

Welcome to the I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes project virtual public announcement.

To pause and start the presentation, use the play/pause button on your video player. To view a graphic in more detail with zoom capability, access the individual graphic links on the project web page:

 www.bit.ly/WestVailPass 



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I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes Project
Virtual Public Announcement

July 2021



This virtual presentation will provide an overview of the initial construction activities beginning in 2021, and a lookahead to future phases of work and more impactful construction beginning in 2022. We'll first reintroduce the project, including the project's Context statement, Purpose and Need statement, as well as the Project Core Goals established in the Context Sensitive Solutions Process and the Environmental Assessment.

- **Project Overview**
- **INFRA Grant**
- **Design Status**
- **Construction Status**
- **Stay Informed**



Before we get started, the team encourages you to join our project email list and stay informed of construction activities using the project website.

Stay informed!

CDOT_WVailPassAuxLanes@state.co.us

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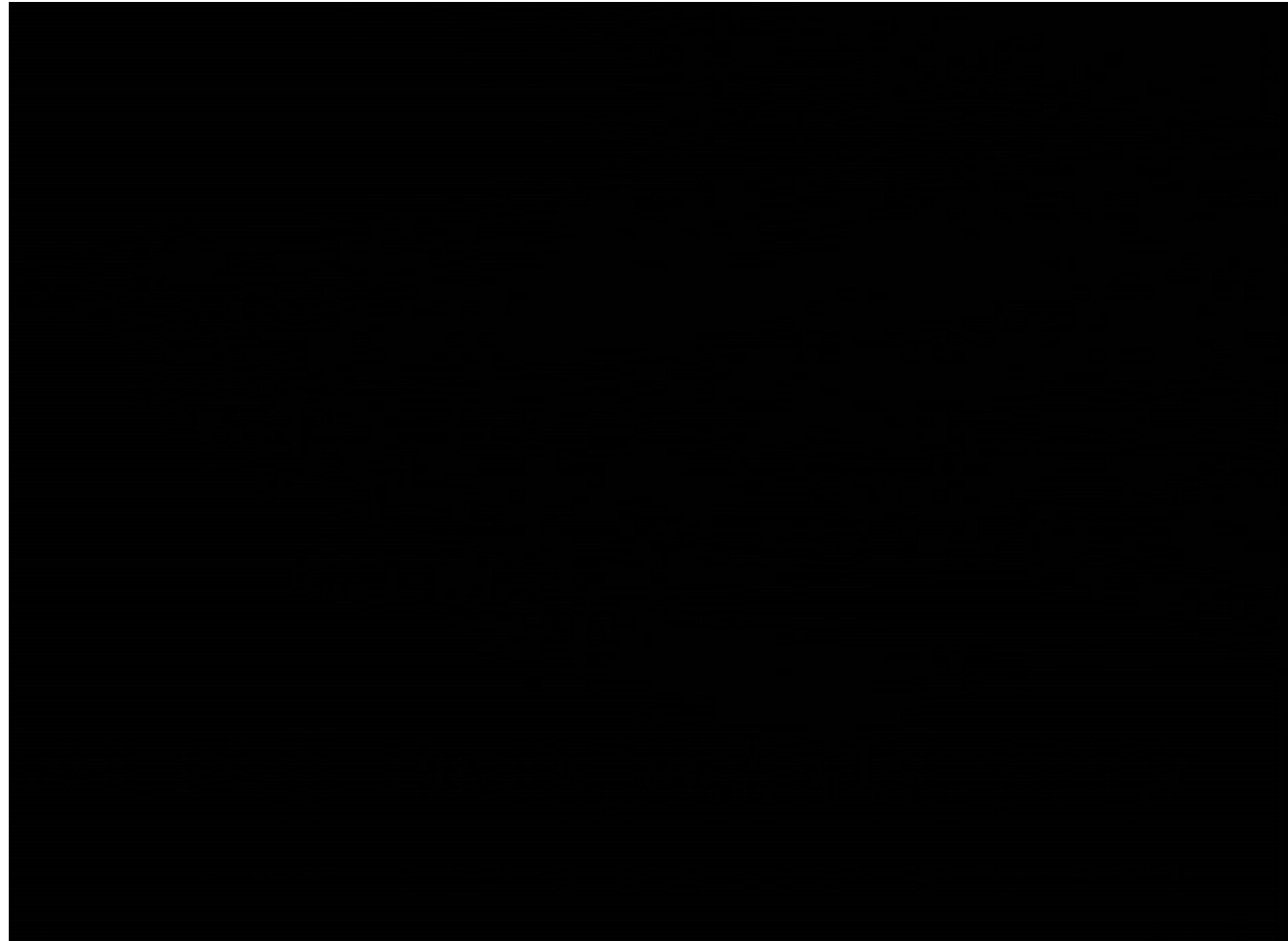
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PROJECT OVERVIEW



