

Areas of Special Attention are locations or stretches along the Interstate 70 (I-70) Mountain Corridor that have been identified as having multiple or unique issues. These areas were identified by stakeholders during the Aesthetic Working Group meetings.

Addressing the various issues and integrating them into design solutions requires further understanding of stakeholder concerns, the issues, and some of the suggested solutions. These concerns, issues, and suggested solutions (when available) have been recorded and provided in a report for each Area of Special Attention.



How to Use This Report

The intent of this report is to provide to planners and designers of the I-70 Mountain Corridor a record of the discussions focused on the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area of Special Attention. This report also includes a description of the area, the goals and objectives for the area, relevant plans that must be reviewed, and the suggested process for moving forward.

This report is not an exhaustive list of alternatives and may not include recent comments and issues.

For all studies along the I-70 Mountain Corridor, a primary source of information must be the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The Georgetown and Silver Plume Area includes the PEIS elements of the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) and planned highway improvements. Further, the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area has historic resources protected by the 106 Programmatic Agreement; is in close proximity to Clear Creek, which is addressed in the Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program (SWEEP) Memorandum of Understanding; and is adjacent to a wildlife area addressed by the A Landscape Level Inventory of Valued Ecosystems (ALIVE) Memorandum of Understanding. These agreements can be found on the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Web site under Corridor Guidance.

WHY GEORGETOWN AND SILVER PLUME IS AN AREA OF SPECIAL ATTENTION

- *Historic character*
- *I-70 bisects Silver Plume*
- *Future development opportunities*
- *Dramatic views*
- *Proximity to Clear Creek*
- *Traffic congestion*
- *Needed interchange improvements*
- *Proposed AGS*
- *Proposed I-70 improvements*

Issues and Proposed Improvements

Issues at Georgetown and Silver Plume effect not only the transportation facility but the surrounding community. Steep grades and sharp corners create congestion for travelers, as traffic numbers increase over the next 30 years, this problem will only intensify.

Cut and fill slopes above Georgetown present safety and maintenance issues, as well as visual clutter for slope stabilization measures. The slope and surrounding topography limit highway improvements.

The Silver Plume community is bisected by the alignment of I-70 creating connectivity issues within the community and limiting highway improvements.

Proposed I-70 improvements include Advanced Guideway System (AGS) and a potential station location at Georgetown (exit 228).

Georgetown and Silver Plume Information

The Georgetown and Silver Plume Area was identified as an Area of Special Attention by the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Aesthetic Working Group.

Area Limits and Description

The Georgetown and Silver Plume Area is generally bound by Douglas Mountain (mile marker 230) on the east and Silver Plume (exit 225) on the west. These limits (mile marker 230 to mile marker 225) were used to focus the discussion.

