



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT:	23982-23929 I-70 West Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements
PURPOSE:	Emergency Services Issue Task Force (ITF) Meeting #4
DATE HELD:	February 7, 2022
LOCATION:	Online Google Meet Meeting
ATTENDING:	John Kronholm, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3 Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3 Rob Beck, Program Engineer, CDOT Region 3 Matt Figgs, CDOT Region 3 Patrick Chavez, CDOT I-70 Corridor Operations Jon Leyba, CDOT Region 3 Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Craig Davis, Town of Vail Fire Battalion Chief/Operations Chris Botkins, Town of Vail Police Steve Vardaman, Eagle County Paramedics Captain Jared Rapp, Colorado State Patrol Mark Gutknecht, Kiewit Pete Remington, Kiewit Jennifer Babcock, Cirque Civil Joy Wasendorf, CIG Sam Stavish, CIG Randal Lapsley, RS & H Dan Logsdon, RS & H Mark Talvitie, RS & H Mary Jo Vobejda, Jacobs Loretta LaRiviere, Jacobs
COPIES:	Attendees

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions

- a. Matt introduced the attendees.

2. Agenda Review and Meeting Goal

- a. Matt said at today's meeting we will present the phasing for bike path work & gain feedback on construction coordination and provide update on 2023 & 2024 I-70 construction phasing and solicit your feedback.

3. Project Status

- a. Matt said we started last fall with our first construction package which included the Lower Truck Escape Ramp. The big changes made were to straighten it and lengthen it, add crash barrels at the end and add a hazmat collection system. If a truck that uses it and crashes and spills its load, there is a big concrete tub underneath the arrestor bed that will collect any hazardous material that will drain into to a tank and stored until we can get hazmat crews on site to clean it out. There is a head gate on the tank that will be closed at all times unless our maintenance crews open it to drain out snow melt and rainwater, after which it would be closed again.



b. Upcoming work includes:

- Two bridge replacements at MM 185.5 which is where the current bike path crosses underneath I-70. A third lane will be added eastbound from MM 185 to 190 with the funding we have. The third lane will have a widened outside shoulder, minimum 10' to make sure that emergency vehicles can use the shoulder if they need to.
- Reconstruct the curve at the Narrows both east and westbound as well as a series of curves at MM 188.
- Install six wildlife underpasses.
- A variable speed limit sign system from westbound MM 185-190.
- A remote closure system for eastbound traffic at MM 180, and for westbound traffic at MM 190. We started the westbound system last fall and this spring and into the early summer we will finish that system up. When completed it will allow us to be able to close the highway from Eisenhower Tunnel. There will be a VMS sign and some overhead lane use signs like you see in a tunnel and trailblazer signs at the interchanges that will direct travelers to turn around and head back east. There are two road closure gates along I-70 that will have to be manually operated, that will give us a head start to close the Pass if the highway needs to be closed. There will be a similar type of system in the eastbound direction around MM 180 that will be done later in the project due to phasing.

1. Craig inquired how many gallons of hazmat runoff will be contained on the lower ramp? It would be helpful to know for our strategic planning if there was a gas tanker that broke open, how much fuel or hazmat it holds, if we have to apply anything ourselves, and how long we have before it is overfilled.

Randal confirmed the volume of the settling basin is 3780 c.f. or 28,276 gallons. The design was intended to capture the volume of a tanker truck (11,000 gallons) plus the 5-year rainfall event. He can provide the calculations if you would like to have them.

2. Craig asked if eastbound I-70 from MM 180-185 will go to three lanes or is that not in the scope of this work?

Matt said the environmental assessment states we will have three lanes from MM 180-190 in both directions. We only have money for the first five eastbound miles right now, but the long-term plan is to go three lanes in both directions.

