



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT:	21685 I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes
PURPOSE:	Technical Team Meeting #6
DATE HELD:	August 27, 2018
LOCATION:	Miller Ranch Community Center, 25 Mill Loft Road, Edwards, CO
ATTENDING:	<p>Joel Barnett, FHWA Martha Miller, Program Engineer, CDOT Region 3 John Kronholm, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3 Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3 David Cesark, Environmental Manager, CDOT Region 3 Patrick Chavez, Program Manager, CDOT HQ Randy McIntosh, CDOT Maintenance Drew Stewart, Design Team, CDOT Region 3 Matt Klein, US Forest Service Ben Gerdes, Eagle County Dick Cleveland, Representing Vail Town Council Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Association Alison Michael, FWS Shannon Anderson, Bicycle Colorado Pete Wadden, Town of Vail Chad Salli, TOV Engineering Taylor Elm, Colorado Parks & Wildlife Michelle Cowardin, Colorado Parks & Wildlife Siri Roman, Eagle River Water & Sanitation District (ERWSD) Larissa Read, SE Group on behalf of ERWSD Richard Duran, Colorado State Patrol Emmalee Blender, CDOT Region 3 Traffic Ken Harbert, CDOT Region 3 Traffic David Singer, CDOT Environmental Section Manager Scott Jones, Colorado Snowmobile Association Don Connors, Wood Stacy Tschuor, David Evans & Associates Kara Swanson, Consultant Environmental Task Lead, David Evans and Associates</p>
COPIES:	Attendees

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions & Agenda

- a. Kara Swanson did introductions, covered the agenda, and described actions taken since the last Technical Team (TT) meeting
- b. Meeting Purpose and Goals
 - i. Ensure that the team has an understanding of the process
 - ii. Recap of Process
 1. The charter has been signed and adhered to.
 2. The Purpose and Need will be refined through the process
 3. The team reviews the proposed alternatives
 4. The team has been gathering information for environmental, water quality and public input issues.



5. Update: John and Leah gathered trail user information by handing out surveys in the field
6. There will be another public meeting for input on design options.
7. There will be future opportunities during design and construction for additional CSS processes and input.

2. Draft Alternatives Review

- a. Kara introduced alternatives
- b. There were six alternatives presented at the last Technical Team meeting. Kara provided an update on what had changed since then.
 - i. **No Action**
 - ii. **Curve Modifications & ITS Improvements**
 1. This will include current 2 lane configuration
 - iii. **Auxiliary Lanes with Reduced Shoulders**
 1. This alternative was eliminated but full shoulder alternative was redefined to include reduced shoulders when needed
 2. Karen added that there would be criteria that would implement reduced shoulders and they could not be added to the project without further input from the team.
 - iv. **Auxiliary Lanes with Full Shoulders**
 1. Includes 3 full width lanes with standard shoulders.
 - v. **Operational Lanes with Reduced Shoulders**
 1. Includes 2 full lanes with a 16' shoulder that could be utilized as an additional lane with a 4' shoulder when needed for operations.
 - vi. **Westbound I-70 Realignment**
 1. Complete westbound realignment of I-70

3. Level 1 Screening Results

- a. Stacy described the Level 1 screening results.
 - i. **Purpose and Need Criteria (Level 1)**
 1. The team discovered fatal flaws in the alternatives by answering the following questions:
 2. Safety – Does the alternative reduce crashes?
 3. Operations
 - a. Does alternative improve flow?
 - b. Does the alternative reduce full closures?
 - c. Does alternative help emergency response?
 4. Enhanced Environment
 - a. Does the alternative maintain (or improve) existing wildlife connectivity
 - b. Does the alternative include a trail relocation?
 5. Collaborative Decision Making
 - a. Is the alternative consistent with the ROD
 - b. Siri asked if the alternative needs to match the ROD recommendations.
 - i. Kara said the team is trying to continue the process started with the ROD



- ii. Karen did not want to just follow guidance from the ROD, but confirm that the ROD follows the decision from the CSS process.
 - iii. Kara said that if any alternative had failed the screening in only one area that would be a trigger to investigate the problem but not eliminate the alternative.
 - 6. Larissa asked if the team could elaborate on the enhanced environment connectivity criteria and why the criteria say “maintain” when the Core Value includes “enhance”.
 - a. Kara stated that maintaining existing wildlife connectivity through the corridor is the bare minimum the project wants to meet - the team is committed also providing enhancements as the preferred alternative is refined.
- ii. **Results**
 - 1. Stacy reviewed results from the screening (see screening matrix).
 - 2. **No Action (Retained as baseline)**
 - a. Dick asked about the trail relocation if it was necessary for it to be moved. Is it an eliminating criteria?
 - 3. **Curve Modifications & ITS Improvements (Eliminated)**
 - a. Does not meet purpose and need.
 - b. Inconsistent with the ROD.
 - 4. **Auxiliary Lanes with Full Shoulders (Retained)**
 - a. Siri said that public is concerned that 3 lanes would increase driver’s speed.
 - i. Stacy stated that crashes along corridor are mainly related to lack of recovery area, particularly during weather events. Those that are not are related to speed differential with slow-moving vehicles due to the curves and the grades. 3 lanes will allow for more room to recover and to maneuver around slower vehicles, enhancing safety.
 - b. Michelle said wildlife connectivity is not being maintained between MM185-190.
 - i. Kara confirmed that the majority of the current connectivity is maintained through enhancing the existing bridge locations.
 - ii. Karen emphasized that CDOT and FHWA is committed to maintaining or enhancing natural environment in this area.
 - iii. Kara discussed that upper pass connectivity could be discussed as a design option for the level 2 process.
 - iv. Michelle would like to see this added as a success factor.
 - v. Dick said that connectivity should be a “no” for this alternative since it isn’t maintained for the upper section.
 - vi. David Singer asked if this criterion is being addressed sufficiently for a Level 1 screening and needs to be



