



## MEETING NOTES

<b>PROJECT:</b>	23982-23929 I-70 West Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	Combined Project Leadership Team (PLT) and Technical Team (TT) Meeting #29
<b>DATE HELD:</b>	July 18, 2022
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Online Google Meet Meeting
<b>ATTENDING:</b>	Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3 Matt Figgs, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3 Lisa Schoch, CDOT Historian James Proctor, CDOT Bridge Enterprise Kristin Salamack, USFWS CDOT Liaison Danielle Neumann, DNR Stephanie Gibson, FHWA Jeff Bellen, FHWA Kevin Sharkey, Eagle County Greg Hall, Town of Vail Siri Roman, ERWSD Larissa Read, ERWSD Shannon Anderson, Bicycle Colorado Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Jon Stavney, NWCCOG Mark Gutknecht, Kiewit Randal Lapsley, R S & H Sam Stavish, CIG Mary Jo Vobejda, Jacobs Jim Clarke, Jacobs Pat Hickey, Jacobs Amy Hopkins, Jacobs Loretta LaRiviere, Jacobs
<b>COPIES:</b>	Attendees

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

#### 1. Introductions & Meeting Purpose

- a. Karen introduced the attendees at today's meeting.
- b. Mary Jo said today we will have a brief review of the reevaluation process, an update on Section 404 permitting, and construction public information updates.

#### 2. Review of Work Completed Since the Last Technical Team (TT) Meeting

- a. CDOT and Kiewit have reached an agreement for CP #3 which is the westbound bridge and detour pavement. For each construction package, CDOT and the contractor go over the costing and all the work that RS & H have put into the design, and they negotiate a new agreement for each construction package.
- b. The DOR (60% design) submittal for CP #4 has been submitted.
- c. There is continued construction progress and the blasting has been completed. There possibly could be more blasting in other construction packages.
- d. Construction Package #1-3 have been started but CP # 4 & 5 are still being designed.

#### 3. EA Reevaluation Process



- a. Jim said for CP #1-3 we have reevaluated consistency with the EA and FONSI commitments, requirement and impacts that were recorded. We will continue to conduct reevaluations with the future construction packages until the end of the entire project because the EA and FONSI are considered living documents. We look at all the resources, but most of the commitments are for Protected Species, Historic, and Visual Resources/Aesthetics.

We are in the process of another reevaluation for the amended CP #3 for the two large areas on the lower half of the Pass to place excess material.

We checked to see if there were any changes to the protected species list, and it turns out there were. The grey wolf is listed as a protected species and the monarch butterfly is listed as a candidate species, but we don't see any effects to those two species from this construction package.

We also reevaluated the impacts to visual resources for the embankment areas and we found the impacts are consistent with those reported in the EA and are consistent with the Aesthetic Guidelines that we developed during the design phase. We've incorporated some design elements by varying the slope angles, installing boulders, and replanting with native vegetation. With these types of measures, it will blend in better with the natural landforms out there.

- b. We sent another consultation package in late June to the SHPO and 106 consulting parties to make sure they are aware of the extra work. During the EA and 106 process we reported an adverse effect to the Vail Pass historic district, but those embankment areas doesn't change that adverse effect.

1. Greg said next to the road the area is reseeded with native grasses and the area that was not disturbed has shrubs, grasses, and a few trees. In larger disturbed areas introducing shrubs and temporary irrigation to really get them established so it looks more like what was native, versus what is next to the roadway.

Randal said we are working with our landscape architect. The first thing we are going to do for the disturbed areas is to replant them to stabilize them. We can't plant mature vegetation in there, but we are trying to plant species that are native and will grow and over time will look like the native areas. We intend to come back near the end of the project and have one landscaping plan that will plant all of the disturbed areas by adding bushes, trees, and boulders. We are working with the Forest Service to get seedlings planted with native materials that are out there so they will have a better chance of survival and use native seed banks to make sure it we look as natural as we can.

Pat said the disturbance areas will be graded in a manner that looks more natural using natural landscape undulations so instead of one grade and slope it will have contouring to reflect the natural contouring

2. Jon said he's been noticing going up and down the Pass, maybe it's in the path of future construction, but uphill there are a lot of not yet fully dead trees that are 15' up and 30' back off the slope that are dying, I assume because of mag chloride mixed in with the snow that is blown up there. When planting native species, are we thinking of a clear zone that maybe not have fir trees that get damaged by that? I'm not going to blame mag chloride but there is a clear row of dying trees.

Randal said we can discuss that with our landscape architect to take that into consideration. We haven't had any specific discussion about this but typically from a safety standpoint we don't plant trees in the clear zone of the roadway. The mag



chloride and other elements may extend further than what is required from the safety clear zone.

Karen said we are doing some landscaping at the end of each project, but the landscaping for the project is still being designed so what you see out there for CP #1 is not the final landscape product.