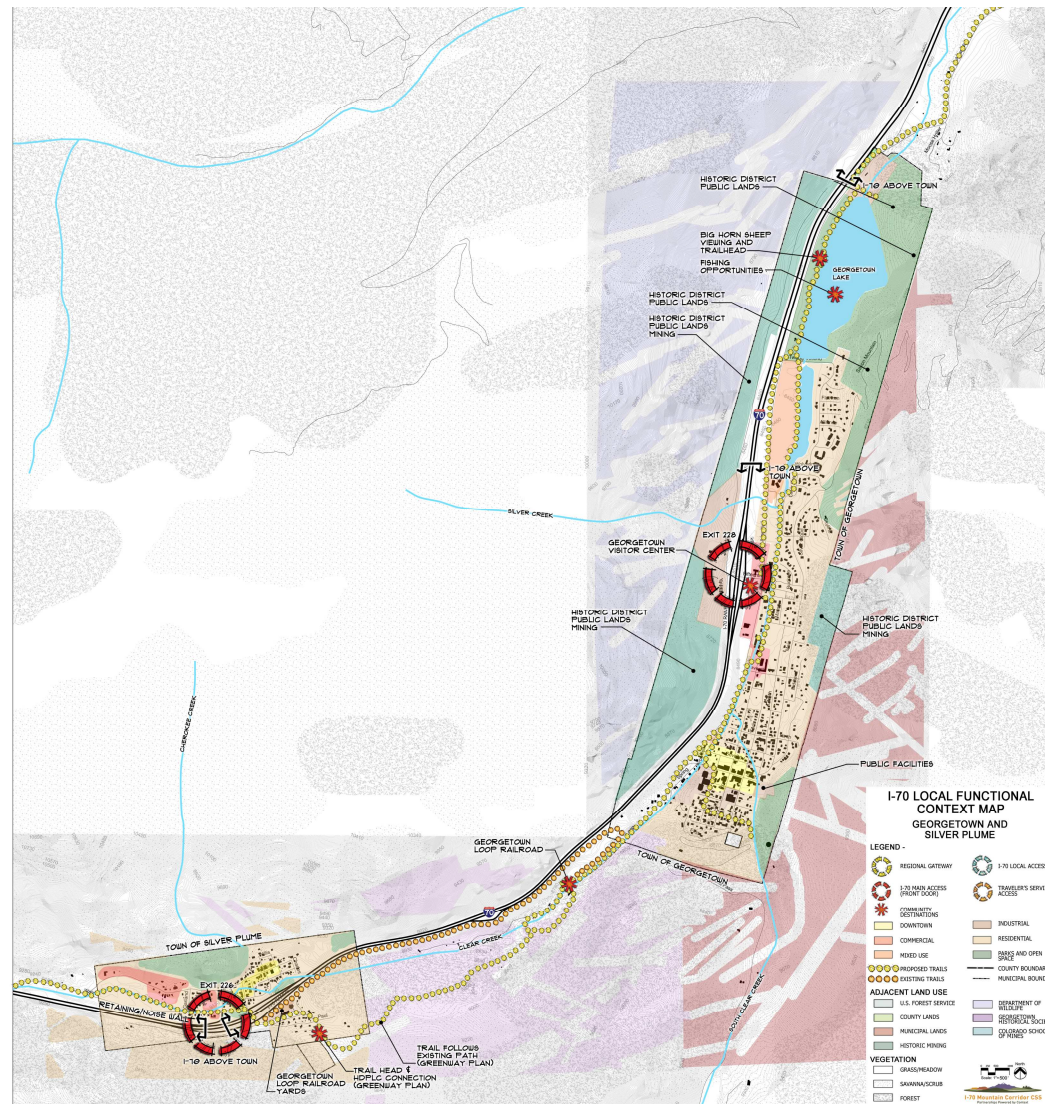


Georgetown looking east

Georgetown and Silver Plume Junction Context

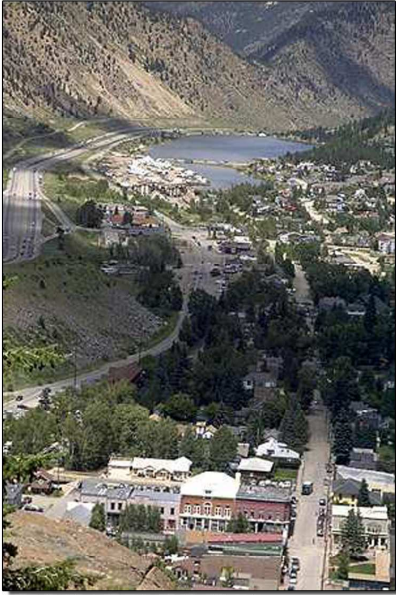
Important contextual features and places within Georgetown and Silver Plume create a unique context in and around the area. These include the Georgetown Loop Railroad, Georgetown Lake, Georgetown and Silver Plume National Historic Landmark District, historic buildings in Georgetown and Silver Plume, proximity to Clear Creek, mining history and mine tailing piles, the Visitor's Center, and local businesses. The functional aspects of Georgetown and Silver Plume are graphically represented on the Functional Context Map, which illustrates the layout and operational aspects of the area -- including land use, circulation and access interrelationships, and operational priorities.

Georgetown and Silver Plume Functional Context Map



GEORGETOWN AND SILVER PLUME- AREA OF SPECIAL ATTENTION REPORT
MOUNTAIN MINERAL BELT

MARCH 2011



VIEW EAST ACROSS GEORGETOWN



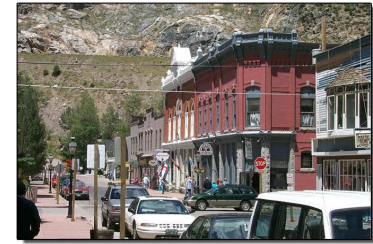
GEORGETOWN VISITOR'S CENTER



GEORGETOWN LOOP RAILROAD



VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE IN SILVER PLUME



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN



VIEW SOUTHEAST ACROSS GEORGETOWN



HISTORIC STORE FRONT IN SILVER PLUME



SILVER PLUME CITY LIMIT



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN



GEORGETOWN/SILVER PLUME HISTORIC SOCIETY



HISTORIC STORE FRONT IN SILVER PLUME

**GEORGETOWN
 AND SILVER
 PLUME
 CONTEXT
 PHOTOGRAPHS**



Transportation Vision Elements to Be Considered

Future improvements and studies in the I-70 Mountain Corridor through the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area should consider each of the elements outlined below. Terraced roadway alternatives should be considered on hillsides to minimize environmental impacts and create a better community interface and development through the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area.

