

I-70 Collaborative Effort
May 30, 2018
Summit County Community and Senior Center, Frisco, CO

Meeting Summary

Members Present: Members: Tim Mauck, Dan Gibbs, Holly Norton, Margaret Bowes, Jill Ryan, Steve Durian, Chris Linsmayer, Dennis Royer, Mary Jane Loevlie, Mike Hillman, Brian Duchinsky, Gary Frey, Greg Hall

Alternates Present: Tracy Sakaguchi, Kelly Galardi, Kevin Burns, Randy Wheelock, Dorothy Ostrogorski

Meeting Notes:

Co-Chair Mauck called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Introductory Remarks and Approval of November Meeting Minutes

After introductions, Co-Chair Mauck reviewed the day's agenda and asked for comments on the November 13, 2017 meeting minutes. Hearing none, Co-Chair Mauck asked for and was given consensus approval for the minutes.

2. 2020 Discussion

Co-Chair Mauck reviewed the 2020 language in the Record of Decision (ROD) and explained that the purpose of the discussion was to begin to get a consensus understanding from the CE on what this language means and what needs to be done for this reassessment.

Vanessa Henderson from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) explained that from her perspective, some form of NEPA re-evaluation is required but the review can be limited in scope. The fundamental question is whether the Purpose and Need statement continues to hold true. If so, the scope of review can potentially be limited to completing a simple form that CDOT uses for these purposes. Vanessa agreed to send the form to the Co-Chairs who in turn agreed to distribute it to the CE members.

Kelly Larson from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) reiterated that opinion and added that it is important to look at conditions in the corridor and determine whether they have changed dramatically. If they haven't, that would also suggest a narrow re-evaluation.

The discussion identified a few of the conditions and developments that could be considered as part of this discussion, including whether a new bore at the Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnels is in the minimum program of improvements and changes in population or traffic patterns and demand.

Co-Chair Mauck concluded the discussion by asking members of the CE to give thought to the issues that the CE should consider and come to the September 2018 meeting prepared to discuss.

3. Projects Update

Steve Harrelson from CDOT updated the CE on the Floyd Hill improvements in order to get confirmation from the CE that the project is on the right track.

He explained that since October, 2017, there have been multiple Project Leadership Team (PLT), Technical Team (TT) and Issues Task Force (ITF) meetings as part of a successful Context Sensitive Solutions process, out of which consensus was reached and a solution identified.

He presented a slide showing the major elements of the proposed action and proceeded to discuss each roadway option that was developed and evaluated. He then discussed other supportive elements to the project, including the frontage road, the greenway, and others. After showing renderings of the proposed action, he outlined next steps for the project, including a public meeting at Clear Creek High School on June 12, a TT meeting on June 27, and continued data collection.

He explained that the necessary funds for the project, estimated to be between \$500 and \$600 million, will be available if Coloradans approve a ballot initiative this fall proposing to increase sales tax to pay for transportation improvements. Assuming passage, an Environmental Assessment will be conducted with an expected decision in spring 2020. Construction would begin after that and the project is expected to take 2 to 3 years. He also explained that there are still open questions, among them whether the additional lane will be a tolled lane.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Co-Chair Mauck asked the CE to confirm whether there is consensus support for the direction of the Floyd Hill project and the CE confirmed.

4. Westbound PPSL

Steve Harrelson gave an update on the Westbound Peak Period Shoulder Lane Project (WB PPSL). He explained that the TT and the PLT have reached consensus on a direction that includes a 4' right shoulder, two 12' general purpose lanes, 11' Peak Period Shoulder Lane and a 2' Shy distance to the median barrier. This approach will not work in about 22 percent of the project because of narrow bridges, high rockwall blasting and a desire to minimize median impacts. In those areas, the width will be narrower.

He explained that FHWA cannot say this approach is in compliance with the Record of Decision until it is formally submitted but that the agency has indicated that it is likely to conform.

He explained that Clear Creek County asked for some assurances in the NEPA documentation that demonstrate that the project is interim and operational in nature and that CDOT has concurred with those assurances. Specifically, CDOT has committed to including in the Categorical Exclusion a mutually agreed upon definition of "interim", a limitation of the use of the lane, an acknowledgement that this project cannot and will not function as, or be converted to, the maximum program of improvements, a commitment to future visioning of the maximum build out for this road section with Clear Creek County and other stakeholders and a restated commitment to the CSS process and Aesthetic Guidelines.

Furthermore, the Categorical Exclusion will contain reference to the companion projects that are committed to in the ROD or are mitigations for impacts, including:

- Frontage road: The completion of the construction CR 314 to Idaho Springs.

- Greenway: Correction of the surfacing of the Greenway from the Game Check Park east to Hidden Valley, design and construction of the connection of the Greenway from the Game Check Station to the Idaho Springs trail, and a feasibility study for the Greenway on the north of the interstate, or south of the interstate but north of the creek, from Downieville to Lawson.
- Construction of a bridge at Fall River as advance mitigation for the EB and WB PPSL restriction of multi modal circulation.

