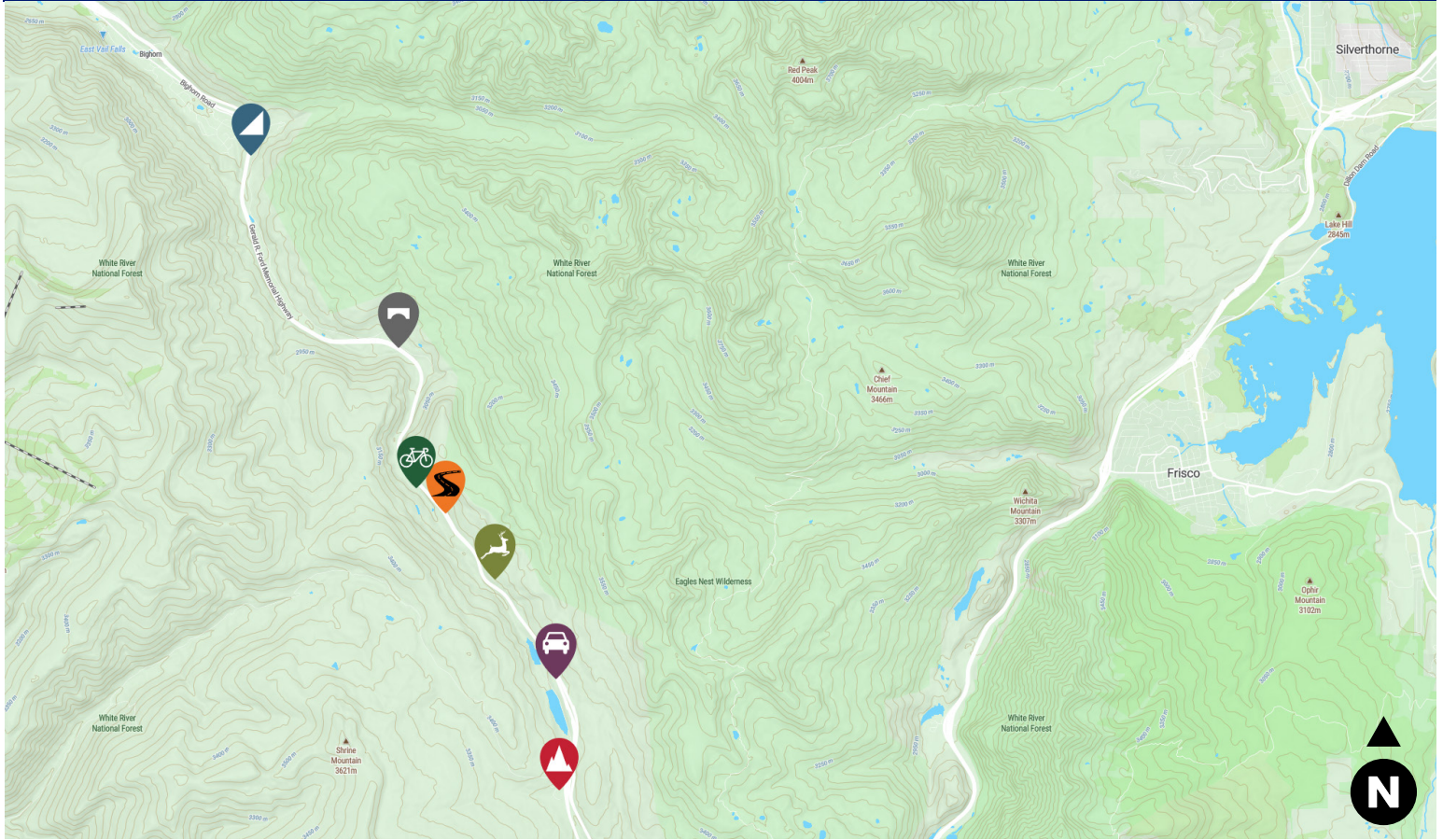


# I-70 Vail Auxiliary Lanes project map



**COLORADO**  
Department of Transportation



## New truck ramp Mile Point 182

The emergency truck ramp along westbound I-70 just east of Vail was reconstructed in the fall of 2021 to straighten out the curve in the ramp to make it safer for truck drivers needing to use this ramp. Between 2016 and 2018, the old ramp was used 14 times. Many other trucks attempted to use the ramp but overturned because of the steep grade and curve. The new ramp, opened by Governor Polis on Dec. 6, 2021, provides a straighter path off the highway. It also features a settlement basin beneath it so any hazardous spills can be contained on site and cleaned up with no impact to Gore Creek.



## Bike Trail Relocation Mile Points 185-187

About two miles of the Vail Pass Recreation trail is being relocated as part of this project. Moving the trail further from I-70 provides the room needed to add the eastbound auxiliary lane, but it will also benefit trail users by reducing the risk of vehicle and pedestrian/bicycle crashes. Separating the trail from the highway will provide a more pleasant experience for trail users who will no longer be right next to interstate traffic. This project will also build two bicycle/pedestrian bridges along the trail to take users onto the south side of Black Gore Creek for a short distance.



## New Bridges Mile Point 185

Both I-70 bridges over Polk Creek near Mile Point 185.2 are considered structurally deficient and will be rebuilt as part of this project. The new structures will be designed with a 100-year lifespan and will be realigned to meet geometric criteria and improve safety for the traveling public. The westbound bridge will be rebuilt in 2022 and 2023 and the eastbound bridge in the following years. By building the bridges in a new alignment, traffic will be able to use the existing structures while the new bridges are being built.



