



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT:	21685 I-70 West Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements
PURPOSE:	Project Leadership Team (PLT) Meeting #7
DATE HELD:	December 18, 2020
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 Greg Hall, Town of Vail Ben Gerdes, Eagle County Dick Cleveland, Town of Vail Former Councilman Tom Gosiorowski, Summit County Stephanie Gibson, FHWA Jeff Bellen, FHWA Shaun Cutting, FHWA Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Association Jim Thomsen, Kiewit Randal Lapsley, R S & H Mary Jo Vobejda, Jacobs Jim Clarke, Jacobs Loretta LaRiviere, Jacobs
COPIES:	Attendees

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions & Meeting Purpose

- a. Karen began the meeting by introducing the PLT attendees' names and organizations.
- b. Mary Jo explained the purpose of the meeting is to close out the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Phase 2 Project Development for the Environmental Assessment (EA) and we will be going through that with presenting the lessons learned and survey results. We also want to set up a plan and get your endorsement for the Phase 3 Design CSS process. The Environmental Assessment documented the chosen alternative and mitigation commitments. In this next phase we will focus on the best way to design the project and how to meet the commitments.

2. Review of work completed since the last Technical Team (TT) Meeting

- a. Karen said there was a combined PLT and TT meeting last August. Since then the EA has been completed. The draft Finding of no Significant Impact (FONSI) is with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responding to their comments. If approved, it is expected to be signed in mid-January.
- b. Karen said you have probably noticed there are some new faces on the call. The new consultant team consists of R S & H with Randal Lapsley leading the design



effort for the funded portion of the project and the CSS Jacobs Team led by Mary Jo Vobejda from Jacobs. Other Jacobs team members are Jim Clarke, the environmental lead and Loretta LaRiviere is providing project support.

- c. Karen announced that Kiewit has been selected to deliver the project through the CMGC delivery method. This will be very helpful because they can suggest innovative ideas and give feedback throughout the design on cost. Jim Thomsen will be representing Kiewit to bring their construction expertise to the table.

3. Lessons Learned

- a. Karen said a survey was sent to all PLT, TT & Issue Task Force (ITF) members and the purpose was seek feedback on how the CSS process went during the last few years while developing the EA.
Mary Jo explained the survey focused on the CSS process, not the outcome of the project. The survey questions covered multidisciplinary nature of the teams, regularity of meetings, team effectiveness, reflection of the community's qualities, collaborative discussions, project stakeholder contributions, input through the process, availability of resources, and 2-way communications.
 - i. The survey was sent to 54 participants in the previous process and sixteen responses were received. Overall, the results were 80% positive responses. Some comments suggested more 2-way conversations and more opportunities for feedback as improvements.
- b. Mary Jo asked if anyone had suggestions on how to improve 2-way conversations and opportunities for more feedback.
 - 1. Tom said he wasn't dissatisfied with the communication and inquired if that comment came from the public or a team member?
 - a. Mary Jo said the survey was only sent to team members and it was anonymous. Often these kind of comments usually come from someone who didn't get the solution they were hoping for.
 - 2. Greg said other corridor projects have gone further with the design in their EAs while this project only went to 10% design and the Aesthetics Guidelines and Design Exceptions commitments were moved to this design phase. He stressed the importance of having these two commitments fully understood before we get too far in the design process.
 - 3. Greg brought up the explanation of the differences between the TT & ITF that was discussed at Monday's TT Meeting.
 - a. The ITFs are the experts and looking for the best solutions for their ITF.
 - b. The TT takes the issues from the ITFs and weigh the pros and cons between the different ITF solutions and makes a recommendation on the best solution.



4. Greg said the I-70 Collaborative Effort (CE) was formed as a requirement of the I-70 Record of Decision (ROD). They have been meeting regularly for about twelve years. They recently did a reassessment and have approved the updated work plan for the I-70 Mountain Corridor. He said the CSS process has built a lot of trust and needs to be done consistently. Greg said there was talk a while ago about forming an environmental group that review projects along the corridor during all phases to monitor all environmental impacts
5. The Advanced Guideway System (AGS) is not just an overlay over other projects along the corridor and we need to ensure that any improvements constructed does not make the AGS harder to build. Greg suggested having someone with AGS background be invited to join the TT.
 - a. Mary Jo thanked Greg for his comments and agreed the process is all about consistency. She said they will take these suggestions into consideration as we move forward.