Additional assurances that will be in the Categorical Exclusion document include:

- A commitment that discussions about the PPSL operations, from concept of operations through the operations plan and the terms of the agreement implementing it, will be open to participation by stakeholders including the High-Performance Transportation Enterprise and Clear Creek County prior to the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between FHWA and CDOT.
- Regardless of the contracting technique, the specifications for the project will include a mutually agreed upon communications plan, a commitment to the PLT/TT process throughout construction, a commitment to the Aesthetic Guidelines, and adherence to agreed-upon visual impact modifications and drainage features. The TT will be permitted to review and comment on the specifications.

CDOT provided clarification to several questions or issues raised by members of the CE:

- Construction is expected to commence in the spring of 2019 and would be expected to take the better part of a year.
- The language in the operating agreement for EB PPSL that limits use of the lane to 100 days a year will likely apply to Westbound.
- The Transportation Commission is evaluating this project and will determine in June or July whether it qualifies as a Senate Bill 1 project that could be funded with SB1 funds.
- There was some discussion about which category of exclusions this project fell under. Kelly Larson agreed to provide that answer to the CE.
- There was also some discussion about whether mitigation and a CatEx are compatible concepts.

At the conclusion of the discussion, there was general consensus that this project is going in the right direction, subject to understanding what category of exclusion applied, a determination that it qualifies as a Cat Ex, and further clarification on the apparent inconsistency between a Cat Ex and the requirement for mitigation.

5. Tech Briefing

Peter Kozinski of CDOT gave a Rapid Speed Mobility overview, focusing on Hyperloop and Arrivo, two technologies with which CDOT has partnered. He noted that the Advanced Guideway System study had concluded that high speed transit in the corridor was not financially feasible at this time but that these technologies are putting a new light on that issue. He noted that CDOT is currently conducting a Rapid Speed Travel Benefits and Opportunities Study and that Arrivo and Hyperloop are also conducting their own feasibility studies. All three studies should be

completed in the fall of 2018, after which CDOT and the CE will have a clearer understanding of the potential for high speed transit in the corridor.

6. **Olympic Briefing**

Tamra Ward of Taloma Partners, a firm providing consulting services to the Colorado Olympic Exploratory Committee, gave an update on the possibility of a Colorado bid for a future Winter Olympics. She noted that the Olympic Exploratory Committee had recently completed its process of asking whether Colorado could and should submit a bid. The Committee submitted its report to the Governor and the Mayor who were expected to announce their decision in the coming days. She noted that an Olympics could be a catalyst to achieving meaningful and permanent solutions to the congestion on the I-70 Mountain Corridor.

7. **Ballot Initiative Update**

Jake Martin of _____ gave an update on the proposed ballot initiative to raise sales tax with the added revenue going to meet Colorado's unmet transportation needs. He explained the history of transportation funding and how it has not kept pace with the need and that a broad and diverse statewide coalition was formed to test options to raise additional revenue for transportation, finally settling on the sales tax. He explained how the funds would be spent if voters approved, listing out the projects in the mountain corridor that would be funded, including:

- I-70 West Vail Pass Improvements: Construction of a third lane in both directions to increase safety and mobility -- cost \$225 million
- Floyd Hill to Twin Tunnels Widening: Widening to three lanes westbound on I-70 from Floyd Hill to the Twin Tunnels – cost \$480 million
- Frisco to Silverthorne Auxiliary Lanes: Addition of an auxiliary lane between Frisco and Silverthorne – cost \$16 million
- I-70 Glenwood Canyon Bridge Repair: Replacement of bridge railing for improved safety and rockfall mitigation through the canyon – cost \$50 million
- I-70 Palisade to De Beque: Reconstruction and realignment of curves and other safety measures – cost \$71 million

8. **Economic Benefits Study**

Patty Silverstein of Development Research Partners discussed the study she is about to get underway at the request of the CE on the potential economic impact of high speed transit in the mountain corridor. Her approach to this study is similar to a study she conducted approximately 8 years prior on the cost of congestion in the corridor with a significant difference being the need to talk with residents and businesses in the corridor to better understand the impacts of high speed transit on communities in the corridor and on their local tax revenues and economies. She noted that the study will be technology agnostic. She concluded that she would be reaching out to CE members to talk further about the study.

9. **I-70 Coalition Update**

Margaret Bowes of the I-70 Coalition gave an update on a new initiative the Coalition has undertaken. It is designed to take advantage of the interest in the Olympic discussion to raise awareness of the plan for the I-70 Mountain Corridor – the Preferred Alternative – and the fact that it is multi modal.

10. **Conclusion**

Tim Mauck drew the meeting to a close at 2:00 PM.