

**I 70 Mountain Corridor  
Collaborative Effort Meeting  
January 31, 2008  
The Keystone Collaborative Center, Keystone, CO**

**Meeting Minutes**

During this meeting, the Collaborative Effort members were divided into small working groups and asked to perform a mapping exercise. Each group was provided with a map and elevation contour of the corridor and asked to develop a vision of transportation improvements for two time milestones: the years 2025 and 2058. Three colors were to be used to identify transportation improvements.

A blue solid line was used to indicate areas where additional highway lanes should be added, and a dashed blue line was to indicate other highway and safety and efficiency improvements. A black solid line was to indicate where an “advanced guideway system” (AGS) should be developed. For the sake of this exercise, groups were not to focus on specific technologies for transit systems. A dashed black line would indicate where bus or bus rapid transit with dedicated lanes should be developed. A red ink pen was to be used to highlight or flag any additional concerns or areas that require special attention.

In addition to this brief color-coded legend, the group was also provided additional assumptions that further simplified this exercise. Participants were to assume:

- “Appropriate” connectivity to front range transportation systems (road and transit networks and to Denver International Airport)
- All intersections that coincide with major highway or transit projects will need improvement, and so do not need to be highlighted unless the group desires
- It is not necessary to identify specific alignments for road or transit improvements. The goal instead is simply to identify which transit modes should serve which areas and communities
- The costs of different modes, improvements and environmental and community mitigations, for the sake of this exercise, should NOT be considered.

Finally, the participants were instructed to discuss improvements and seek agreement where possible, and then document this agreement on the maps and in written notes in forms provided. Likewise, groups were asked to clarify where there is disagreement and to document that as well. In addition, a map and materials were provided to members of the public and other observers who were in attendance, so that they too may perform this exercise.

At the end of the mapping exercise, all maps, for both timeframes, included elements of transit and highway improvements in addition to highlighting several specific areas that need special attention. It is notable that each group indicated that an advanced guideway system, for both 2025 and 2058 was the ideal vision for the corridor. However, it is also important to note that several participants pointed to the assumptions, which greatly

simplified the exercise and may not reflect funding or engineering constraints. Therefore, **the results of this mapping exercise do not represent consensus or final agreement about any particular package of transportation improvements. Instead, “agreements” for the sake of this exercise are to be interpreted as areas of convergence, and all groups were explicit that additional discussion is required for all elements and options.**

The following notes were transcribed from “Elements of Agreement/Disagreement” which each group prepared.

### **Group One**

#### **Elements of Agreement**

- Fixed guideway from C470 to Eagle County Airport
  - Guideways should be elevated in general, though concerns over the cost of elevated infrastructure were noted
- The goal of highway and transit improvements are to increase capacity and move more people through and about the corridor
- Some kind of collector/distributor system would be necessary to move people to and from main I70 system

#### **Key issue areas and areas that require special attention, design and consideration**

- From Idaho Springs to Silver Plume there are many special concerns regarding historic resources, community vitality and water and environmental quality
- Near the current highway alignment from Frisco to Vail there are several fens (peat-forming wetlands that receive nutrients from sources other than precipitation) and other water resources

#### **Elements with Disagreement**

- Some group members believe that six-lanes of general purpose highway lanes are desirable from Clear Creek County line west
- There was not clear agreement whether busses need have dedicated lanes constructed prior to the development Advanced Guideway System (AGS), and whether dedicated bus lanes could be converted to AGS over time
- There were different opinions about the amount of capacity improvement that is needed and which methods should be used to increase capacity (transit, highway, transportation demand management, etc.)
- There was not clear agreement about the time required to design, build and pay for an advanced Guideway system
- Some group members felt that busses need dedicated lanes, others felt that busses in mixed traffic are a viable option

### **Group Two**

#### **Elements of Agreement**

- Some highway improvements, close to those identified in the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) as minimal action plus an AGS was identified as a desirable package of improvements
- A public-private partnership of some sort is likely necessary for the administration and management of transit systems.
- Denver International Airport (DIA) should be the eastern terminus for an AGS
- Bus Rapid Transit in the corridor is desirable
- Initial improvements for the highway systems should focus on minimal action components and Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Interchange improvements will be necessary wherever there is major highway or transit improvements
- Climbing/descending lanes in key areas of the corridor would be beneficial and desirable
- Tunnels may be necessary for safety and efficiency improvements in certain locations:
  - Dowd junction
  - Near mile marker 244 where highway 6 converges and for the most difficult portions of Floyd Hill.
- The Port of Entry in Downieville should be moved/removed
- Empire junction can be reconfigured for greater traffic flow and merging
- There may be several options or alignments for AGS including:
  - US 6 Clear Creek Canyon
  - Mount Vernon Canyon
  - Connections to Front Range transit systems and Denver International Airport
  - Potential transit spurs to: Breckenridge, Steamboat, Central City, Black Hawk, and Winter Park

**Key issue areas and areas that require special attention, design and consideration**

There was much discussion regarding the nature of population and transportation demand growth in the corridor. Key considerations include:

- How to manage growth in communities
- How to manage recreation demand, access and impact to public lands
- The degree, extent and type of growth are values and “social engineering” questions
- Transit can be a tool for growth management and for directing growth and access to specific areas

**Elements with Disagreement**

- This group wants to explicitly state that agreement about a non-cost constrained Vision is not the same as agreement about a preferred alternative
- Further discussion is necessary regarding the phasing and sequencing of transportation improvements

### **Group Three**

#### **Elements of Agreement**

- Mode choice
- Primary transportation for the East/West corridor; recognizing other routes will exist (Moffat line)
- Transportation needs are diverse including local and interstate commerce, commuting, and recreation
- Viable transit will provide reliable commuting options for work force particularly addressing housing issues
- Transit can expand, more effectively with demand, without adding infrastructure
- Safety and traffic flow concerns need to be addressed throughout the corridor
  - Enforcement
  - Education
  - Physical environment
- Bus transit would help in the interim

#### **Elements with Disagreement**

- Transit needs to be rail
- Demand on highway will increase beyond the impact that transit will have on congestion
- Yes and No: 6 lanes through Idaho Springs
- Floyd Hill to Highway 40 needs many levels of improvement
  - Environment
  - Community
  - Cost
- Yes and No: Designated lane for buses

### **Group Four**

#### **Elements of Agreement**

- Transit in the form of AGS is desirable and the most useful long term solution
- Western terminus of AGS should extend at least to Gypsum
- West side of Floyd Hill road improvements for safety, including the “S” turns, are necessary
- There is broad and considerable concern for Idaho Springs and losing more of the town to road development, historic preservation, and noise
- Safety and congestion improvements for Empire Junction are desirable
- The culture of automobile-centric travel may change given alternative fuel availability and climate change concerns
- Total and ‘life cycle’ costs need to be evaluated for all transportation modes
- National historic districts in Silver Plume and Georgetown need to be maintained
- Rock fall safety improvements are necessary
- Highway safety and efficiency improvements are necessary

### **Elements with Disagreement**

- Regarding additional highway lanes, some group members felt this was the most cost effective. Other group members felt that transit systems alone should be used to increase capacity.
- True cost of lifecycle
  - Maintenance
  - Long-term mitigation
  - Fuel unknowns
  - Global climate
  - Impacts
  - New information and technology
- There was disagreement as to whether transit systems alone can serve future transportation demands

### **Group Five (members of the public in attendance and other observers)**

#### **Elements of Agreement**

- AGS should start at DIA or at the very least Union Station
- AGS should go at least to Eagle County Airport or Dotsero
- High-speed elevated guideway

#### **Elements with Disagreement**

- None listed