looked at as a design option further along in the process.

- vii. Kara suggested adding a note that only existing connection paths were considered.
- viii. Karen noted that we haven't advanced design to that point just yet and don't have those answers at this point. She suggested following the original criteria that the existing connectivity will be maintained.
- ix. Dick said with 6 lanes to cross (as opposed to the existing 4) wildlife connectivity would be impacted
- x. Stacy said that the criteria could be changed with a note that the upper pass will require additional mitigation to satisfy the requirement.
- xi. Karen agreed.
- xii. Dick noted that if crash data is analyzed, it could be non-issue due to low number of interactions
- xiii. John confirmed that this is one of the lowest areas in the state for wildlife interactions.

5. Operational Lanes with Curve Modifications (Eliminated)

- a. Does not meet purpose and need
- b. Inconsistent with the ROD
- c. Discussion
 - i. Scott asked does the recreation core value include the rest area or does it only concern the path?
 - ii. Stacy said that the criterion only included the bike path and the rest area is not included.
 - iii. Dick asked about how the project would end at the top of the pass (how the lanes would shift from 3 to 2)?
 - iv. Stacy confirmed that the project would drop the extra lane at the rest area exit ramp.

6. Westbound I-70 Realignment (Eliminated)

- a. Does not meet purpose and need
 - i. Does not allow for emergency response
 - ii. Does not maintain wildlife connectivity.
- b. Inconsistent with the ROD
- c. Emmalee asked about the automated closure concept. She is concerned that the technology is not available for a full automated closure.
- d. Stacy said the project is planning for when the technology is available. Currently this would be the lane open/closed signage similar to those installed on US 36.

7. More comments

- a. Dick said that Black Gore Creek is specifically mentioned in the success factors and we should add Gore Creek as well.

4. Next Steps for Alternatives

- a. Level 2 Screening



- i. There will not be a Level 2 screening since a preferred alternative has already been identified.
 - ii. The design option process will continue to evaluate constraints and potential mitigation.
- b. Design Options Considerations
 - i. Kara said the core values will have impacts on the options considered and that the Level 2 criteria would still be used in the design option considerations.
 - ii. Next TT meeting (TT#7) will consider options.
- c. Discussion
 - i. Michelle noted that ALIVE has one meeting scheduled and wondered if that would be enough to reach goals of the ALIVE group.
 - ii. John said ideally we would cover the pertinent issues with one meeting.
 - iii. Karen asked what the goals are. Ideally, we want to end with solutions, or identify areas that need to be considered. We have discussed this as a team and what level of design will we be at when these meetings take place.
 - iv. Martha added that other wildlife work is going on in the area and this is driving how the process will go. However, we are trying to balance input and design.
 - v. Karen noted this is the time for the CSS and EA processes and design will come after. We will have ongoing discussion about these issues in design.
 - vi. Michelle noted that due to retirements, she and Taylor will be taking on a lot of the work for CPW.

5. Core Values Review

- a. Kara introduced the topic by noting feedback from stakeholders that the Core Values could use additions and changes regarding water quality and sustainability.
 - i. The project team suggested not editing the Core Values, but instead adding additional critical issues and success factors regarding water quality/resources.
 - ii. PLT agreed with suggested edits.
 - iii. Siri suggested a more active statement on the water quality process rather than “identify opportunities for partnerships”.
 - iv. Dick reiterated the addition of Gore Creek.
 - v. Martha mentioned the minimized night construction noise impacts, and questioned it as a success factor.
 - 1. Kara answered this is a topic that is still not tightly defined at this point in the process.
 - 2. Martha was concerned that this would conflict with the R3 lane closure strategy (LCS).
 - 3. Karen agreed that the LCS would be an issue with night work.
 - vi. Larissa had concerns that the water quality construction might conflict with wildlife connectivity.
 - 1. John answered that there are MOUs in place that dictate, as you construct, you mitigate.
 - 2. Martha discussed that the use of US 6 as a detour would impact connectivity for up to 2 years, but CPW had noted they would be OK with that at the previous ALIVE meeting.



- vii. Emmalee asked if the corridor maintenance was being considered as a success factor.
 - 1. Karen noted that Randy is being involved through the process.

6. Schedule and Wrap Up