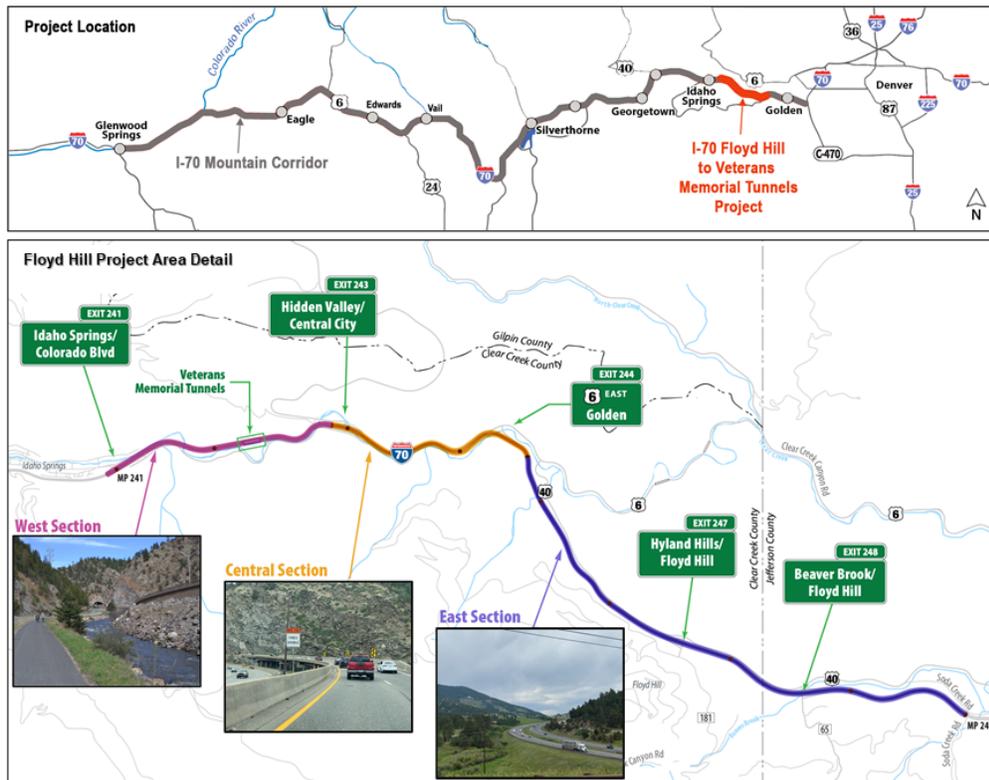


FLOYD HILL PROJECT SUMMARY INFORMATION

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose the Interstate 70 (I-70) Floyd Hill to Veterans Memorial Tunnels Project (Project) to improve travel time reliability, safety, and mobility, and address the deficient infrastructure along 8 miles of I-70 from west of Evergreen in the Floyd Hill area through the Veterans Memorial Tunnels to the eastern edge of Idaho Springs. Major elements of the Project include adding a third westbound travel lane on I-70, constructing a missing frontage road connection, adding an eastbound auxiliary lane to the uphill section of Floyd Hill, improving interchanges and intersections, improving design speeds and stopping sight distance on horizontal curves, improving the Clear Creek Greenway, and implementing environmental mitigation for wildlife connectivity, air and water quality, stream conditions, and recreation. This project is a top priority for CDOT and stakeholders.



Project Benefits

Improves travel times, reliability, and safety: The two-lane westbound section of I-70 west of Floyd Hill is a major bottleneck. Along with other recent improvements, the Project would save users more than an hour of travel time for summer and winter weekend trips and decrease the number and severity of crashes through more consistent traffic flow and speeds.

Supports communities: Improving interstate travel and providing alternate emergency access through a newly connected frontage road system strengthens safety and mobility for thousands of Coloradans that rely on I-70 to access their communities and for the millions that visit the mountains annually. I-70 is the lifeline for commerce and tourism that support rural mountain town economies.

Is fiscally responsible: This section of I-70 has not had significant improvements since its original construction in the 1960s. Maintaining the corridor's aging infrastructure is increasingly expensive and time consuming and disrupts travel for individual communities and the public. It is more effective and efficient for CDOT to replace this infrastructure rather than to continue to invest scarce dollars in facilities that are at the end of their service lives.

Fosters environmental sustainability and resiliency: The Project will help bring about improvements--such as new transit service, coordinated rural broadband access, and electric vehicle

charging stations--that support the ways travel can and will change in the future. It also includes new air quality monitors and provides a redundant route for when natural disasters disrupt highway travel. Impacts to high-quality wetlands and wildlife habitat have been avoided while important riparian areas of Clear Creek will be restored; improving water quality, wildlife habitat, and prized fishing and rafting areas. Lastly, the Project will construct the Corridor's first major wildlife crossings.