4. INFRA Grant Improvements

- a. Karen said the scope for the **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)** Grant was presented to the PLT & TT in August.
- b. There is \$140.4 M for design and construction.
- c. INFRA Grant components include:
 - i. Eastbound auxiliary lane from Mile Post (MP) 185-190. This portion was chosen because of the operation challenges with stalls and crashes. The third lane will allow more room for these incidents to be moved out of traffic to the side of the road.
 - ii. This section will also widen the inside and outside shoulders from four feet to six feet.
 - iii. Glare screen barriers will be installed on both the east and westbound medians where they are at the same level.
 - iv. The widening results in having to relocate two miles of the trail further away from the highway from MP 185-187.
 - v. Installing two large and four small to medium wildlife underpasses between MP 185-190 and wildlife fence will be installed in these 5 miles.
 - vi. Additional outside shoulder widening both east and westbound in crash hotspot areas.
 - vii. Westbound curve reconstruction and inside shoulder widening at the high crash locations (MP 185.6 & MP 188).
 - viii. The bridge at Eastbound MP 185 will be reconstructed. This is where the auxiliary lane and shoulder widening begins.

- ix. Straightening out the lower truck ramp at MP 182 to meet truck ramp standards.
- x. Installing signage improvements throughout the corridor including a variable speed limit system
- xi. Installing an automated highway closure system at the bottom and top of the pass with overhead signage and a push-button gate. This will allow for faster closure of the pass. The gate will require someone to physically go close the gate.
- xii. Installing an anti-icing system on the bridge at MP 184.3.

5. INFRA Grant Scope, Schedule and Status

- a. Karen noted the INFRA Grant commitment is to start construction in 2021. The size and amount of the construction was not defined. Since the project is being delivered via the CMGC method we can easily break the scope into multiple delivery packages. Three packages were originally proposed, and we are now considering a fourth package. All design must be completed by the end of 2022 and construction would start in 2021 and must be completed by the end of 2024.
- b. The first two scope items are expected to include the lower truck ramp realignment and installation of the automated gate closure system. These are still being vetted to determine if they can be designed by May and construction can begin late summer.
- c. Karen said the design of Construction Packages 2 & 3 are moving forward more quickly than planned. They are working with FHWA for funding approval to get Package 2 out in February 2022 and Package 3 in May 2022. The remainder of the project would be in Package 4.
- d. There are more ITFs than typical due to the number of EA mitigation commitments.
- e. Most of the work in the ITFs will be done early to mid-2021 to get the feedback needed to integrate it into the design.
- f. At the December 14th meeting, the TT agreed that we should schedule monthly meetings and cancel as needed so that the meetings are consistently on their schedules. This will allow us to address issues that arise during the ITF meetings and design.
- g. PLT and TT meetings are scheduled to continue through construction.
- h. Karen said they were planning on having less PLT Meetings because they feel the TT gives feedback on the ITF suggestions and endorses the process, and then the PLT are given updates on how the process is going.

6. Overview of EA Public Comments Addressed in Finding of no Significant Impact (FONSI)

- a. Karen said there were 140 comment submissions with 320 individual comments received during the EA comment period which ran from September 22nd – October 21st.



- i. 98 comments were regarding traffic noise analysis. The majority of the comments were from residents of the Vail Racquet Club.
- ii. Agencies that commented included:
 - US Army Corps of Engineers
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Division of Natural Resources (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)
 - Eagle River Watershed Council
 - Eagle River Water and Sanitation District

