



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS SURROUNDING PUBLIC MEETING #2 DECEMBER 13, 2018

Outreach Overview

The second public meeting for the I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes Project was held on December 13, 2018 in open house format from 4:30 – 6:30 PM at the Donovan Pavilion in Vail. The meeting served to present the alternatives evaluation and draft proposed action for public comment. Approximately 40+ people attended the meeting.

This document includes a record of all comments submitted surrounding this second public meeting, from September 26, 2018 through May 8, 2019. Comments were received through the project web page comment form, letters, and emails and phone calls to project team members, in addition to those documented on comment sheets and maps, and recorded by project team staff at the open house meeting.

What do you see as the benefits and/or impacts of the Proposed Action's preliminary roadway design?

Benefits

- Hopefully, improve eastbound traffic flow during snowstorms.
- An opportunity to increase wildlife permeability and habitat connectivity.
- The realignments, improving of curves, and reduction of grades would greatly improve the travel experience. It is not clear what the exiting lanes would help with.
- Safer roadway and fewer crashes. Improved sediment reduction. Improve the rec path location away from I-70.
- I don't see many benefits.
- We will refrain from commenting on the primary benefits and impacts of the proposed design until Eagle River Water & Sanitation District staff and our consultants review the water resources technical memo, details on best management practices, and the Environmental Assessment. Feedback will also be given to the technical teams as appropriate, as some of the District's comments are better suited to those groups.



Impacts

- ❑ The possibility that another eastbound lane might take out my complex (Ridgeview Square on Spruce Way) in East Vail as the eastbound lane is already almost on top of the complex. There is no compensation that could compensate me. It must be widened to the north.
- ❑ Moving the bike path to the other side of the creek could increase habitat disturbance.
- ❑ Expansion of the roadway will exacerbate water quality issues, trouble with wildlife connectivity, and increase impacts to the bike path.
- ❑ Water quality, wildlife connectivity, aesthetics.
- ❑ The negative impact on wildlife is a large concern as the number of deer, elk, bear, moose, bobcats, lynx, birds and other will be huge. Isn't it time to address our natural resources rather than, once again, catering to the whining of people stuck in congestion?
- ❑ I'm totally against auxiliary lanes on West Vail Pass. We don't need accidents in all three lanes instead of two. People should just show down instead of giving them so many lanes. Especially with global warming, we don't need that many cars on the road.
- ❑ Impacts are wildlife, East Vail neighborhoods, water quality. With the added lane and smoothing of the corners, you will only encourage more people to drive faster and make bad decisions regarding speed and road conditions. I am concerned about the noise the highway will produce to the homes in East Vail. The added noise and filth from the highway can be a huge detriment to quality of life for those who live in East Vail. Mitigation of the negatives of noise and pollution to the neighborhood are of paramount importance.
- ❑ I am wondering if building the extra 2 lanes is really the best way to tackle the safety issue? Could we consider lowering speeds, not allowing semis to pass in that area, or some other sort of safe driving reinforcement? The building of two extra lanes will negatively impact our water quality, wildlife, and increase our noise pollution. I want to make sure that we look at all options instead of just building more costly roads. I feel like we haven't done enough to solve the problem with least impactful options.

Please list your thoughts and comments regarding design option development. What are the most important values to consider as design options are being developed?

Water Quality

- ❑ It is unclear how the proposed design will improve water quality. Any project should implement the best and latest to improve water quality and minimize impacts from the roadway.