- Advanced Guideway System (AGS)
 - **Potential Station Locations**
 - Georgetown (exit 228)
- I-70 Improvements
 - **Interchange Locations**
 - Georgetown (exit 228)

Goals and Objectives for the Area

- Provide efficient interchange configurations to free space for development and better incorporate the natural environment.
- Mitigate unfavorable visual appearances from both the community and roadway perspectives with the use of buffers and transitions between community uses.
- Allow no further encroachment into Clear Creek.
- Restore existing rock faces and unstable slopes in Clear Creek and Silver Creek.
- Provide open structures over creeks for wildlife passage. (This is a Wildlife Linkage Interference Zone -- LIZ #11.)
- Protect landmark focal view to historic Georgetown, Georgetown Lake, and Georgetown Loop Railroad.
- Provide sound attenuation concepts other than free-standing walls to protect neighborhoods.
- Minimize economic impacts to the communities.
- Preserve areas of high visual value or recreational value by restricting the stockpile of construction materials in these locations.
- Improve the consistency in design and color schemes for roadway structures (sound walls, retaining walls, barriers, guardrails, bridges, and wildlife fencing).

- Preserve major site resources and features such as topography, views, unique vegetation, geological features, lakes and wetlands, and other qualities native to the site and its surroundings.
- Preserve sites of historic value.

Design and Engineering Guidance

I-70 Mountain Corridor Design Criteria - Overview

The following overarching principles apply to the entire I-70 Mountain Corridor. These principles are supported by the Aesthetic Guidance, which is divided into Design Segments and which presents specific objectives and strategies. The principles are provided to the future managers and designers of transportation facilities within the corridor to guide the desired outcomes of individual projects.

A. Corridor Design Character

Elegantly engineered transportation facilities will reflect function, simplicity, and integrated design throughout the corridor. The landscape under, adjacent to, and beyond the structures supporting transportation facilities shall be rugged, organic, and made of natural materials. Designers will not attempt to make facilities falsely appear natural with the application of materials. The linkage of land and transportation features will be visualized as a single design effort, rendering a cohesive quality for the entire corridor. The geometry of the road should maintain a continuous flow and fit existing land forms.

B. Integrated and Complete Design

All facilities included in a project -- whether primary or auxiliary to the function of the corridor -- will be identified, programmed, and conceptually designed prior to completion of 30% design. This will include consideration of the entire construction disturbance zone. A comprehensive design is necessary in order to plan for all construction disturbances and create an integrated, sustainable corridor that accounts for each project. Aesthetic objectives and functionality are optimized when all elements are included in the design at inception. Integrated design includes considerations such as drainage and hydrology, water quality, wildlife crossings, rock cuts, life cycle costs, and long-term maintenance.

C. Partnerships to Create the Corridor

Corridor design will include consideration of a buffer and transition area between transportation facilities and community-oriented land uses. The landscape planting, earthwork, structural solutions, and location of the transportation facilities need to be fully examined in order to avoid potential visual and scenic impacts, buffer highway noise, and preserve community character and patterns. Road and trail connections and multi-modal travel corridor opportunities should be considered. Reinforcement of alternative methods of travel such as pedestrian and biking paths should be incorporated and coordinated with community and recreational planning efforts.

D. Using the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)

The I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS contains critical background and reference information foundational to design. The PEIS should be reviewed throughout the entire design process for insight into the detailed assessments of various corridor aspects. This will ensure alignment and consistency with the analyses and recommendations determined by the PEIS.

E. Corridor-Wide Projects

Projects that will be implemented across the entire corridor have the potential to create elegant consistency. These projects should be approached with an additional level of care and scrutiny, and should address the ideas set forth in the Aesthetic Guidance for all four corridor Design Segments. The goal should be a project that yields an overall aesthetic benefit to the corridor.