The Canyon Viaduct, simulated above, would realign a portion of WB and EB I-70 between US 6 and Hidden Valley to the south on a viaduct (bridge) structure above the Clear Creek Canyon, similar to I-70 through Glenwood Canyon. Moving the interstate out of the floor of the narrow canyon provides space for the new frontage road connection and Clear Creek Greenway and facilitates Clear Creek riparian restoration that enhances water quality, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Elevating the highway and moving it farther from the canyon walls also reduces the potential for mudslides and rockfall to interfere with highway operations.

The Project includes:

- Adding a third WB lane from top of Floyd Hill through the Veterans Memorial Tunnels
- Completing a new frontage road connection between US 6 and Idaho Springs
- Improving interchanges and intersections
- Improving design speeds and stopping sight distance on horizontal curves
- Adding an eastbound I-70 auxiliary lane to I-70 in the uphill direction of Floyd Hill
- Improving the multimodal trail (Greenway)
- Providing two permanent air quality monitors
- Two new wildlife crossings east and west of the Project area in Genesee and Empire where the interstate interferes with wildlife movements and wildlife-vehicle collisions are high
- Coordinating rural broadband access with local communities
- Implementing park-and-ride facilities with electric vehicle charging stations to support micro-mobility travel options between Denver and the mountains

Comments on the Floyd Hill Project and Environmental Assessment are welcome!

The Environmental Assessment is available for review and comment through October 1, 2021. Online public engagement is available during the same period through the Project website (bit.ly/FloydHill). CDOT and FHWA will review, consider, and respond to all comments received. A final decision about if and how to move forward with the project, along with responses to comments, will be included in a written decision document, expected in spring 2022.



How Have Local Communities Been Involved in Development of the Project?

CDOT has been working collaboratively with local communities, state and federal agencies, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to develop a solution for this vital stretch of highway. The Project followed the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, which brings together multi-disciplinary, multi-interested stakeholder groups tasked with developing the best project to meet transportation needs, fit the geographic context, and support environmental and community values. The resulting Preferred Alternative, the Canyon Viaduct Alternative, is endorsed by the CSS participants and has received wide-ranging support from local communities and mountain travelers.

What is the Canyon Viaduct Alternative, and why is it CDOT's preferred solution for the Project?

Through the CSS process, CDOT, FHWA, and stakeholders determined that the Canyon Viaduct Alternative best meets the Project's Purpose and Need, facilitating safe and efficient transportation and supporting CDOT's long-term maintenance and resiliency objectives. This design also respects the environmental, historical, community, and recreational resources of Floyd Hill and supports community values. It also has the least environmental impacts and greatest opportunity for enhancements.

Did CDOT Consider Whether Widening Would Ultimately Lead to More Traffic?

Complex travel models, known as activity based models, are used whenever CDOT studies a large project like Floyd Hill. These models are sensitive in several ways to changes in roadway capacity and congestion. In general, if roadway capacity is increased and congestion decreased, the model will show additional travel demand in that corridor over time. This additional demand is commonly referred to as "induced demand". However, the effect of induced demand changes with the actual use patterns along a corridor and the unique conditions of Floyd Hill causes traffic to function—and respond—differently than what we might see in a more urban or suburban areas. CDOT's traffic data, as well as live experience, show that Coloradans spend hours sitting in traffic on I-70 as they travel to and from the mountains, especially on weekends. Floyd Hill is a 2-lane stretch of I-70 bordered on either side by wider 3-lane templates. Thus, widening Floyd Hill is not likely to shift development patterns or daily commutes, so much as address a specific choke point where traffic and accidents currently proliferate given the heavy use of this road to access popular destination areas.

Are More Transit Options Also a Part of the Floyd Hill Project?

In July of 2021, CDOT allocated \$2M to initiate a new transit shuttle service along I-70 as Bustang Pegasus. The service will involve a fleet of passenger vans that are smaller than the standard Bustang over-the-road coaches and thus can operate in the I-70 Mountain Express Lanes (MEXL) through Clear Creek County, avoiding traffic congestion in the general-purpose lanes. Pegasus will operate frequent departures between the Denver Metro area, Summit, and Eagle Counties and will also utilize the new Express Lane constructed as part of the Floyd Hill Project. Pegasus beginning operations as early as December 2021, is designed to reduce traffic during the Floyd Hill construction period and peak weekend leisure travel.