Project Introduction and History

The original I-70 alignment over Vail Pass was analyzed in the 1973 Vail Pass Environmental Impact Statement. Construction of this section of I-70 was completed in 1978.



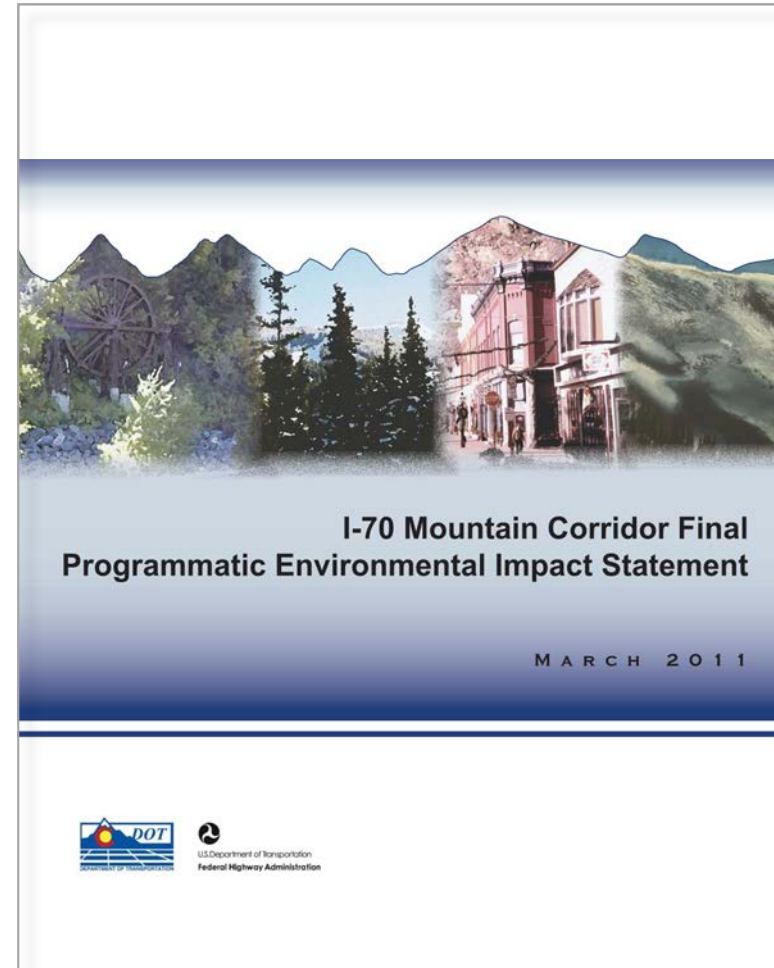


Project Introduction and History

Years of analysis and studies, beginning in 2011, identified the need for auxiliary lanes eastbound and westbound on the west side of Vail Pass between Mile Points 180 and 190.

An auxiliary lane is a travel lane that is added between two interchanges to improve traffic flow.

In 2017, CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) began a more detailed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for assessing improvements to I-70 on West Vail Pass.