Engineering the I-70 Mountain Corridor

Design Criteria

Seven required Engineering Design Criteria have been developed to address the unique characteristics of the I-70 Mountain Corridor. These criteria are intended to influence the alignment of the transportation facilities and are an essential component of the engineering design.

The Engineering Design Criteria have been developed and adopted by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) because they represent an approach that enhances safety, mobility, and sustainability while reducing maintenance through design and engineering.

Design Criteria Categories

The following Design Criteria categories direct the development of both I-70 and the Advanced Guideway Systems (AGS)*:

- Design Speed
- Alignment
- Slope Cut and Fill
- Disturbance
- Rock Cut
- Bridge Structures
- Sound Attenuation

*As the AGS for the I-70 Mountain Corridor is further defined, developed, and refined, the criteria may be updated to match the chosen technology.

Application of Design Criteria

All of the Design Criteria must be met in Life Cycle Phase 2: Project Planning. Alternatives may be refined in Life Cycle Phase 3: Project Design, when the designer is able to determine which criteria may require an exception and why. The one exception for this requirement is

in Areas of Special Attention, where a design exception may be considered in Phase 2 due to the complexity of the issues involved.

Federal, state, and local agencies will neither officially review nor grant design exceptions until Life Cycle Phase 3: Project Design.

Project Leadership Team Role

The Project Leadership Team (PLT) must be apprised of the Design Criteria being used on its I-70 Mountain Corridor project.

Justification for any criteria that would not be met as determined during design must be presented, discussed, and agreed upon by the PLT. Consideration will be given to the I-70 Mountain Corridor Core Values; safety; operation; compatibility with the overall network; character of traffic; cost implications; and impacts to scenic, historic, and environmental features. Other variables to consider include the amount of change to the criteria, its effect on other criteria, and any additional impacts that one change may make.

Design Exception Process

Due to challenges presented within the I-70 Mountain Corridor, a situation may arise in which the existing Design Criteria cannot be met, or in which the impact of meeting the criteria would be too great. Should this be the case, a design exception must be requested. Design exceptions may assist a designer in finding a transportation solution that balances impacts to scenic, historic, and culturally or environmentally sensitive areas while still providing for safety and mobility. Designers should think innovatively, consider the Core Values, and take into account the flexibility available to them when designing a transportation solution for the I-70 Mountain Corridor.

Design exceptions may be granted for the following justifications:

- Complementing surrounding physical characteristics
- Enhancing safety
- Increasing capacity
- Reducing costs
- Protecting the environment
- Preserving historic and scenic elements
- Interfacing with multiple modes of transportation
- Utilizing new technology or innovative approaches
- Doing the right thing

I-70 Mountain Corridor Design Criteria

Design Criteria		Remarks
Design Speed	<p>For I-70, 65 MPH design speed. For Advanced Guideway System (AGS), dependent on technology.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Posted speed of 55 MPH on I-70. 2) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 13 controlling criteria and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Design Criteria apply. 3) Technology-appropriate Design Criteria will apply to AGS.
Alignment	<p>Eastbound highway lanes, westbound highway lanes, and the AGS will be designed as separate, independent alignments.</p> <p>The three alignments will maintain no less than the existing median width or create a clear zone that does not require a guardrail or barrier.</p> <p>No loss of existing vertical separation of highway lanes will occur in any section.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provides a recovery zone. 2) Median required for snow removal and maintenance. 3) Separation prevents headlight glare, improving safety and maintenance conditions. 4) Separate alignments will adapt to topographic conditions. 5) See Illustration 1 for highway cross section.
Slope Cut and Fill	<p>Limits of physical disturbance shall be less than 40 vertical feet from the top of the pavement or rail platform to the farthest edge of cut or fill.</p> <p>Cut and fill embankment will not exceed a slope of 2.5:1 (H:V).</p> <p>All roadway retaining walls over 12' in height will be installed below the elevation of the roadway.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Planting, re-vegetation, and restoration of slopes will be successful with flatter slope embankment. 2) Slopes will be more easily maintained and erosion and sediment transport will be manageable. 3) See Illustrations 1 and 2.