7. CSS Commitments

- a. Mary Jo said the CSS mitigation commitments were decided during the EA process and the language may change slightly in the FONSI, but the commitments will remain the same.
- b. Jim said that in addition to reconvening the PLT, TT, and ALIVE and SWEEP ITFs, CDOT has committed to:
 - i. Creation of a CSS Design Criteria Exception ITF to address the exceptions identified in the EA. This ITF will be convened during final design will focus on the CSS design exceptions that are pertinent to the design work at that time.
 - ii. Creation of an Aesthetic ITF to help develop guidance for the corridor. This ITF will include the Section 106 ITF members.
 - iii. Development of a Sediment Control Action Plan (SCAP) update in conjunction with final design and prior to the construction of any new impervious surface.
- c. Jim said the Key Commitments include:
 - i. Wildlife
 - Crossing structures and fencing
 - ii. Vegetation
 - Survey for T&E species
 - iii. Water quality
 - SCAP update
 - Permanent control measures to be designed and installed to minimize sediment entering the Black Lakes.
 - iv. Wetlands
 - Formally delineate all wetlands. All permanently impacted non-fen wetlands will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio.
 - Fens may need to be replaced at a higher ratio.
 - v. Visual/Geologic
 - Aesthetic guidance that incorporates the historic context of the corridor.



- Minimize slope excavation of undisturbed slopes Use excavation and landscaping techniques.
 - Avoid destabilizing existing landslides/ debris flow/alluvial fans during construction.
 - Use rock sculpting and aesthetic treatments for rock cuts
- vi. Historic
- Develop an amendment to the I-70 Mountain Corridor Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA).
- d. Comments regarding commitments:
1. Tom inquired why is there no certainty on the non-fen wetlands being replaced at a 1-1 ratio?
 - a. John said the USACE 404 permitting process will determine the mitigation.
 2. Greg inquired if the updated SCAP will be extended to the limits of the overall project and not just the INFRA project.
 - a. Karen confirmed it would.
 3. Greg wanted to know if there was a plan to protect the trees. He said when Glenwood Canyon was built the contractor was fined if trees were lost during construction. He acknowledged trees close to the road may eventually be lost later due to other environmental impacts.
 - a. Jim said the EA identified the mitigation for trees.
 4. Greg asked if there will be an architect included as part of the design team to oversee the visual aesthetics on structures.
 - a. Jim said Diane Yates is leading the 106/Aesthetics guidelines. She is a 30-year landscape architect and was heavily involved in Glenwood Canyon. We also have a senior environmental planner that specializes in visual impacts assessments.
 - b. Greg replied landscape architects do a pretty good job, but that Frank Lloyd Wright's Arizona studio was involved in the structures design on the Vail Pass.
 - c. Jim said we can always add an architect if we feel it is necessary.
 - d. Karen said this is a very important part of the design of this project. The first Aesthetic Guidelines ITF Meeting will discuss the contributing historic factors that need to be taken into consideration. Diane and Jim will be holding a training session for the designers, so they understand how this is different from other projects.
 - e. Randal said the designers do have an aesthetic background.

8. CSS Process & Schedule



- a. Mary Jo said during this CSS Phase, we will be looking to ensure the options best serve the decisions that were made in the EA. This phase will be reviewing the design plans and specifications to ensure the mitigation commitments are incorporated.
- b. The CSS 6 Steps during this Phase remain the same as the other phases:
 1. Define the Actions (Defined in the EA/Mitigation)
 2. Endorse Process (by TT & PLT)
 3. Establish Criteria (ITF methodology)
 4. Develop Options (ITF may or may not develop)
 5. Evaluate Options (ITF and TT recommendations)
 6. Document (Environmental Mitigation Tracking)
- c. Mary Jo reviewed the ITFs that will be a part of the CSS process and the members:
 - i. SWEEP
 - ii. ALIVE
 - iii. 106/Aesthetics
 - iv. Design Exceptions (to be formed when needed during design)
 - v. Emergency Response (to be formed at a later date)
- d. The role of the members of the ITFs are to be experts in their area and provide feedback regarding their area of specialty. The TT will provide feedback from stakeholders that have other backgrounds especially in areas of competing interests.
- e. Karen ask the group if they were satisfied with the initial schedule for PLT meetings which were planned to be only twice more in this phase.
 1. Tom said meeting so seldom is atypical based on his experience. They normally meet quarterly.
 - a. Karen said she was open to having more PLT meetings or having combined PLT/TT Meetings.
 2. Tom said he would prefer quarterly meetings and having one prior to the public meetings.
 3. Greg suggested PLT milestone meetings when the ITFs are finishing their work. He added the complexity of the project may change if more funding is identified which would require more PLT meetings.

