

## **I-70 Collaborative Effort Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

**Members Present:** Co-Chair Randy Wheelock (Clear Creek County), Co-Chair Greg Hall (Town of Vail), Rachel Beck (Colorado Competitive Council), Brent Spahn (Summit County), David Krutsinger (Transit Director, City and County of Denver), Andrew Marsh (Idaho Springs), Jason Smith (CDOT- Region 3), Eva Wilson (Town of Avon/Local Transit Provider), Ann Rajewski (CASTA), John Uban (Headwaters Group), Margaret Bowes (I-70 Coalition), Paul DesRocher (CDOT- Division of Transit and Rail), Dennis Royer (Sierra Club), Holly Norton (State Historic Preservation Office), Matt Scherr (Eagle County), Mary Jane Loevlie (Idaho Springs Business Representative), Jack Tone (Colorado Rail Passenger Association)

**Alternates Present:** Julian Gonzalez (FHWA), David Cesark (CDOT- Region 3), Becky English (Sierra Club), Kay Kelly (CDOT- Office of Innovative Mobility), Tracy Sakaguchi (Colorado Motor Carriers Association)

**Interested Parties:** Steve Coffin (CE Staff, Steve Coffin Strategies), Abbie Modafferi (CE Staff, CDOT), Andy Wilson (FHWA), Mandy Whorton (Peak Consulting), Vanessa Halladay (Peak Consulting), Basil Ryer (CDOT- Region 1), Karen Berdoulay (CDOT- Region 3), Erik Mocko (Grand Junction), Miller Hudson (Colorado MagLev)

**Note: This meeting was recorded to assist with creating meeting minutes.**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:00 A.M.

### **1. Introductions**

Following introductions, Mr. Greg Hall called the meeting to order.

### **2. Public Comment**

Miller Hudson with Colorado MagLev offered public comment regarding the history of his involvement in the I-70 Corridor. He called for action in the I-70 Corridor to secure funding that has recently become available for Advanced Guideway/Rail Projects. Additionally, he reminded the group that future AGS in the Corridor *must* have a symbiotic relationship with Front Range Passenger Rail. A link in the Mountain Corridor would encourage ridership on Front Range Passenger Rail. In Hudson's opinion, AGS in the Mountain Corridor is equally as important as rail development on the Front Range when it comes to economic vitality. Despite over 25 years of planning, the Corridor still needs a transportation district with appointed representatives who can apply for funding with CDOT's support. At the moment, Front Range Passenger Rail estimates it will be 10-12 years before they can host riders. It will undoubtedly be longer for the Mountain Corridor to see this progress. Hudson calls out that the Collaborative Effort must be prepared to make AGS a reality in the I-70 Mountain Corridor.

### **3. CE Business**

#### *a. Discuss/Approve Agenda*

- Consensus on agenda.

#### *b. Discuss/Approve May 2023 Minutes*

- Minutes approved by consensus.

#### *c. Budget Review*

- Mr. Coffin reviewed the 2023 budget and noted that there is enough money left to fund approximately one more meeting lunch. Members will not be asked to contribute funds to the Collaborative Effort, unless for the purpose of splitting lunch duties.
- Mr. Hall notes that Abbie Modafferi (CE Staff and CDOT) will be serving as an unbiased CE facilitator/staff. The PEIS and ROD state that CDOT will provide staff for

facilitating purposes (agenda setting, meeting minutes, and on-boarding new members). Clear Creek County was previously funding this role since 2017 and now the ownership is shifting back to CDOT.

- Mr. Hall restates that the I-70 Collaborative Effort does not expect agencies and members to put forth funding, unless it is decided additional work will be taken on by the Collaborative Effort.
- Mr. Wheelock states that “additional funding” may include sponsorship for conferences, for example, AGS Subcommittee members attending a conference to explore emerging technologies.