Design Criteria		Remarks
Disturbance	<p>Construction will be fully contained with areas of historic or current disturbance if no centerline change occurs.</p> <p>New alignments must be consistent with Design Criteria for slope cut and fill.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Existing maintenance problems will be resolved or improved by staying within the existing limits of disturbance. 2) Construct without increasing the disturbance zone.
Rock Cut	<p>A geotechnical analysis report will be completed and reviewed prior to any proposal to create rock cuts for an alignment.</p> <p>If rock cuts are required, naturalized custom cuts methods are required. Rock cuts shall be constructed using scatter blasting techniques and provide for adequate rockfall area at the base.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Allows for understanding of rock formations at an early planning stage to potentially avoid rock cuts. 2) Avoids rockfall mesh and reduces maintenance. 3) Scatter blasting techniques provide a naturalized cut and allow safety from rockfall to be incorporated in the design.
Bridge Structures	<p>Bridge structures will not utilize slope paving techniques and will require a closed-end abutment design with a minimum vertical height of 8', measured below the bridge girder.</p> <p>Bridge embankments shall be 2.1:1 maximum.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Avoids the maintenance of slope paving. 2) Provides a method of incorporating re-vegetation and landscape into bridge slopes. 3) A clear span over streams and drainages avoids water quality construction impacts and reduces maintenance and pier scour. 4) Provides benefits below bridges for vehicle clearance, wildlife crossing, solar access, and re-vegetation success. 5) See Illustrations 3 and 4.

Design Criteria		Remarks
Sound Attenuation	<p>Sound buffering and attenuation will be designed in conjunction with the horizontal and vertical alignment to eliminate the need for noise mitigation.</p> <p>Mitigation, if required, will integrate landforms, landscape planting buffers, and walls.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Design can minimize or eliminate additional noise mitigation. 2) If sound walls are required, see Illustrations 5 and 6.

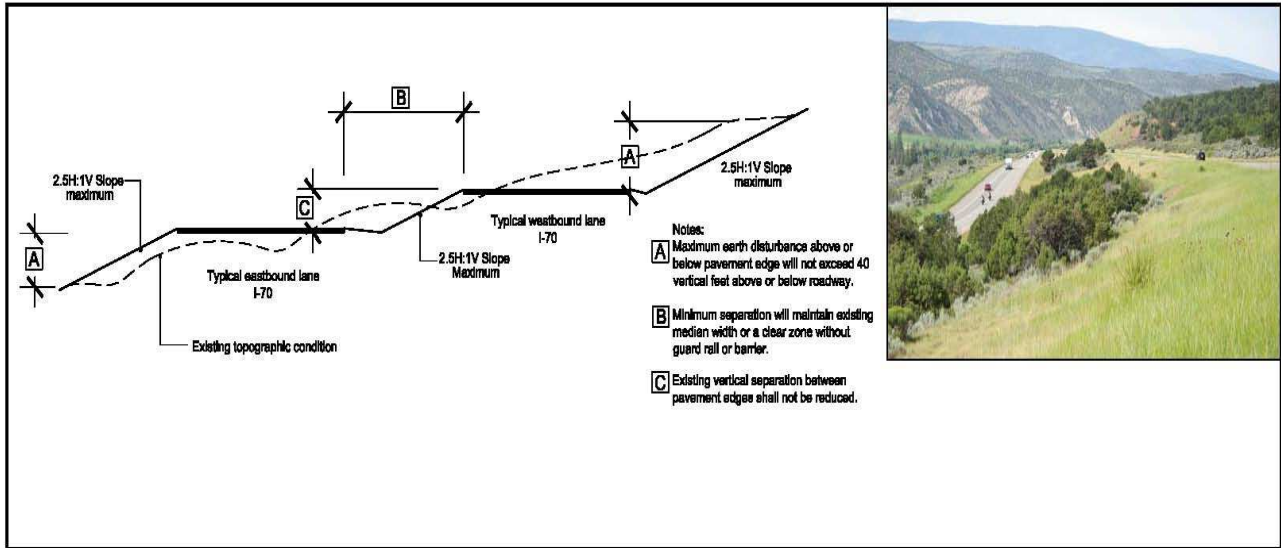


ILLUSTRATION 1: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR ALIGNMENT AND CUT AND FILL