3. Larissa said she really appreciates that you are going back to the EA impact analysis. She asked about impacts to streams and water resources that you have encountered or and mitigation measures that are thinking of employing on the streams and water resources.

Jim said he will look again on what we had for water quality but as I recall we didn't think we were going to increase any effects. For the embankment area where it gets closer to the stream we were talking about doing an offset to make sure the slope wasn't getting too close to the stream and adjacent wetlands.

#### 4. Section 404 Update

- a. Pat said we received permits for CP #3, and we will be implementing our mitigation which is the fen restoration in the next few months. The fen mitigation and bioswales will be for non-jurisdictional wetland impacts and we will be doing in-lieu program purchase credit mitigation for the jurisdictional impacts. A similar approach will be taken for CP # 4 & 5. We will be mitigating jurisdictional wetland impacts most likely with in-lieu program purchase credits and on-site mitigation will be to mitigate for non-jurisdictional feature. It's about half and half, roughly a ½ acre for each.
- b. We had a site visit with the USACE on June 28<sup>th</sup>. We walked a lot of the wetland areas we had delineated the previous summer and looked specifically at the jurisdictional nature of these features, the significant features that make them jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional wetland waterways. We will be submitting a formal request for verification of those jurisdictional features within the next week. Shortly after that we will be submitting our nationwide permit request for CP #4 & 5. The permanent impacts are estimated to be roughly 4/10 of an acre for those packages. We are still looking at on-site mitigation for non-jurisdictional for these packages and will likely purchase in-lieu credits for the jurisdictional wetland impacts.

1. Greg said in CP #2 you were finding some pretty wet areas when you were working early in the spring. Were those wet areas distinguished as wetlands or was it just seepage and groundwater that happens every spring in some areas? Are there seasonal wetlands that happen in the spring, and will you be piping around them or trying to dry out the actual path platform or are we doing what is beyond the path continue to stay wet even on a seasonal basis.

Matt said we were encountering typical groundwater seepage across the site outside of the where most of our wetlands are mapped for CP #2, and we were also encountering them a lot higher up on the slopes. One area in particular is close to the upstream pedestrian bridge. We worked with the design team because there is a bioswale in that area and we wanted to make sure we weren't draining that area that would be close to wetlands and a wet meadow. We've been using the rubble fills with geofabrics and geogrids to stabilize the base. There have been certain areas where the water it is not necessarily in a wetland area by using drainage to convey it across the trail, so it doesn't pond and sit underneath the trail. It's been a very interesting and unique challenge that we've been facing but we've been coming up with a lot of those solutions. We have been



working very closely to make sure those areas that are wet stay wet but not undermine the trail that would lead to future maintenance issues.

## 5. Construction Update

- a. Matt said because there was so much water and the ground was so soft in the spring, a 335 excavator was sunk up above the tracks and above the counterweight and in all my years of construction, I have never seen that happen before. There was also a little D-6 dozer that got stuck and I'll just say it wasn't a fun day in the field. The project team and construction staff in the field have been giving nicknames to some of the areas. One they call the Lava Fields because it's been so wet the mud actually moved like lava as the groundwater progressed through it. Another area they named the Mystical Forest because there was groundwater they didn't know where it was coming from. We've had a lot of challenges across the site.
- b. We have started building the two soil nail walls that will be cut walls above the trail.
- c. We have been rough grading for our trail alignment. If you're driving through, it's a little hard to see because of all the barrier and construction equipment but if you've ridden the path through there you're able to see the trail alignment pretty well. The rough grading we've done on the other side of the creek which is progressing quite well at this point.
- d. We started on the downstream pedestrian bridge drilled shaft foundations and will soon be moving to the upstream crossing and the bridges will be installed later this fall.
- e. We've also been working on the permanent drainage, and we will be installing several SCAP ponds. With CP #2, the ponds are much easier to maintain because they will have access roads to them from the bike path. We've done turning templates to make sure we can get a loader and tandem in there to clean them out each season and get rid of the sediment. For CP #3 that we just negotiated for the westbound bridge, there are a few more SCAP ponds that will be constructed as we start that work and will make sure the drainage is being brought online during construction. The ponds in CP #2 will be working by the end of the season and will be collecting sediment and drainage over the winter.
- f. Blasting for the rec trail has been completed. This was the biggest area where our Geotech engineers anticipated blasting for the project.

We initially anticipated about a month and a half of blasting from the second half of June all the way through July and about 20 different blasts. Because of the location we were able to change our methodology and procedures a little bit which enabled us to do larger shots and fewer blasting events and we were able to accomplish all of our blasting in only four different events and we finished that on July 6<sup>th</sup>. The blasting wasn't as spectacular as you might expect. You wouldn't see the big fireball movie type explosion. All you would see was the rock heave up and come back down which would fracture the rock in a lot of smaller pieces to make it easier for us to load it out in our excavation.