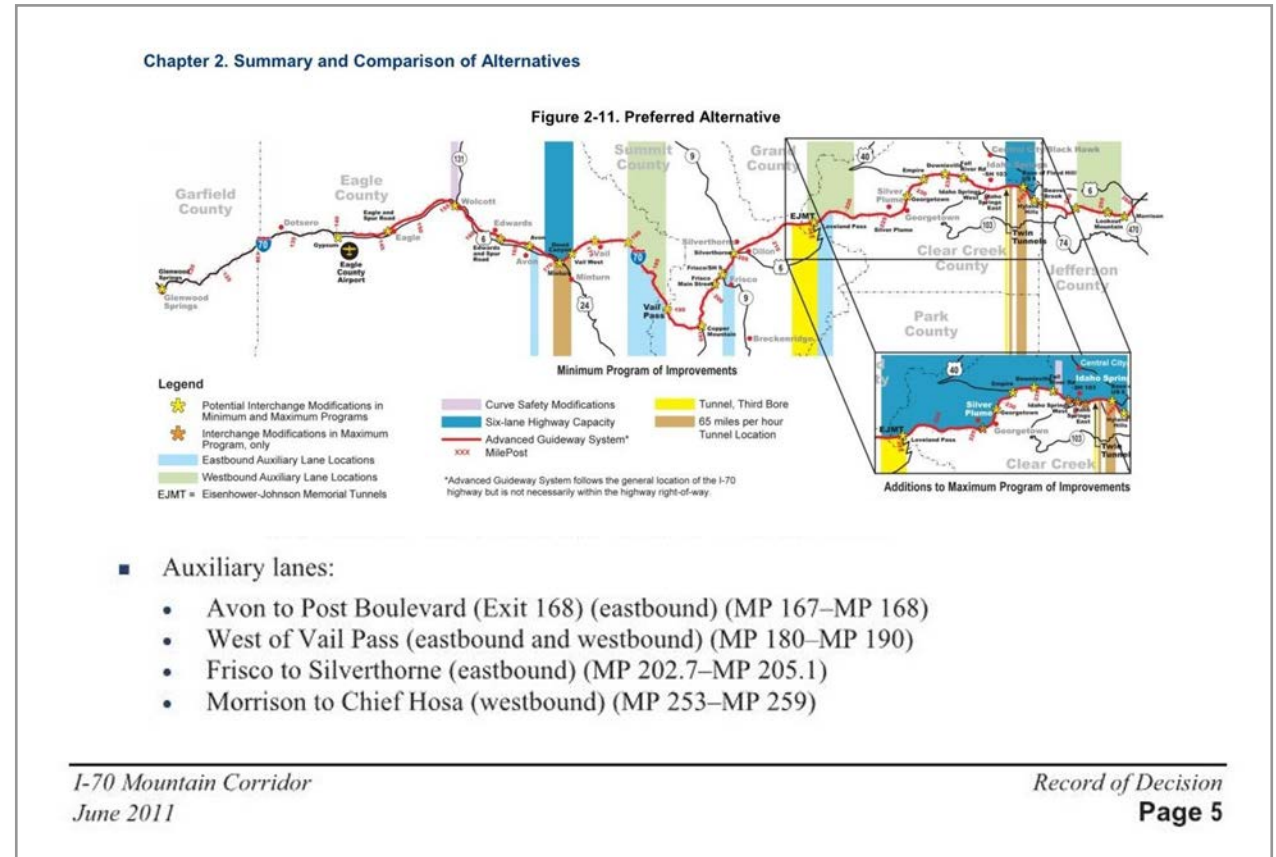


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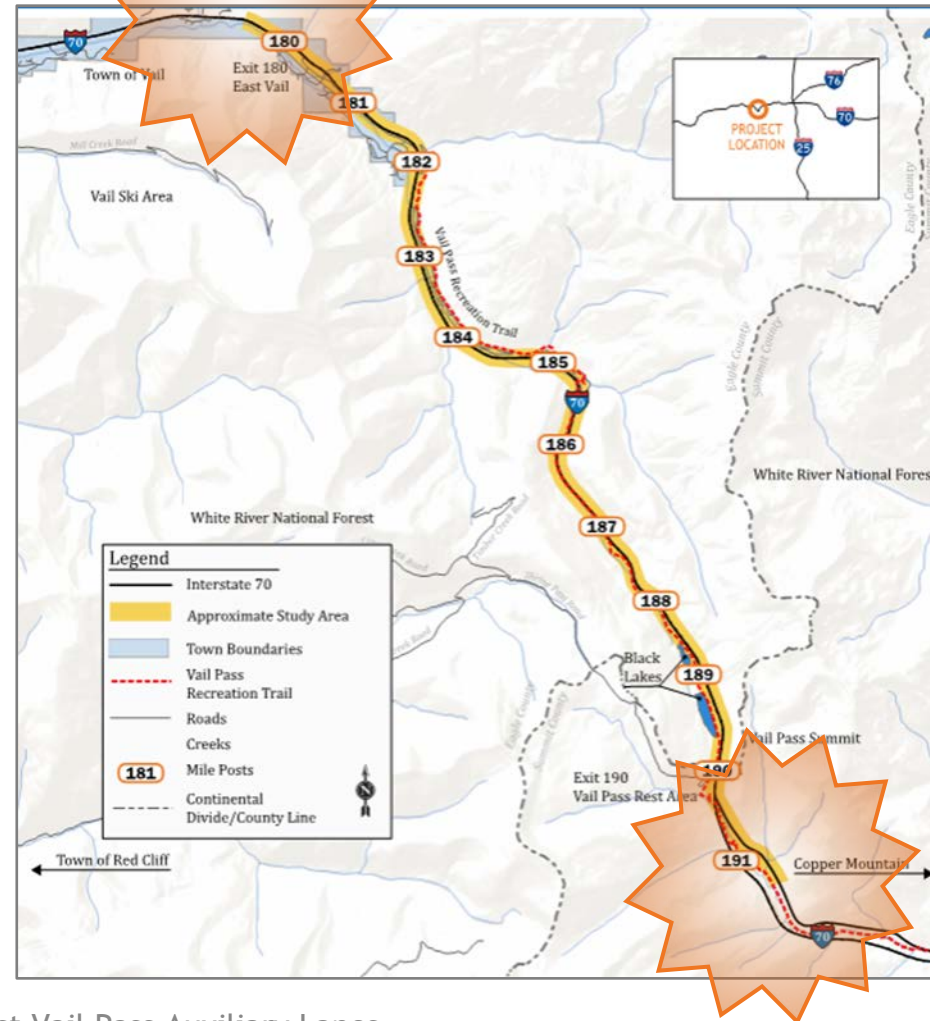
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Project Area

The project's eastern end is just east of the Vail Pass Rest Area at the top of the pass and the western end is in the eastern portion of the Town of Vail. The Project limits include eastbound and westbound I-70 from Mile Points 179.5 to 191.5.





Project Context Statement

Corridor Context

I-70 is Colorado's only east-west Interstate, providing a critical interstate economic link for the country. It also provides the only direct route between the Front Range and western Colorado. Area residents and visitors travel the corridor to access growing mountain communities, as well as local and regional recreational opportunities. Vail Pass is rich in natural beauty and unique environmental, wildlife, historic, and recreational resources.

The I-70 corridor over Vail Pass has a natural scenic beauty and dramatic views as it winds through U.S. Forest Service land. The corridor is recognized as a nationally and exceptionally significant feature of the federal interstate highway system due to its early implementation of context sensitive design, integrating a modern transportation facility with the surrounding natural environment. This section of highway is considered a historic resource due to these elements.

The steep grades, roadside terrain, and extreme weather events make I-70 over Vail Pass a challenging mountain pass to travel and maintain. Conflicts between vehicles traveling at substantially different speeds create safety problems and operational issues. Transportation improvements must preserve the natural beauty and unique resources in the corridor while improving safety and the travel experience for commerce, residents and visitors.