I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes

Public Meeting #2 Comment Summary

- ❑ Concerns about gravel and magnesium chloride impact on the Black Gore Creek. Huge amount of work being done to mitigate impacts to Black Gore Creek by local advocacy groups. Please make clean water a priority.
- ❑ I opened a Dropbox account [and sent a link to] the BGC Erosion PowerPoint file that I created in 2008. Somewhat dated I know, but I bet some of the entries are still valid. Issues that should be addressed by the CDOT I-70 lane addition project.
- ❑ Improve water quality in the Big Horn Road crossing area, and from mile post 182 – 183.
- ❑ Concerns with water impacts for entire Gore Creek and Black Lakes.
- ❑ Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. The mission of the Eagle River Watershed Council (ERWC) is to advocate for the health and conservation of the Upper Colorado and Eagle River basins. As such, ERWC staff and consultants are participating in the I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes project, in particular on the Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program (SWEEP) committee. Several staff and board members also attended the project open house held at Donovan Pavilion in Vail on December 14, 2018. As you know, ERWC and numerous other partners, including the Colorado Department of Transportation, have worked for many years and secured major funding and community support for improvements and mitigation along Black Gore Creek and Gore Creek. We were therefore surprised that the creeks, related water resources, and water quality were not highlighted at the open house. In fact, there was little mention of water quality concerns except for a poster that noted how they would be handled in the future. While we appreciate the opportunity to participate in on the SWEEP committee and provide feedback on technical matters, we wish there had been more content on water resources on which the general public could provide feedback. We look forward to the release of the Environmental Assessment to the public later this year, and recommend that the document include robust analyses of impacts to the creeks and riparian corridors, macroinvertebrate and aquatic species, and the anticipated benefits from water resource-related mitigation measures. Black Gore Creek and Gore Creek are vital components of our watershed health and our economic vitality, and as such, we believe they should have received more attention and opportunities for public input at the recent open house. Thank you for your consideration and for the continued opportunity to participate in this important project.
- ❑ [Eagle River Water & Sanitation District] believe[s] there was a lack of information on water resources and water quality provided to the public at the open house. Black Gore Creek, Gore Creek, and related water resources are very important to the District, Town of Vail, state and federal partners, and the local community. These water sources are critical to the public health of District customers, among other important values. Black Gore Creek and Gore Creek are on the state of Colorado's 303(d) list for impaired waters, and this project will expand the footprint and the impacts of I-70; therefore, any



additional impacts to water quality and water resources are likely to compound existing water quality concerns. Given the current conditions of these creeks and the importance of water quality to the local community, we would have preferred that more detail was shared with the public on how and why water protection efforts are key to the success of this project. For example, poster 13, “Environmental Resources” did not mention water quality at all and focused almost solely on wildlife and historic structures/bridges. The creeks were not labelled on this poster, preventing public understanding of the geographic context. Though “potential wetlands” were included on this poster in green, they certainly do not comprise the extent of water resources that may be affected by the project, which should have been included on this “Environmental Resources” poster.

- ❑ [Eagle River Water & Sanitation District] had some concerns related to posters 7 and 8, “Alternatives Evaluation Process” and “Level 1 Alternatives.” Because only one alternative was retained at the completion of the Level 1 screening process, a number of environmental screening factors that were included in Level 2 were never evaluated (i.e., no Level 2 process was carried out). Though the project team has reiterated that these items are retained as core values going forward, the lack of information about water resources at the public meeting concerns us because it appears (and may have appeared to the attending public) that water resources are not high priority for the project development phase. On the second page of poster 11, “Design Option Considerations,” water quality evaluation processes are presented in more detail. However, we are concerned that several elements previously included in the Sediment and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program Memorandum of Understanding (SWEEP MOU) for the Project Development phase have now been delayed to later project phases. In particular, a Water Quality Management Plan identified in the SWEEP MOU implementation matrix Project Development phase was not mentioned on this poster. Additionally, commitments in the Project Development phase such as revisions to the sediment control action plan and initiation of site-specific consultation with other agencies were forecasted to occur in “future project phases” or in “separate projects,” which is not consistent with the intent of the MOU. Finally, at the Vail Town Council meeting on Dec. 4, 2018, CDOT presented a project update and took questions from town council in preparation for the public open house. The likelihood of project phasing was mentioned several times, due to the failure of Propositions 109 and 110, and due to the normal extended timetable for such a large undertaking. We request that additional information on such phasing be shared with the SWEEP stakeholders as soon as it is available. Additionally, we recommend that as project elements are phased in over time, the beneficial and adverse impacts are evaluated to determine if additional phases or full build-out is necessary. Therefore, the earliest phases of the project should include robust baseline and continuous monitoring of impacts on water quality and water resources. We understand the immense complexity of the planning and implementation of this project; however, when all the aforementioned items are viewed as a whole, the District



is concerned that water resources and water quality impacts are being discounted at worst, and at best, pushed to later phases of the project that will not include detailed NEPA review. District staff will continue to work closely with the project team to ensure the project protects the environmental interests of the District and Authority customers, guests, and our many community stakeholders.