- This summer we are going to start working on the recreation path, relocating the two-mile section of trail that is immediately adjacent to I-70 in the Narrows area.
- Later this summer and through 2023, we will also be starting our third construction package which is the westbound bridge replacement at MM



185.5. This bridge is being constructed offline, to the north of the existing bridge. The existing westbound structure will be fully operational until the new bridge is finished and then we will move traffic over and demolish the old westbound bridge to build the eastbound bridge in its place. We have a pretty good phasing plan that will have minimal disruptions to traffic.

4. Bike Path Update

- a. Matt presented a fly through video of the bike path. We are still finishing the design, and things may change but this gives you a good idea of where the bike path will be. The video is in a draft format, so there are some aesthetic and grading differences you'll notice versus what the final design will be. Almost 2 miles of the bike path will be relocated. The ultimate width of the trail will be 12' and the bridges will be 14' wide to give a little more room for user comfort.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVJ0Y8tspmo&feature=youtu.be>

Along I-70, because the bridges are moving to the north we have to install some retaining walls and do a small shift of the bike path near the bridges at MM 185. Because this new bike path section is completely offline, we can build the new bike path and move path users over to the new path and then start building the walls.

Where the new bike path is a bit closer to the highway we are trying to provide grade separation so that it will be lower than the existing highway and provide some offset distance. There will be a bridge on the path that crosses Black Gore Creek and the bike path continue on the south side of the creek until the next bridge structure that crosses you back over to the I-70 side of the creek and ties into the existing trail around MM 187.

Randal said the trail bridges were designed to handle the heaviest maintenance vehicle CDOT has which is a front-end loader with an attachment for snow clearing on the front. We did reach out to a number of agencies to make sure their equipment didn't exceed that limit. The load capacity rating is 27 tons/54,000 pounds.

1. Steve asked if you have identified any emergency access to the proposed bike path update. Currently along that section where the bike path is adjacent to I-70, that is a commonly used emergency access point. Will there be any different access points with this different design?

Matt said at this time we don't have any different access points. The main access will still be up at the top of the pass down from the Black Lakes parking lot.

- b. Matt said even though a large portion of the trail is being built on the south side of the creek, there will be a lot of retaining wall work, earthwork, and construction access that will disrupt the existing trail. Our project team has made the commitment to not close the existing trail and sometime between mid to late May we will have the temporary 8' trail detour in place.
- c. During the bike path construction eastbound I-70 will be a narrower configuration of two 11' lanes with 2' shoulders for the 1 ½ mile long bike path detour. Once the bike



path work is completed, we will remove the barriers and put I-70 back into its normal configuration over the winter.

There will be a temporary barrier on I-70 with a glare screen on top of it. This will all sit on the existing platform of I-70. That barrier between traffic and the bike path will be pinned so that if a car that strikes it, the barrier will stay in place. On the other side of the bike path, if our construction is right next to the path, we will have another barrier to keep trail users safe from the construction vehicles. If we have at least 5' of room, we will set up something else, perhaps cones or orange fencing, so it doesn't feel like a constant cattle chute.

- d. Pete said narrowing the I-70 eastbound lanes allows us to have safe travel on the bike path and eastbound I-70 and allows us to safely construct our work. At the beginning of the construction area, we will have an access road where trucks and construction vehicles will slow down on the I-70 shoulder and then pull in and cross the bike path.

There are four points for construction access to the trail. There is an in and an out at the beginning and end of the construction area, and two in and outs in the middle. At each one we will have a flagger to make sure they hold up the bike traffic when construction traffic is getting on and off the interstate.

Our construction access road will run along inside the detour path for the entire length for emergency access. If there is an incident on the bike path, emergency service providers will be able to use that construction access, so you aren't shutting down I-70 to respond to someone who got hurt on the trail.

- e. There will be quite a bit of excavation and wall work done all next summer while the bike path is on the top. This is an area with a steep grade and there will be two emergency pull offs for vehicles that overheat, have mechanical problems or any other type of emergency. There is a taper on both ends and it will be a safe area for emergency pull offs. We made these emergency pull offs separate from the construction access points because we want safe areas for both construction access and emergency pull offs and not have construction vehicles blocking the emergency pull offs or vice versa.