#### 4. **Operating Protocols**

Steve Coffin opens the conversation by discussing the proposed changes in the Operating Protocols:

##### *Purpose and Role*

- The group agrees by consensus to meet twice annually, in September and April.
- How should changes to the meeting time be handled? Language should be added to clarify that meeting time and dates should be able to be moved if needed due to inclement weather.
- Ms. Loevlie requests adding additional language to stress the importance of the Collaborative Effort taking action. The role of the CE is to support implementation of the ROD. Eva Wilson asks if the purpose and role section should state that the Collaborative Effort ensures compliance versus advocating for the ROD? Mr. Gonzalez agrees and reminds the group that whatever language is added must be consistent with the PEIS.
- Mr. Hall brings up that this ROD is unique because typically a ROD applies to an individual project, while the ROD in this case applies to the whole corridor. It does, however, allow for the privilege of adaptive management, which drives the role and purpose of the Collaborative Effort.

##### *Membership Eligibility*

- Does the group wish to change the language in the Operating Protocols relating to membership?
- Mr. Coffin brings up the Keystone Closeout Report, which describes criteria that should be met by the Collaborative Effort and their alternates. This information can be found on page 7 of the Keystone Closeout Report. The most recent discussion regarding membership stemmed from Grand Junction’s request to join the Collaborative Effort. Grand Junction’s membership will be officially discussed during the April meeting. To this point, Mr. Dennis Royer asks whether or not Glenwood Springs has asked to be a member. He points out that by including GJ and not GS that we are extending the corridor but excluding other communities.
- Ms. Bowes asks how the original seats were decided. She asks theoretically, what if countless other communities want to have representatives? Mr. Hall responded by reminding the group that the Collaborative Effort was originally formed on quite a bit of distrust. There was a call for balance between East Slope and West Slope communities.
- Mr. Wheelock offers the comment that Grand Junction would have a similar role to what Denver represents for the group- a driver for both demand and supply. Wheelock reiterates that, when new members are added, it is imperative that they are capable of demonstrating understanding of the institutional knowledge of why compromises were made in the ROD so that we don’t have to continue to discuss decisions that were made in the past.
- The group continues to discuss representation from the East Slope and West Slope. Any new members to the group have to realize they are agreeing to the Preferred Alternative and ROD and must be in consensus for what has already been agreed upon.

- Mr. Hall offers the option of having one representative from each county along the corridor. Using this approach, Summit and Jefferson county would be able add a municipal representative. Garfield county would potentially also add a municipal representative, but their participation has been limited in the past.
- Ms. Bowes responds to the group by stating that she is not advocating for change in representation at this time, but she is advocating for clear determinants of membership to be outlined in the Operating Protocols. The Operating Protocols need to be more specific around this topic. This idea is seconded by both Eva Wilson and Holly Norton.
- Ms. Norton suggests tabling this discussion until additional municipalities come forward seeking membership.
- Mr. Krutsinger brings up one of the points from the Keystone Closeout Report and emphasizes its importance. Members shall be “Empowered as a decision maker within their organizations or constituencies or otherwise able to commit and bind their constituencies to any agreements of the collaborative effort.” He continues by pointing out that if project activity shift throughout the corridor, we need to make sure that members are not making decisions on behalf of multiple communities. For example, a single Summit County representative cannot make decisions on behalf of both Silverthorne and Dillon. In Krutsinger’s opinion, this would be the nexus for revisiting the balance of membership. Mr. Wheelock responds by questioning whether this should be handled at the CSS or CE level. Each project has PLT, ITF and TT that include stakeholders from the community where the project is taking place.
- Mr. Hall recommends adding detail to what each of the members represent, and the perspective each member brings to the table. This would allow for the group to decide if we are missing important perspectives. Mr. Wheelock adds that one perspective we may be missing currently is a voice to speak on the natural environment and/or climate change. Both co-chairs echo- is there a voice that we are missing here? What has changed since the PEIS has been implemented.
- Ms. Modafferi asks what the action item is for the next meeting. Should there be more detail added to Appendix 1, which roughly outlines membership organization.
- Mr. Coffin closes the discussion by offering to add more detail to Appendix 1 of the Operating Protocols, to add additional language from the Keystone Closeout Report. The group agrees in consensus that this will be the path forward.