Recreation Trail

- ❑ Nice work! A relocated multi-use path would be an excellent early action!
- ❑ Keep this as close to the road as possible in order to mitigate habitat and wildlife impacts.
- ❑ Move it away from the roadway.
- ❑ Please locate the new bike path away from the freeway. The least enjoyable part of the bike path today are the sections located directly next to the freeway.
- ❑ Any changes to the bike path that cause further disturbance to wildlife and their habitat must be avoided.
- ❑ A number of people had concerns about water quality and wildlife impacts in regard to the bike path alignment.
- ❑ One person stated that they did not want the bike path to be coincident with the road.
- ❑ I just want to go on record that I am 100% in favor of making the bike path on Vail Pass as user friendly, aesthetic and environmentally responsible as possible. As a member of this conversation I feel it is my responsibility to voice, as strongly as I can, how important this plan is for recreational users of the Vail Pass bike path. The economic impacts from the bike path are vital to both Eagle and Summit Counties, not to mention the beauty experienced by riders. As a frequent cyclist of Vail Pass, knowing we can improve this experience for generations to come, gives me great satisfaction. Given that we have options and the rare opportunity to vastly improve the user's recreation path experience, I think it would be a crime to keep the path near the busy, noisy and dangerous I-70. The incremental cost of moving the bike path away from the highway, when amortized over many years, is quite minimal. It would also seem that moving the bike path away from the highway would make maintenance of that section easier and safer.
- ❑ The focus of the sole “dot exercise” for the public included an opportunity to share feedback on potentially competing values within the context of recreation trail realignment. [Eagle River Water & Sanitation District] appreciate[s] that water quality was included in this exercise. However, the discussion was within the context of the trail, rather than a standalone assessment that solicited public feedback on the values and potential impacts of the entire project. This appears to be in conflict with other materials



shared at the meeting, which state that CDOT is interested in understanding the priorities of the public. That is, the value of the stream should have been publicly assessed on its own, rather than within the context of the trail alignment. In addition, the trail alignment was presented as a “given” rather than allowing the public to freely assess its value.

I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes **Design Option Considerations**

Trail Relocation

The draft Proposed Action will directly impact the Vail Pass Recreation Trail from mileposts 185.5 to 187. Due to these impacts, the project team will be evaluating different options for locations for the trail to be rebuilt. The consideration of options must balance many things: user experience: noise, safety perception, views; wildlife impacts; water quality impacts; wetland impacts; ability to maintain the trail; and others. When evaluating these options, the team would like to know which of the Core Values and considerations below are most important to you?

Place a dot sticker by the three things you think should factor most into decisions about the relocated trail

Safety on Trail (Proximity to highway) 	Grade of Trail 	View from the Trail
Highway Noise 	Wildlife Impacts 	Wetland Impacts
Water Quality Impacts 	Forest Impacts 	Ease of Maintenance of Trail

Wildlife Habitat Connectivity

- ❑ Please increase habitat connectivity. Consider the size of box culverts to ensure they are big enough for target species. Take measures to make sure underpasses/culverts don't fill up with snow.
- ❑ It appears little is incorporated to improve wildlife connectivity. Maintaining existing corridors is important, but a project of this scope should also repair/replace the lost connectivity.