## Curve reconstruction Mile Points 186 and 188

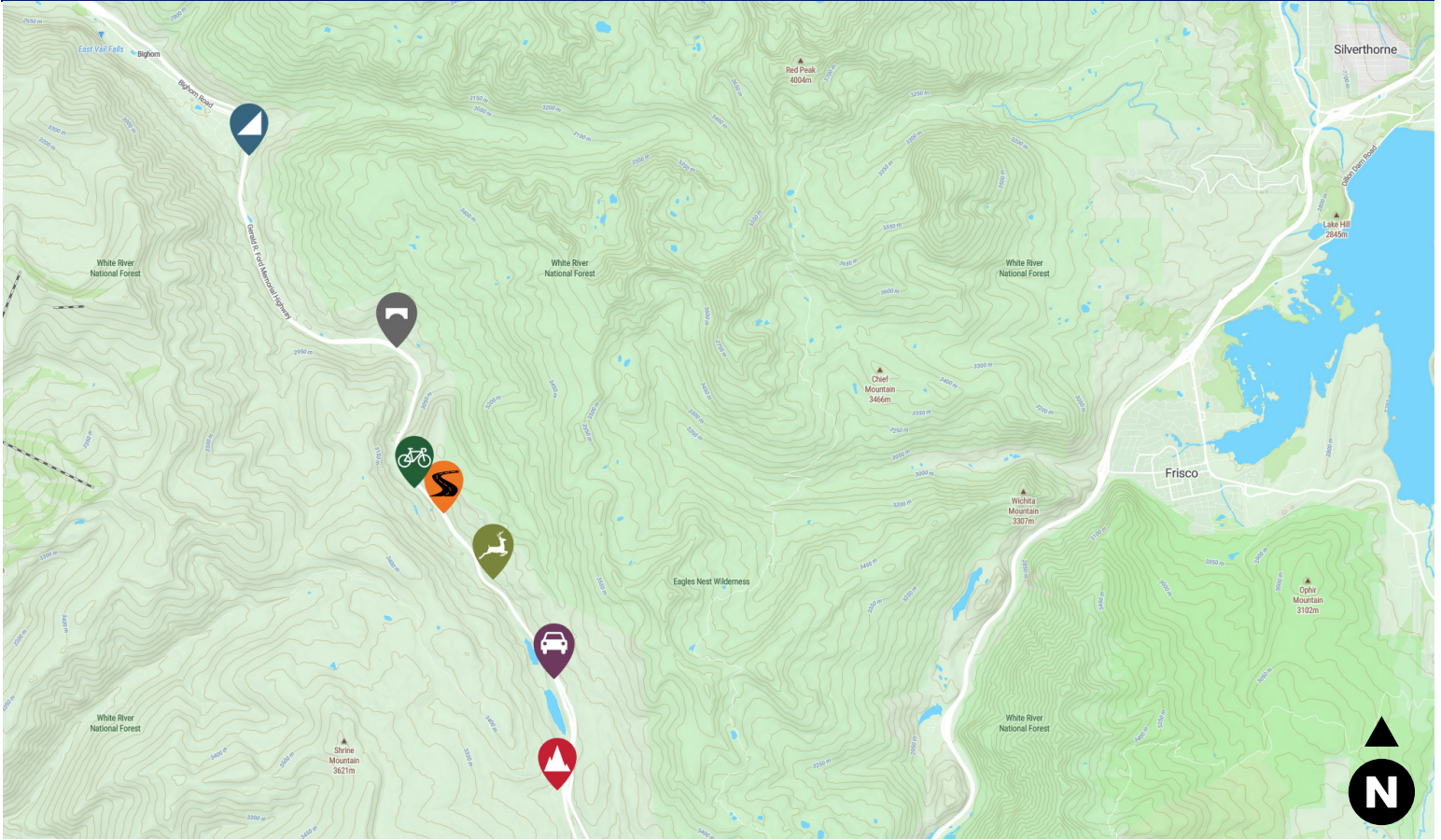
In this first phase of Vail Pass improvements, curve modifications will be made along westbound I-70 between Mile Points 188 and 186 to improve the roadway geometry and design deficiencies. Data shows these curves have the highest crash patterns through this section of I-70. Reconstruction will contribute to an overall reduction in crashes. In reconstructing these curves, the inside shoulders will be widened from four to six feet in some places.



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## Wildlife crossings

Mile Point 185-190

This project will construct six wildlife underpasses - two for large animals and four for small to medium-sized animals. These underpasses will help reconnect crucial wildlife migration patterns and promote the safe passage of wildlife beneath I-70. As it stands today, a single Canadian lynx would need to cross I-70 several times in its lifetime to produce enough young to successfully migrate north. Wildlife fencing will also be added along both sides of I-70 toward the top of Vail Pass between Mile Points 185 and 190. It's expected this fencing will help reduce the number of wildlife-related crashes by 80%.



## Vail Pass

Mile Point 190

I-70 through Vail Pass serves as a major transportation route across Colorado's Rocky Mountains, providing a critical interstate link for the country. The steep grades, roadside terrain, and extreme weather events make I-70 over Vail Pass a challenging mountain pass to travel and maintain. The pass as we know it today was completed in 1979. Since that time, however, Colorado's population and traffic volume have increased significantly, and I-70 has struggled to keep up. This project will address many of the physical constraints on this road to improve safety for the traveling public and enhance connectivity to the rest of the freight network in the United States. This project will also reduce the number of incidents along Vail Pass and limit the number of full closures of the pass by providing a third lane for staging emergency response vehicles.



## Eastbound Auxiliary Lane

Mile Points 185-190

This project will widen eastbound I-70 between Mile Points 185 and 190 to provide a third lane. This additional auxiliary lane will improve operations, mobility and safety by providing a climbing lane for slow-moving, freight and large recreational vehicles while providing two lanes of capacity for other vehicles. The additional lane will also help keep traffic moving in the other two lanes when maintenance or emergency service vehicles need to respond to an incident on the pass.