*Other Changes*

Mr. Gonzalez with FHWA reviews the other minor changes in the Operating Protocols including the following:

- Add the date the version of the document was accepted by the Collaborative Effort.
- Add a summary of revisions to the beginning of the document.
- Refer to the “Record of Decision Preferred Alternative” throughout, and add page references where appropriate.

**5. Minimum/Maximum Program of Improvements Update**

Ms. Modafferi provides a brief summary of the Minimum and Maximum Program of Improvements outlined in the ROD. Highlights include:

- Idaho Springs interchanges should be added to project tracking as complete.
- The group should discuss projects that support the ROD but are not actually outlined in the ROD, such as PPSL. These projects should be outlined on a supplemental list.
- Ms. Norton suggests uploading the ROD project tracking spreadsheet to the Collaborative Effort website.
- Mr. Marsh stresses the importance of including projects that support transit through the corridor, like the Idaho Springs Mobility Hub, and not just capacity-focused projects.

- Ms. Modafferi emphasizes that this list will also include a project prioritization section for discussion by the group.

#### *AGS*

Ms. Modafferi summarizes AGS updates since the 2014 Feasibility Study and notes that Mr. Wheelock will provide an AGS Subcommittee update later on in the meeting:

- Mr. Hall notes that as mobility projects are moving forward, land use and AGS compatibility should always be considered. Such advances should also accommodate future AGS.
- Ms. Loevlie suggests adding the Rocky Mountain Railroad Authority as a resource as it contributed technical information to the AGS Feasibility Study.

#### *Non-Infrastructure Related Components*

Ms. Modafferi summarizes the various non-infrastructure related components of the ROD that the Collaborative Effort supports. Ms. Bowes offers to meet with Ms. Modafferi to populate the tracking sheet with greater detail on emerging non-infrastructure components, such as carpooling, winter operations and maintenance. Furthermore, Ms. Loevlie and Mr. Hall recommend adding courtesy patrol, mobility, incident management, and traffic demand modeling to non-infrastructure related components as well. Other suggestions include:

- Ms. Kelly mentions that CDOT uses the categories transit, highway and multimodal during planning. The “multimodal” category is intended to bridge the gap when a project does not fit in either of the other project types. This could be a useful way to track projects outlined in the ROD.
- Mr. Marsh suggests adding “Local Transit Services” as its own category under “Non-Infrastructure Related Components.” They are expensive operations that are important to the success of the corridor. The corridor needs such operations to be successful and Mr. Marsh reminds the group that Clear Creek County values local transit operations. Ms. Wilson seconds this suggestion, and adds that the newly formed Transit Authority in Eagle County is another example.
- Mr. Hall recommends adding reference to recently passed legislation that may affect the CE’s ability to carry out the ROD. For example, he references Senate Bill 260, which requires some projects to monitor greenhouse gas emissions. This would be an example of adaptive management. Ms. Bowes suggests including bills that have passed with a link to the legislation.

#### **6. Context Sensitive Solutions and Aesthetic Guidelines in the Mountain Corridor**

Mr. Basil Ryer presents examples of applications of the aesthetic guidelines in the Mountain Corridor. Comments throughout the presentation include the following:

- Mr. Hall asks about the long-term availability of specific materials in each design segment. For example, ensure that the correct paint color is used when replacing guardrails after a crash.
- Mr. Coffin asks who at CDOT is institutionalizing the Context Sensitive Solutions? Ms. Modafferi responds by informing the group about the CSS course that CDOT offers to all employees, regardless of department, sector, or role.