The Project Context Statement and Core Values helped to frame the unique conditions of the Project as well as the concerns and values to be considered during the Environmental Assessment (EA) and future decision-making. This Context Statement was based on the original Mountain Corridor Context Statement and was further developed for this project through a robust process with project group members, resource agencies, and community members. The Context Statement captures in words the special qualities and attributes that uniquely define Vail Pass.



Purpose & Need

The Project Purpose and Need statement was developed based on the I-70 Final PEIS Purpose and Need, which identified safety and mobility issues on West Vail Pass related to speed differences between different types of vehicles such as cars and freight operators or other slower-moving vehicles.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety and operations on eastbound and westbound I-70 at West Vail Pass. “Operations,” as defined here, means “how well traffic flows through an area,” which can be affected by the number of cars and trucks, weather, curves, steepness of the road, and other features. This project is needed to address safety and operational issues such as crashes, road closures due to crashes and weather, and passenger vehicles being stuck behind semi-trucks.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety and operations on eastbound and westbound I-70 on West Vail Pass.

Need:

- Safety concerns
- Operation issues





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INFRA GRANT



INFRA Grant Funding

In June 2020, CDOT was awarded a federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant. This, combined with other funding sources, will allow for construction of the first phase of the project, totaling \$140.4 million.