1. Shannon asked if you are on schedule or ahead of schedule for the bike path.

Matt said he thought initially we would have been ahead of schedule but having to deal with a lot of subsurface conditions has put us right on schedule at this point.

Matt said if anyone has ridden the rec trail detour section recently we would welcome your comments. We've received a few comments and will reach out to the Courage Classic to hear how their ride went.



2. Greg asked if Matt knew of any instances of EMS having to respond to incidents on the bike path construction area recently.

Matt said they have not heard of any incidents.

3. Shannon inquired what a SCAP pond is.

Matt said SCAP stands for Sediment Control Action Plan which is the plan on how to handle it sediment. They are really just big ponds to collect the sediment and any sand from the roadway before it heads into the creek.

4. Greg said a week ago on a Saturday they were down to one lane for a construction related activity and I was surprised that we were down to one lane on a weekend even though it was uphill, and it was probably completed by 9:30 or 10:00 I wasn't expecting that on a weekend for construction activity. Is that normal?

Matt said we have been following the CDOT lane closure strategy for the Pass which allows for weekend closures in the morning until 10:00 am and because we are working six days a week, we usually use that lane closure in the morning to get deliveries and equipment in and try to get everything onto the site that is needed for that day.

5. Greg inquired if there is any chance of having an on-site visit or field trip. It would be helpful for the SWEEP ITF and even the PLT/TT to walk the site to see some of the mitigation that is happening during construction and some of the SCAP ponds.

Shannon said she would also be interested in being part of the site visit if it happens. Maybe having it on a Sunday when there is no construction might be an option.

Karen said she will look into it to see what might work. Obviously there are challenges visiting an active construction site. We can also provide more videos of us walking the project site in certain areas.

## **6. Public Involvement Update**

- a. Sam said the PI efforts over the past month have been all about the blasting notifications. In our Friday email update, we would give a one week and when possible a two-week outlook for what the blasting potential days could be. On the scheduled blasting days, we would send out a go or no-go update around noon or one o'clock so people could plan for their evening drive time or trail use. And on the days of blasting as soon as we got the all-clear that the road and trail were open and ready to go, we would send out the blasting complete notification. The process seemed to work pretty smoothly and throughout that we were proud to increase our subscriber count from 558 to 630 in 22 days for the weekly email blasts. That was due to a CDOT press release that gave information on how people could sign up and join our email list and we are always happy to grow our subscriber count. We also worked with the Hanging Lake Trail Tunnel Operations team to use CDOT overhead VMS signs to notify drivers and also updated the hotline and website.
- b. Sam thanked Matt and Karen for the great interview with Matt Renoux on Channel 9 News that ran ahead of the blasting which gave a good overview of the project. There was also coverage of the project in the Vail Daily, Aspen Times and other corridor outlets that we want to get the word out to.
  1. Greg thanked Karen for giving a project presentation at the Town Council meeting in June. It was well received and appreciated.



- c. Now that we are through with the blasting work the focus is still on the bike path and we did welcome our first major event over the last weekend, the Courage Classic. We worked with that team and the organizers to answer any final questions they had leading up to their ride. We are looking forward to checking in with them to see how everything went. We've met with the Copper Triangle group for a site tour and the Triple Bypass will get out for a ride prior to their event. We are working with all the other tour organizers and events so everyone is aware of what is happening on the path. Everyone is happy to get the information and know it is still open. We will continue the weekly email outreach and share the project progress through our regular communication channels.

## **7. Schedule**

- a. Randal said the schedule continues on as you have seen before in term of the design schedule. we are working on the CP #4 DOR (Design Office Review) submittal which is about a 60% level complete set of the plans so the contractor and others can see where the design how the progressing. We will continue on with comments received from that review and finish the Final Office Review (FOR) in November with anticipated final plans in February 2023 time frame. Following that we will continue with the CP #5 construction package, but those plans won't be completed until around September 2023. Construction continues to move forward on track and with improved conditions should remain on schedule.
- b. Mary Jo said the SWEEP ITF will meet again in August and that is linked to what Randal was just talking about. We need the design for CP #4 to be far enough along for the final Map Book for MP 185-190 to be finished. It will be sent out for review prior to the next meeting. That will be the end of the SWEEP ITF meetings as far as we know right now.
- c. Matt continues to have EMS ITF meetings on an as-needed basis during construction and will have a meeting annually to give them an update prior to the upcoming construction season on where and what work will be done and how emergency services needs to respond by letting them know what will be open and how they might access the trail, etc.
- d. The PLT and TT have been combined into monthly meetings and towards the end of next year we will go to quarterly meetings for this combined group.

## **8. Next Steps**

- a. Mary Jo noted the next PLT/TT meeting is on August 16<sup>th</sup> and as mentioned before, the next SWEEP IT meeting will be on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Things are slowing down for the ITFs and CSS Meetings from the standpoint that construction is underway, and the design is moving forward. We want to keep you informed but there are fewer decisions or options to look at as the design becomes complete, now it is a matter of executing it.