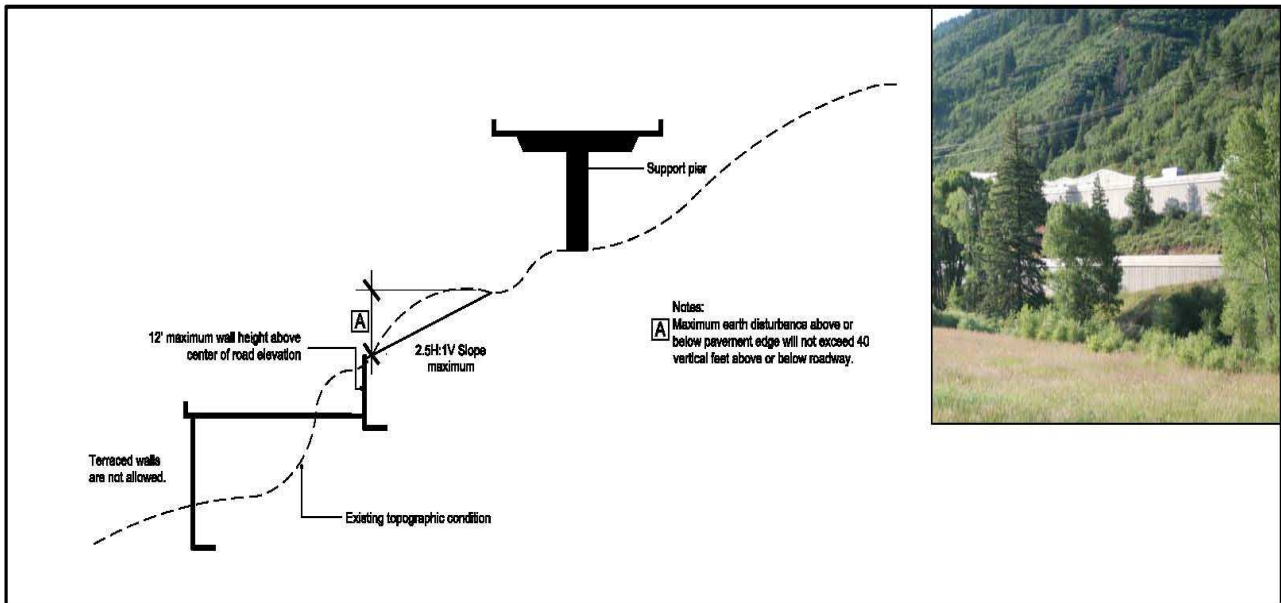


ILLUSTRATION 2: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR CUT AND FILL

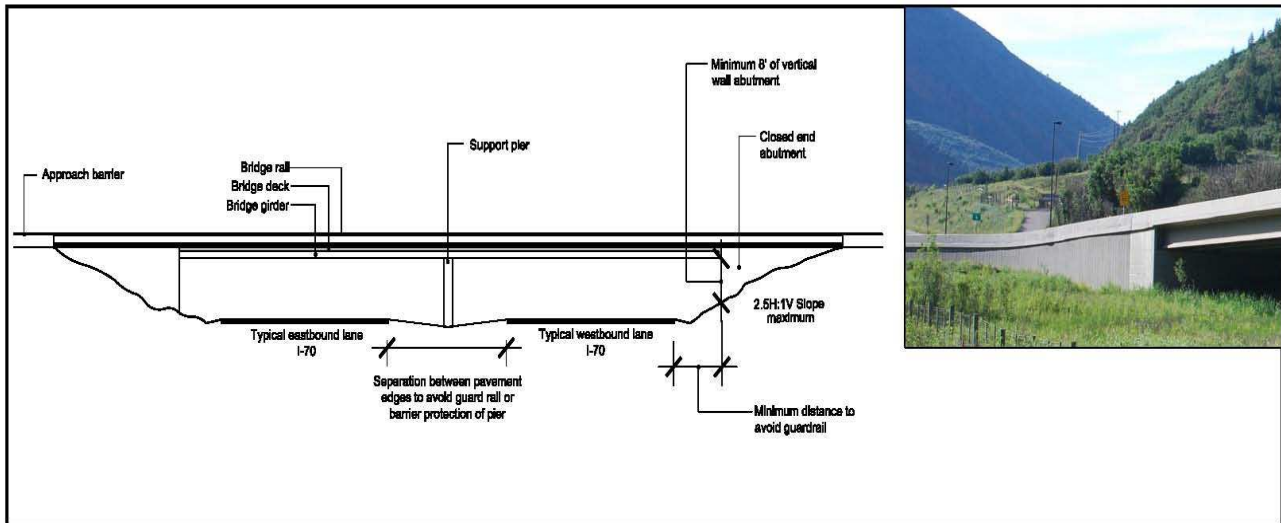


ILLUSTRATION 3: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR BRIDGE STRUCTURES OVER I-70