Funding Identified:

- Federal INFRA grant: \$60.7 million
- CDOT contribution: \$75.2 million
- Other federal sources: \$4.5 million
- Total: \$140.4 million



INFRA

I-70 Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements

Colorado Department of Transportation
Eagle County, Colorado

Proposed Award: \$60,700,000

Estimated Future Eligible Project Costs: \$140,400,000

Estimated Minimum Non-Federal Funding: \$75,200,000

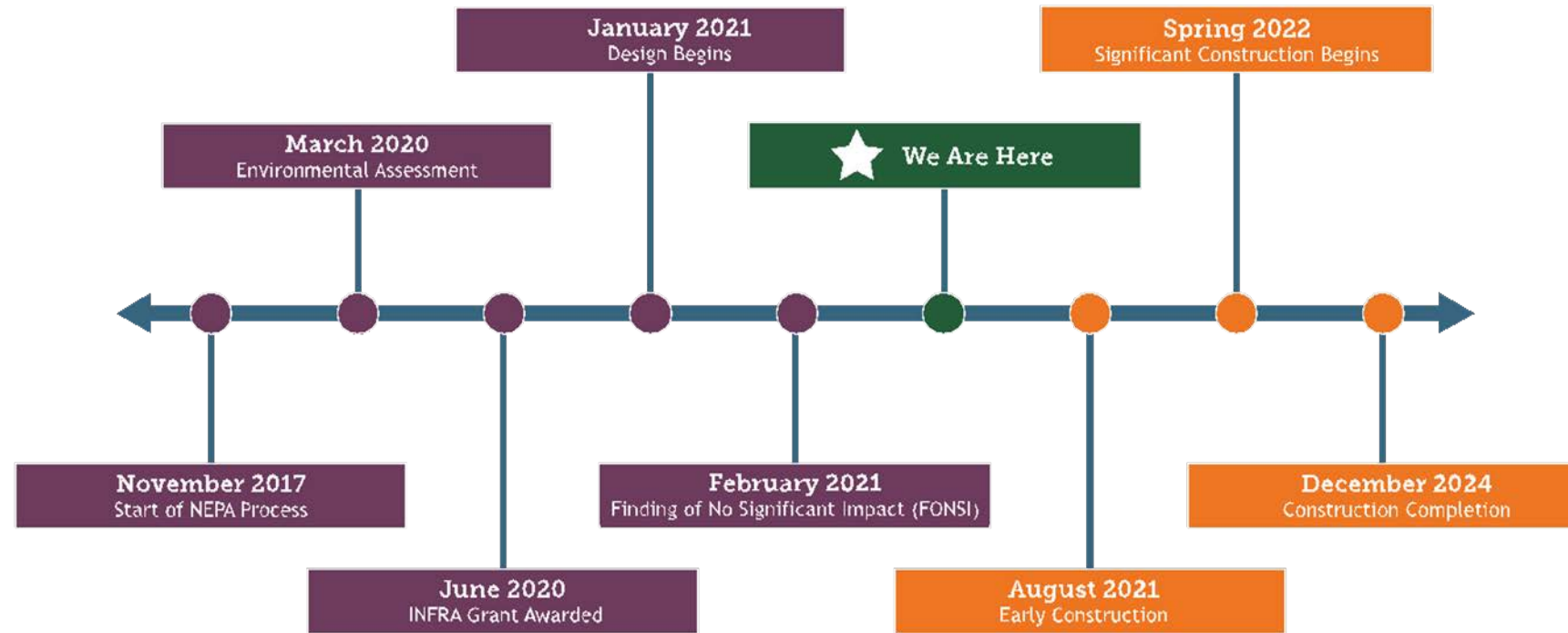
The total cost for the Proposed Action is **\$700 million**.

CDOT will continue to pursue additional funding to complete the rest of the project.



Project Timeline

The INFRA Grant – applied for in coordination with the Intermountain, Gunnison Valley, Northwest Transportation Planning Regions (TPR), and the Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/TPR – will facilitate work on the areas of highest crash rates and greatest operational challenges.