Where we are building on the other side of the creek it is more wide open but we will still have a construction access road in that area. There won't be barrier on both sides, it is just barrier protecting the bike path from the traveling vehicles on I-70.

- f. Matt said he met with the public relations team last week to talk through the plan for public information about the bike path construction. We will be distributing fliers to bike shops, working with event organizers and the outfitters who drop people off the top of the Pass. We understand it can't just be fliers and emails going out, we have to have enough signage on the path to give warning about flaggers stopping users for construction traffic.

1. Craig asked if eastbound I-70 will be down to one lane for normal traffic during the bike path construction.



Matt confirmed there will be two eastbound narrower lanes open during construction, except for times when a lane is needed for construction. Any lane closure must follow CDOT's Lane Closure Strategy document which outlines times that lane closures are allowed based on traffic volumes.

2. Craig inquired if we will be sending out the PowerPoint slides to the group. He would like to get this out to his agency and partners.

Matt said we will make this available to the group after today's meeting.

- g. Matt said we are considering and working through some of the details for heavy tow support during the summer for that section of I-70. We had something similar for the Vail Pass paving project last summer and we are looking to incorporate that into this project.

Patrick said we have done that in the past coordinating with the safety patrol program that we already have a contract for so if you want to contact me, we can try to work out the details. We can use the rates we have for our contracted safety patrol.

5. I-70 Work

- a. Matt said the bike path is the bulk of the work in 2022. When we start the westbound bridge it will be offline work, so it won't be very impactful to I-70 other than some lane or shoulder closures through our scheduled lane closure strategy that tells us when the best times are to do it for traffic volumes.
- b. Matt said there are two phases to build the eastbound lanes. The most efficient way that we have found to do this for safety and schedule is to do some temporary widening on I-70 in the westbound direction. If we widen a little bit of the shoulder, we can fit four lanes of traffic up there. It will still be a narrow section with barriers separating it down the middle and that will be a pinned barrier for the same reasons we are putting the pinned barrier between I-70 and the bike path this year. That allows us in 2023 to put all traffic in the westbound lanes while we completely rebuild the eastbound lanes to get the widened section through there. We would start to do the shoulder paving this fall to make sure that is in place to maximize our season in 2023.

In 2024 we would flip this to a mirror image. The new eastbound section would be wide enough to accommodate four lanes of traffic and then we can rebuild westbound. We have six wildlife underpasses, two of them being the large arched types that we will need to excavate a large hole on I-70 as well curve reconstruction, large retaining walls and drainage features which necessitates the need for this detour phasing.

Some of the details we don't have finalized yet is, similar to having the emergency pull outs on the bike path section, we are looking on doing the same thing for this area. This detour would run from MM 185.5 to 189 for those two seasons.

3. Craig asked if we had a multi vehicle fire that literally shuts down both of the lanes, is there any option or alternate route for us to use if we had



to? Trying to get to an incident from behind could be impossible because traffic is backed up and there is no shoulder.

Pete said the wildlife crossings may have a short-term effect but for the most part there would be emergency personnel access through the construction area. We just have to make sure we are communicating regularly with you. In some areas where there are certain drainage runs that are going across the road, we will have to phase them for our own access so there should be an alternate option to get emergency personnel through that construction zone. If there are certain times it would be blocked off we have to make sure we communicate that to you.

4. Craig said as we approach this phase of the work, I recommend we work with Steve Vardaman with the paramedic services on a really good, reliable communications plan so if we do need to use the road under construction to access incidents that we are not creating a safety issue for your people working up there.

6. Next Steps

Bike path construction starts in May. It will be completed in November.

The westbound bridge starts in August 2022 and as we mentioned the bulk of the I-70 road work really gets started in 2023 & 2024.