#### **7. Subcommittee Updates**

##### *AGS*

Mr. Wheelock provides an update on the AGS Subcommittee’s recent activity and meetings. He reflects on the 2020 Reassessment and the formation of the subcommittees. He explains that the AGS subcommittee and capacity subcommittee are related- for AGS to be considered in the Mountain Corridor, it had to be a system that could move the “desired capacity” which was equal to about an additional lane of traffic.

Ultimately, this criteria limits the types of technologies that could be considered. In the end, the Feasibility Study indicated that heavy rail would not be capable of operating under the circumstances of the Mountain Corridor, and that AGS through the corridor would have to be some type of light guideway system that could operate under the desired capacity and unique constraints of the area. Following the 2020 Reassessment, the subcommittee revisited whether or not capacity assumptions were still valid, and whether or not the local communities still had the same desired capacity, so they collaborated with the capacity subcommittee to answer those questions. The capacity subcommittee decided that it is not the place of the communities nor the Collaborative Effort to define capacity for other communities. Following these large discoveries and discussions, the subcommittee decided to explore smaller and more affordable technologies that could potentially be applied in the corridor. A summary of additional AGS subcommittee actions follows:

- Meeting with the Federal Railroad Administration
- Meeting with the US High Speed Rail Coalition
- An economic model for AGS in the corridor has not yet been proven viable. Evolving technologies and implementation of high speed rail projects in the United States give us information about what is plausible for the I-70 Mountain Corridor.
- Endpoints of AGS need to connect major metropolitan areas in order to get financial support at the Federal level.
- Ms. Loevlie adds that political will is necessary to make AGS a reality. With political will, the financial feasibility will work itself out.

#### *Environmental Subcommittee*

Ms. Modafferi updates the group on behalf of Ms. Amy Saxton and states that while the subcommittee has been minimally active since the 2020 Reassessment, Ms. Saxton and Ms. Modafferi both look forward to holding an environmental subcommittee meeting in the near future. Ms. Modafferi suggests that with larger projects occurring simultaneously throughout the mountain corridor, the environmental subcommittee has an opportunity to discuss aggregate impacts of these projects.

#### *Capacity*

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Modafferi share slides on behalf of Erik Sabina, who is leading efforts on the Statewide Travel Demand Model. Summary of discussion below:

- The survey team is still working on developing a plan for how to obtain a reasonable sample population that accounts for the uniqueness of mountain communities.
- Weekend traffic is not currently included in the scope of the survey.
- Ms. Kelly points out that the existing Colorado model is activity-based, which is better at predicting and projecting trip generation than other types of models. This model has been extensively used in the state and requires frequent surveying to remain accurate. Erik Sabina's team is working on updating the assumptions that feed into this model.

#### *Communications*

Ms. Bowes gives a brief update for the Communications Subcommittee, which has not recently been active. Mr. Coffin proposes the ideas of making a short informational video on the history of the Collaborative Effort, which CDOT would provide funding for. The video would be somewhat scripted. Ms. Bowes states that the Communications subcommittee would support this effort. Speaker suggestions include the following folks: Russ George, David Nicol, Cindy Neeley, Burt Melcher, Steve Harrelson, Flo Raitano and a representative from the Keystone Policy Center.

## **8. Agency and Corridor Updates**

### *Region 1*

From Ms. Myklebust, read by Abbie Modafferi:

Hello Collaborative Effort. Unfortunately I am unable to be with you in person today, but it is our Region 1 annual employee appreciation BBQ event. As a Region, our people are our number one asset - appreciating the Team is something that is incredibly important to me as a Regional leader. Our snow plow drivers will soon be working long shifts to keep the roads clear and our engineering teams often work night shifts to complete critical construction projects. Today is a short amount of time in the year where appreciating their hard work occurs.

Region 1 has many things occurring from the Peaks to the Plains. CDOT maintains a robust webpage that contains activities occurring along the I-70 Corridor. These projects are listed on the CDOT project webpage and here is a highlight below.