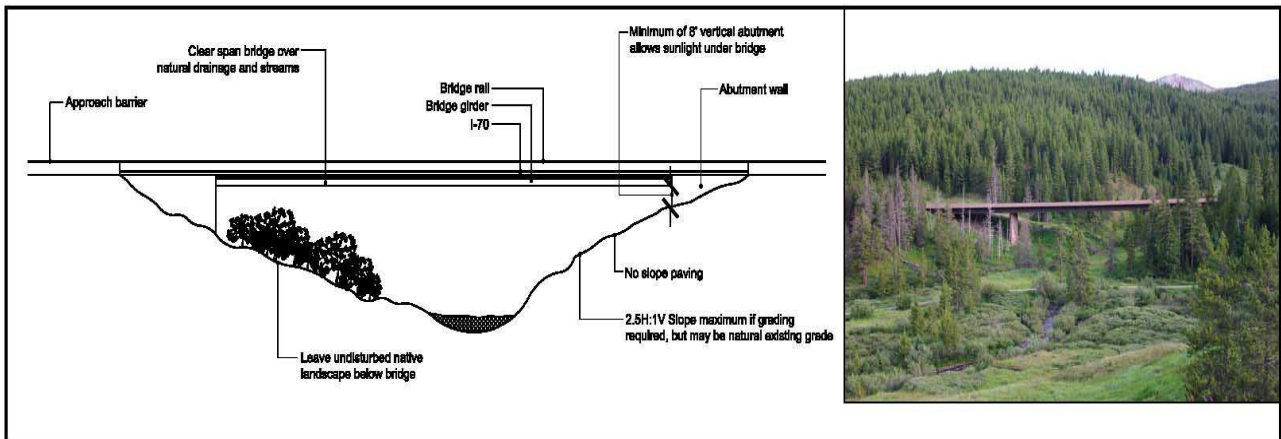


ILLUSTRATION 4: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR I-70 BRIDGE OVER NATURAL FEATURES OR OTHER ROADWAYS

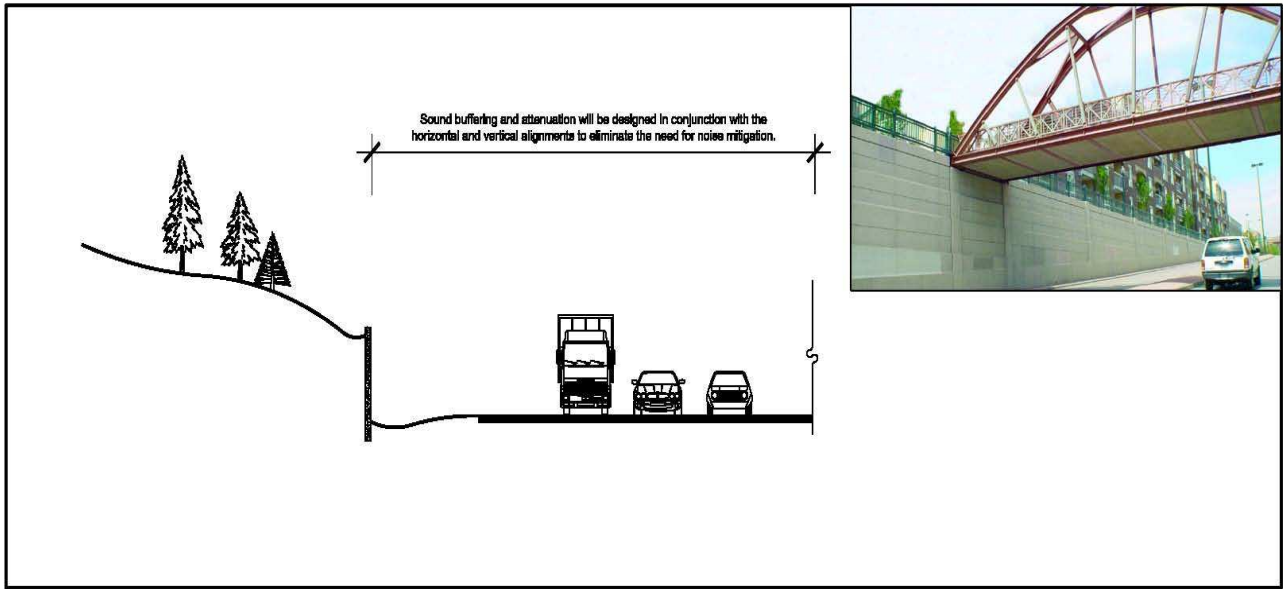


ILLUSTRATION 5: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR SOUND ATTENUATION