- ❑ Improve connectivity if possible.
- ❑ Current information and plans for terrestrial habitat connectivity were included on several posters, some with substantial detail and photographs. However, aquatic species were not mentioned. Connectivity for fish, macroinvertebrates, and other water-dependent species should be included in the upcoming environmental analysis, as temporary and/or long-term disruptions to the riparian corridor are likely during and after construction. [Eagle River Water & Sanitation District] recommend[s] including more detail on aquatic species occurrence and anticipated impacts going forward in the process. The District, Town of Vail, and numerous other local stakeholders have invested heavily in Gore Creek restoration efforts; these efforts bolster not only tourism and recreation in Vail, but in the economic vitality of the entire state.
- ❑ Of highest priority, safe connectivity for wildlife throughout the entire project area must be maintained. This should include new crossing opportunities for wildlife in addition to maintaining and/or improving those that already exist. Any new underpass structures must be wide and tall enough to be functional spaces for elk-sized critters.
- ❑ My main concern is the consideration of wildlife as they travel across I-70, and with increasing traffic along with other challenges they face (human population growth and development, climate change, invasive species, as examples), they will require corridors that allow them to safely move between spaces. Well thought out wildlife crossing areas should be added as this will provide a safety tool for preventing collisions with cars as well as supporting healthy wildlife populations.
- ❑ I am concerned about the following:
 - the need to maintain connectivity for wildlife throughout the whole project area
 - providing new crossings for wildlife in addition to maintaining those that already exist
 - any new underpass should be wide and tall enough to accommodate species like elk
 - the need to prevent changes to the bike path from disturbing wildlife and their habitat.
- ❑ I am writing to express my support for maintaining wildlife connectivity during the Auxiliary Lanes project on I-70 West Vail Pass. This should include providing new crossing opportunities for wildlife in addition to maintaining those that currently exist throughout the life of the project. The I-70 corridor is one of the main wildlife passages on I-70 and it is critical that we maintain this habitat connection. Any new underpass structure should be wide and tall enough to be functional for species such as elk, especially when taking the proposed new road width into account.
- ❑ I hope that you will take wildlife conservation needs into consideration while developing this project. Please remember to consider how important it is to maintain habitat areas



for certain species; so, ensuring that wildlife are able to safely pass over or under the roadway is definitely a must. I support any input that wildlife organizations have in regards to this project. Thank you for your time and good luck with all the planning!

- ❑ I don't agree with moving the wildlife out. This is their home and the more you push them out they will come in the back yards and if a bear hurts someone then it's ok kill it.

Other

- ❑ Don't ruin aesthetic qualities of Vail Pass by too many lights and VMS signs.
- ❑ One person wants variable speed limit signs and the speed limit to be 25 mph when snowing. He noted that in California and Oregon, the speed limit is reduced to 25 mph in "white conditions." He also suggested positive control of the chain-up area to enforce the traction law.
- ❑ I want to make sure environmental values and obligations are properly embodied in the process.
- ❑ Sound control walls needed from East Vail to MP 180.7.

General Suggestions and Comments

Alternative Improvement Suggestions

- ❑ It's time CDOT did a pilot program to reinstate chain stations to see if it reduces I-70 closures in winter.
- ❑ Before going to the expense of adding auxiliary lanes, much simpler and more cost-effective solutions could be implemented to improve driver visibility. These include:
 - Using high-visibility reflective highway paint. Oftentimes coming down the pass (especially at night and when there is any snow on the road) it is VERY hard to see where the edge of the road and the lane lines are. Other states (including OR and NH) use paint that is highly reflective and increases drivers sight distance when it is dark or when there is inclement weather. There is NO REASON why Colorado can't do the same. Reflective paint might be a little more expensive than the junk you currently use, but it is FAR LESS EXPENSIVE than adding new lanes. Especially if the new lanes are narrow (as they are from Empire to Idaho springs), it causes drivers to slow down excessively and/or straddle the lanes if they can't see where the lines are.
 - Add taller dividers between EB and WB lanes on the west side of the pass to block headlights from blinding drivers going the other way. (The ones between West Vail and Minturn are great).



- Add reflective posts to the center dividers and to the right side of the road to mark the edge of the road better. This will improve visibility when it hasn't plowed well.
- The most dangerous part of Vail pass, in my opinion, is not being able to see the road. Improving visibility is much less expensive than adding extra lanes and would be a good first step to making this stretch of highway safer.
- Expanding I-70 to 6 lanes is a silly waste of money. 95+% of the time the highway runs free and clear. Expanding simply turns it into a race track of more idiots going too fast without any foul weather driving skills. Here's a solution: take the proposed budget of the expansion, buy 4 dedicated snow plows and 4 courtesy patrol trucks and when the weather turns nasty simply have them run up and down the pass keeping speeders at bay and keeping the movement of vehicles orderly and safe? If the estimated cost of the expansion is \$500,000,000 my proposal would cost a minute fraction on a yearly basis & would stop the accidents, stop the negative impact on wildlife, and help us save some money.