- Mt. Vernon Truck Escape Ramp - soon under construction
- Genesee Wildlife Underpass (near Exit 254) - currently under construction
- I-70 Floyd Hill - package 1 - under construction
- US 40 Floyd Hill roundabouts at County Road 65 and Homestead Road - under construction
- Clear Creek Greenway and County Road 314 - under construction
- I-70 Resurfacing from EJMT to Georgetown - under construction
- EJMT upgrades - under construction

As always please drive slow in the cone zone and remind your family and friends that construction zones are areas to slow down. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to the CE and see you next time.

### *Region 3*

Mr. Smith provides an update on Region 3 projects, including:

- Minor operational and signage changes in Glenwood Canyon. Working on implementing Variable Speed Limit Signs that can be controlled remotely.
- Vacancies for winter operations have decreased slightly but are still a concern. Housing projects and Joint Operations Actions (supports bringing maintenance workers from other areas) help fill the gap.
- Transportation Commission redistribution funding from FHWA- essentially this is extra Federal funding. Dividing and distributing these funds is currently in process, some of which will go to projects on the Mountain Corridor.
- Transportation Regional Values boundaries under review for approval by the TC. The TRVs have not been updated in 30 years. The Inner Mountain district has experienced huge growth in the past few decades and is being considered for review.
- Ms. Berdoulay provides a summary of projects in Region 3.

### *Office of Innovative Mobility*

Ms. Kelly provided an update on the Office of Innovative Mobility and their annual goals. Her presentation will be posted on the Collaborative Effort Website and sent out with these meeting notes. Summary of key points:

- Bustang family of services increased in ridership and has been considered successful.
- 75% of Colorado's highway system now has access to a fast charger for electric vehicles within 30 miles.
- Grants are available for Transportation Management Organizations. Mentioned that I-70 Coalition has been a recipient of grants from the office in the past.

- Seed funding provided to new TMOs to support their growth. Glenwood Springs is a newly funded TMO that received such funds.
- Funding for innovative projects is also available.
- 250 roadside units were recently installed on Colorado's highways.
- CDOT does not intend to own or operate DC fast chargers, but grants to install them are open to local agencies, local businesses, and others.
- Mr. Coffin asks about behavior change and how the office is intending to implement such change. He also asks how the I-70 Mountain Corridor can be considered as one of the corridors for passenger rail to be installed. Ms. Kelly responds by informing the group that the State Rail Plan (2018) is being updated, and the corridors are in the process of being selected.
- Ms. Wilson asks how the NEVI funds are being distributed. Ms. Kelly responds by letting her know that the process is the same. Applicants can apply to the office to receive various different grants.
- Mr. Hall comments that Bustang lacks incentives for riders that are outside of the Denver Metro area. Specifically, he mentions that there is no discount for multi-purchase trips that do not begin or end in Denver. He supports increasing incentives for commuters in other areas outside of the Metro area. Ms. Kelly responds by informing the group about Bustang's Business Plan, which is a document that is in process. Furthermore, CDOT is considering transit opportunities in their 2050 Statewide Plan and how to provide better connections for commuters.
- Driver shortages are a major challenge.
- Mr. Hall asks about expansion of routes in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Ms. Kelly informs him that SB-180 funds Bustang for three additional years. Phase 1 is now complete and adds two round trip routes on each interstate per day in Colorado. 25 additional buses are on order, but there is an 18-month delay on the delivery of the new buses.
- Mr. Hudson asks if CDOT's regional transportation plan shows rail through the I-70 Corridor. Ms. Kelly responds that the statewide plan and the Travel Demand Model does not include rail. She directs Mr. Hudson to the Statewide Rail Plan update.

*FHWA*

Brian Dobbins is no longer with his position at FHWA

*Meeting adjourned around 2:00 PM.*