9. Project Leadership Team Roles

- a. Mary Jo said the PLT role is to protect the process and ensure CSS happens.
- b. The TT & PLT charters will be revised to reflect CSS Phase 3.
- c. She reviewed the PLT roles:
 - i. Amend the charter as necessary to determine actions needed to accomplish their responsibilities.
 - ii. Identify opportunities to reach agreement and reach the goals set forth for the team. The PLT will strive to focus on relevant issues.

- iii. Provide guidance insights into what is of importance to stakeholders in the project.
 - iv. Approve the project plan to support the delivery schedule for completion of the project.
- d. Provide guidance on the public and transparent process.

Comments on the PLT roles:

1. Tom commented on the role of TT members in providing feedback on topics that may conflict between ITFs since each ITF member focuses on more detailed topics.
 - a. Mary Jo explained that the TT is a diverse group with different backgrounds. They were chosen by the PLT to give this sort of feedback.
 - b. Karen explained that CDOT and FHWA are the ultimate decision makers.
 2. Greg said that the TT is large and asked how do we make sure we are getting the best solution or only hearing the loudest voice.
 - a. Mary Jo and Karen explained that the PLT may attend any TT meetings. They try to give opportunity for feedback from the whole group either in the meeting or as submitted before or after the meeting.
 - b. Dick would like to be notified of when the TT Meetings are scheduled. We will invite PLT members to the TT Meetings.
- e. Mary Jo then reviewed the TT Roles:
- i. Provide feedback on the project plan to support the delivery schedule for completion of the project.
 - ii. Assuring that local context is defined and integrated into the project.
 - iii. Identify critical issues that need to be addressed and provide guidance insights into what is of importance to stakeholders in the project.
 - iv. Supporting and providing insight with respect to community and agency issues and regulations.
 - v. Provide feedback in areas of overlap among ITF areas.
 - vi. Provide feedback on technical issues that are not covered by an ITF, like major roadway design changes or minimizing construction impacts.
 - vii. Provide feedback in evaluating, selecting and refining design options.
 - viii. Coordinating and communicating with respective agencies.
- f. The group reviewed the ITF, TT and PLT Membership to see if there are any gaps or name changes.
1. Greg said it is a requirement of the CE that one of their board members be a part of the PLT for every project. Greg suggested we



include Margaret Bowes on the PLT, but she may delegate another member to attend the meetings.

2. There was discussion on why some entities like FHWA have 3 members.
 - a. The FHWA team explained that the 3 members have different roles including Environmental lead, District lead and Region lead. This is a similar structure to CDOT. Each member has a role. The group understood.
3. Greg stressed that it is key to get Vanessa Henderson's replacement on the PLT when she is replaced.
4. Greg asked if we need a representative from emergency services on the PLT, particularly during construction.
 - a. Mary Jo replied that it is difficult to find one EMS person that represents all agencies.
 - b. Matt said EMS will be included during the Emergency Services ITF and individual outreach as we prepare for construction.
5. Tracy said each PLT along the I-70 Corridor is different and who is at the table varies. But there is a willingness to do the right thing. The process is the same and the checks and balances have been put into place and are utilized and there have been some very good projects as a result of the process.
 - i. In the interest of time, Karen requested the PLT email any additional corrections or additions and will compile them. We will send out an updated membership list.
 - ii. There was discussion on determining an efficient way to schedule meetings in the future. It was decided to schedule meetings quarterly on Fridays at this same time. We will schedule the meetings now for all of 2021 so there is significant advanced notice.

10. Endorsing the Process

- a. The group endorsed the process moving forward.

11. Next Steps

- a. The first meeting for all the ITFs will focus on the process and the second meetings will dive into the draft design, recommendations and critical issues. There will be a few months in between ITF Meetings so the designers can incorporate the ITF recommendations.