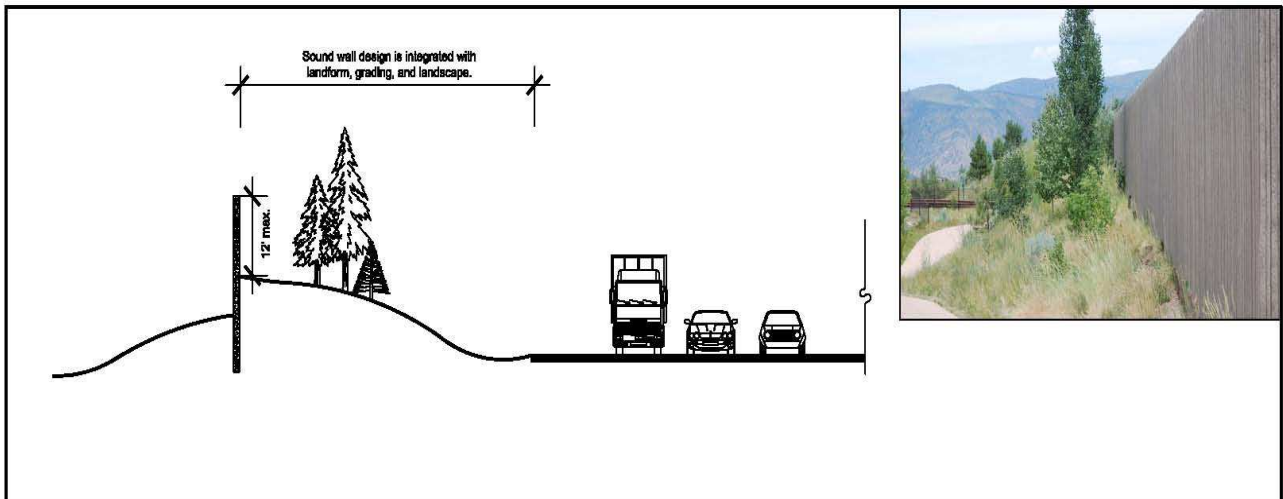


ILLUSTRATION 6: DESIGN CRITERIA FOR SOUND WALL DESIGN

Who Should Be Involved?

Stakeholders in the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area include citizens, business owners, property owners, organizations, travelers, transporters, and agencies. Future studies, planning, and design work should continue to involve not only these stakeholders, but also planning, design, landscape architecture, operations, environment, public process, and communications experts. This involvement and collaboration will allow the stakeholders to look for common ground and provide opportunities to develop partnerships.

The following is an initial list of agencies and organizations. Additional stakeholders and partners should be involved as they are identified.

- Georgetown and Silver Plume community members
- Clear Creek County
- Georgetown Historical Society
- Georgetown Loop Railroad
- Georgetown and Silver Plume National Historic Landmark District
- Town of Georgetown staff
- Town of Silver Plume staff
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- US Forest Service
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Historical Society
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Northwest Council of Governments
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Motor Carriers
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Audubon Society
- Colorado Rail Passenger Association
- OmniTrax
- Trout Unlimited
- Colorado Preservation Inc.
- ECO-Resolutions
- Center for Native Ecosystems
- Colorado Association of Transit Agencies

Other Relevant Materials to Be Included in the Process

The following studies and plans should be considered in continuing work in the Georgetown and Silver Plume Area. This is an initial list and provides a starting point. Additional studies and plans should be included and referenced as they are identified.

- I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
- I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions Guidance
- I-70 Mountain Corridor 106 Programmatic Agreement
- Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program (SWEEP) MOU
- A Landscape Level Inventory of Valued Ecosystem Components (ALIVE) MOU
- I-70 Coalition Land Use Planning Study for Rail Transit Alignment Throughout the I-70 Corridor Clear
- Clear Creek County Master Plan
- Clear Creek Greenway Plan
- Rocky Mountain Rail Authority High Speed Rail Feasibility Study
- I-70 Mountain Corridor Chain Station Plan

The studies listed below have not begun or are not complete at the time of this report. When completed, these studies will provide insights and input for future work.

- CDOT Statewide Transit Plan
- CDOT Statewide Bicycle Plan
- Interchange Safety Study
- I-70 AGS Tier 2 Study