find a balance of length, rock fall, and excavation.

Q: Tracy Sakaguchi, CMCA, inquired how the tunnel can be built so that trucks can access it. She requested that CDOT put in as many safety measures as possible to help bolster community support and trust for trucks using the tunnel.

A: The tunnel would require ventilation and likely fire suppression as well. In terms of hazmat, no fire suppression system will put out an oil tanker. The decision whether trucks have to reroute or can use the tunnel is made by groups outside CDOT once tunnel details are known. It is important to consider that the alternate hazmat route would be along the creek, which is not ideal.

Q: When in the design process are decisions around tunnel safety features made?

A: Soon: if we get funding, we will begin making decisions about ventilation and fire suppression.

Proposed Concepts: WB Tunnel to Hidden Valley

Based on the 20% design, WB I-70 would be benched into the rock slope between the new tunnel and the Hidden Valley interchange. The height of rock cuts would range from 160' to 200' tall. The cut would be about ½ mile long and require extensive excavation. See PowerPoint for graphical representation of comparable rock cuts in the corridor.

Hidden Valley Interchange

Hidden Valley interchange would remain in a similar layout as is there today. An additional right turn lane would be added to the EB I-70 exit ramp. The Greenway Trail would cross from the north to the south side of CR 314 at the intersection with Central City Parkway.

Hidden Valley to Veterans Memorial Tunnels

The proposed improvements from Hidden Valley to the Veterans Memorial Tunnels showed some re-alignment of Clear Creek on the south side of I-70 balanced with rock cut along the north side of I-70. This allowed us to widen and re-use the existing WB bridge for EB I-70. The next phases of design would continue to evaluate how to optimize the bridge construction, shift the creek, and minimize rock cuts to balance costs, traffic impacts and safety. To the west of the tunnel, the Floyd Hill project ties into the WB PPSL project.

There will be no new evaluations until additional funding is identified.

Q: Where will the WB PPSL lane start?

A: WB PPSL advance signage starts to the east of the Veterans Memorial Tunnels, and the WB PPSL will start to the west of the tunnels.

Q: What small highway improvements and steps can be taken in the meantime? The Floyd Hill community hopes that something will be done to relieve traffic and improve the road, such as the roundabouts at the top of Floyd Hill.

A: CDOT will bring these questions up to their upper management. At this point, there is not funding allocated for projects in this area.

Q: The Floyd Hill project is specifically noted in the ROD, does that matter? Is CDOT obligated to do anything?

A: No. It helps streamline the NEPA process, but doesn't guarantee funding.

Next Steps: Refine Design

The next steps will be to optimize design by minimizing or balancing rock cuts, wall heights, bridge lengths, tunnel length, and creek relocation.

Next Steps

Set Up for NEPA Completion

The completion of the 20% design and Existing Conditions documentation has created a logical point to pause the project. The next meeting will not be held until funding is available.

Email Updates as Information Becomes Available

The project team will keep the TT group informed by email of any developments.

Actions

- Jo Ann Sorensen to share Monarch Development plans with CDOT
- Stephen Harelson to bring community question about smaller projects, such as roundabouts up the CDOT chain of command to see if anything can be done in the short-term.
- THK to add the following to the Conceptual Design Parking Lot:
 - Truck reroute at top of Floyd Hill
 - Truck parking in city-owned parking lot at top of Floyd Hill
 - Signage for trucks on the acceleration lane
 - Extending Greenway across Clear Creek to terminus of planned trailhead
 - Fire suppression in tunnel

TT Member Attendees

Jonathan Cain (Idaho Springs); Tracy Sakaguchi (CMCA); Scott Haas (USFS); Stephen Strohming (Gilpin County); Sam Hoover (Central City); Lynnette Hailey (Black Hawk); Cindy Neely (Clear Creek County); Kelly Galardi (FHWA); Bill Coffin, John Muscatell (Floyd Hill Community); Gary Frey (Trout Unlimited); Michael Raber (Bicycle User Group); Wendy Koch (Town of Empire); Pat Holinda (Bridge Enterprise); Mitch Houston (Clear Creek School District); Holly Huyck (Clear Creek Watershed Foundation); Amy Saxton (CCGA); Martha Tableman (CC Open Space); Yelena Onnen (Jefferson County); Neil Ogden; Vanessa Henderson; Steve Harelson; Kevin Brown; Tyler Brady (CDOT); Anthony Pisano (Atkins); Gina McAfee (HDR); Kevin Shanks (THK); Mandy Whorton (Peak Consulting)