Same person commented with same suggestion in more detail using different submittal method:

Looking at the various informational pieces I feel very strongly opposed to the increase from 4 lanes to 6 lanes – reason being, this will take on the characteristics of a race track even more than it is already. Basic fact, most people are truly BAD drivers. Hovering in the left lane, playing aggressive games, driving without good tires, no experience in driving in rain or snow conditions. By creating a 3-lane race track you will encourage even more of these bad behaviors. This stretch of I-70 is a MOUNTAIN PASS – with that comes certain responsibilities of drivers. Probably more than 95% of the time traffic moves quite nicely up and down the pass – throw a snow storm into the mix and chaos ensues....so, with an estimated \$500,000,000 cost (at a minimum) why not hire several people to man four new courtesy vehicles & any time there is a weather or a ski weekend migration back to the Front Range, these vehicles simply “pace” the traffic up and down the pass? Cost would be minimal and the safety would increase exponentially & the number of morons getting into accidents would plummet. I see no reason to spend this amount of money to create a bigger problem, create faster traffic, create an even greater hazard for our wildlife and once again cave to the interests of motorist that complain during snowy weather that the roads are awful.....as I said, 95% of the time traffic flows perfectly fine up and down the pass....so, to mitigate the 5% or less of the time traffic and accidents snarl things we are being asked to find \$500,000,000+?!?!?! Wasteful spending.....Lastly, having been involved over the last many years discussing, revising, editing and helping with C-Dot figure out other traffic issues in Eagle County – it is my experience that they listen, sometimes actively, but not once have I seen them actually change/modify a plan to accommodate the publics input. Just like this issue, us regular



folks are simply spitting in the wind and wasting our time. C-Dot has and will continue to do whatever they want and the public be damned. Sad but true.

- ❑ Excessive speed is the cause of many traffic accidents and near-misses, particularly on the west side of Vail Pass, in the westbound lanes. Increased speed control would help but in the “narrows” or curvy stretch where there is very little shoulder, and even less shoulder in winter, patrol officers stopping speeders could create additional hazards. Would it be possible to install cameras to monitor speed with signage above this area warning of speed cameras and that violators will be ticketed - similar to the red light camera system?

Private Property Impacts

- ❑ I want to be assured that my complex, Ridgeview Square, Spruce Way, East Vail, will not be taken out by this third eastbound lane as right now the eastbound lane is almost on top of the complex. I am also concerned that there is no one in East Vail properties such as mine represented in the planning and design. It must be widened in the opposite direction, to the north.
- ❑ People living in East Vail were glad to see that the south edge of pavement line was being held. This was extremely important to them. They were also concerned about noise and wanted to know if new sound walls would be included in the project.

Other

- ❑ Please include proposed wildlife crossing when these graphics are put online. I was told they were left off the graphics tonight, but could be easily included online. Please include the sizes of proposed crossing structures.
- ❑ I’m worried that more could be done to address the environmental issues we already know of due to the existing roadway. Hopefully any project will keep improving the environment from the existing state as priorities while accommodating the vehicular travel.
- ❑ I would like to commend the people that worked clearing the Vail Pass today. I was not able to make it to the top and pulled over onto the shoulder of the road about two miles from the top. I sat and waited not knowing what to do, I am not from this area and have never went over this pass. A Safety Patrol person stopped and rendered assistance. He pulled me to the top of the Pass into the rest stop where I was able to continue after waiting for the plows to come through. Thank you all so much for saving my day.
- ❑ The Eagle River Water & Sanitation District supports CDOT and FHWA efforts to improve safety and operations on the west side of Vail Pass. We appreciated the outreach to our local community and customers at the December 14, 2018, public open house held at the Donovan Pavilion in Vail.



I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes

Public Meeting #2 Comment Summary

- Anyone who drives I-70 is aware of the terrible road wear and damage caused by big semi trucks. In some places damage is so great it is dangerous to smaller vehicles. What is the volume of semi trucks by percentage of traffic on I-70? Does the trucking industry pay at least that percentage in taxes or fees toward maintaining roads?