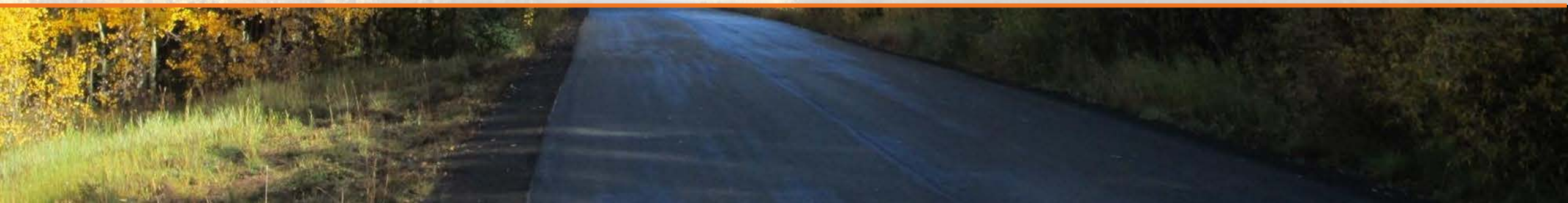
Timing of design and construction for other phases will be dependent on future funding.



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DESIGN STATUS





Proposed Action

Design of the INFRA Grant improvements started in early 2021 on the West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes project that have identified funding. These Phase I improvements include:

- An eastbound I-70 auxiliary lane with widened shoulders between Mile Points 185 and 190
- Westbound Curve modifications with widened shoulders at Mile Points 186 and 188
- Bridge replacement at eastbound Mile Point 185.3
- Truck ramp reconstruction at Mile Point 182
- Highway closure system
- Six wildlife underpasses and fencing
- Two miles of Vail Pass recreational trail relocation between Mile Points 185 and 187
- Improved signage and incorporation of an Active Traffic Management system and variable speed limit signs across the entire project area



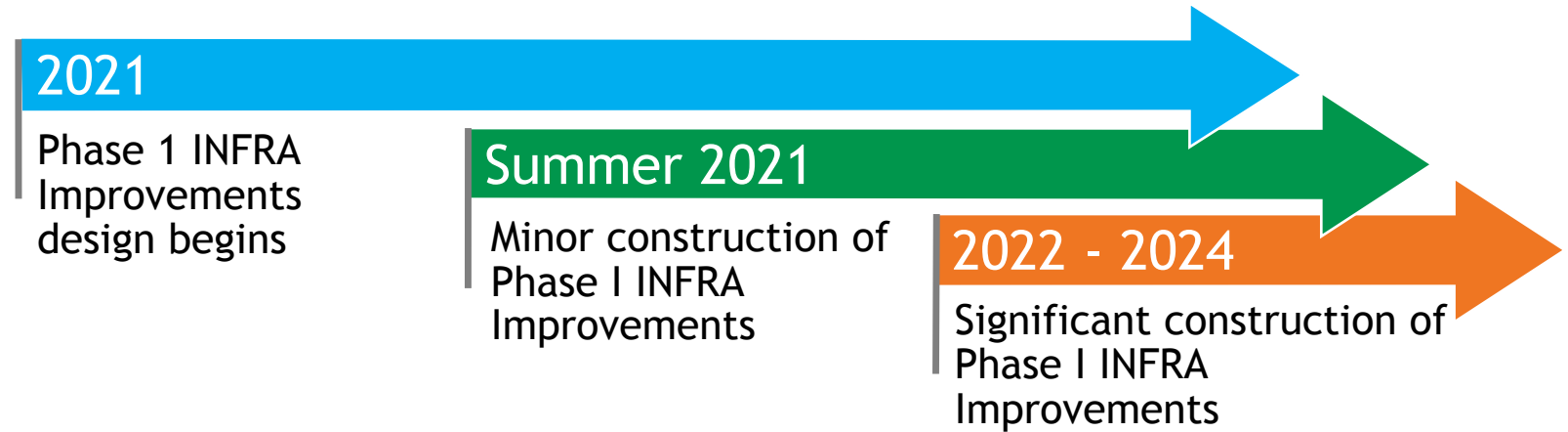


Design Process

The project’s contractor, Kiewit Infrastructure, is assisting in the design development as part of the construction management/general contractor (CM/GC) delivery method.

The initial design focus is on the truck escape ramp and the highway closure system.

This work is anticipated to begin August 2021.



Timing of design for other phases will be dependent on future funding.



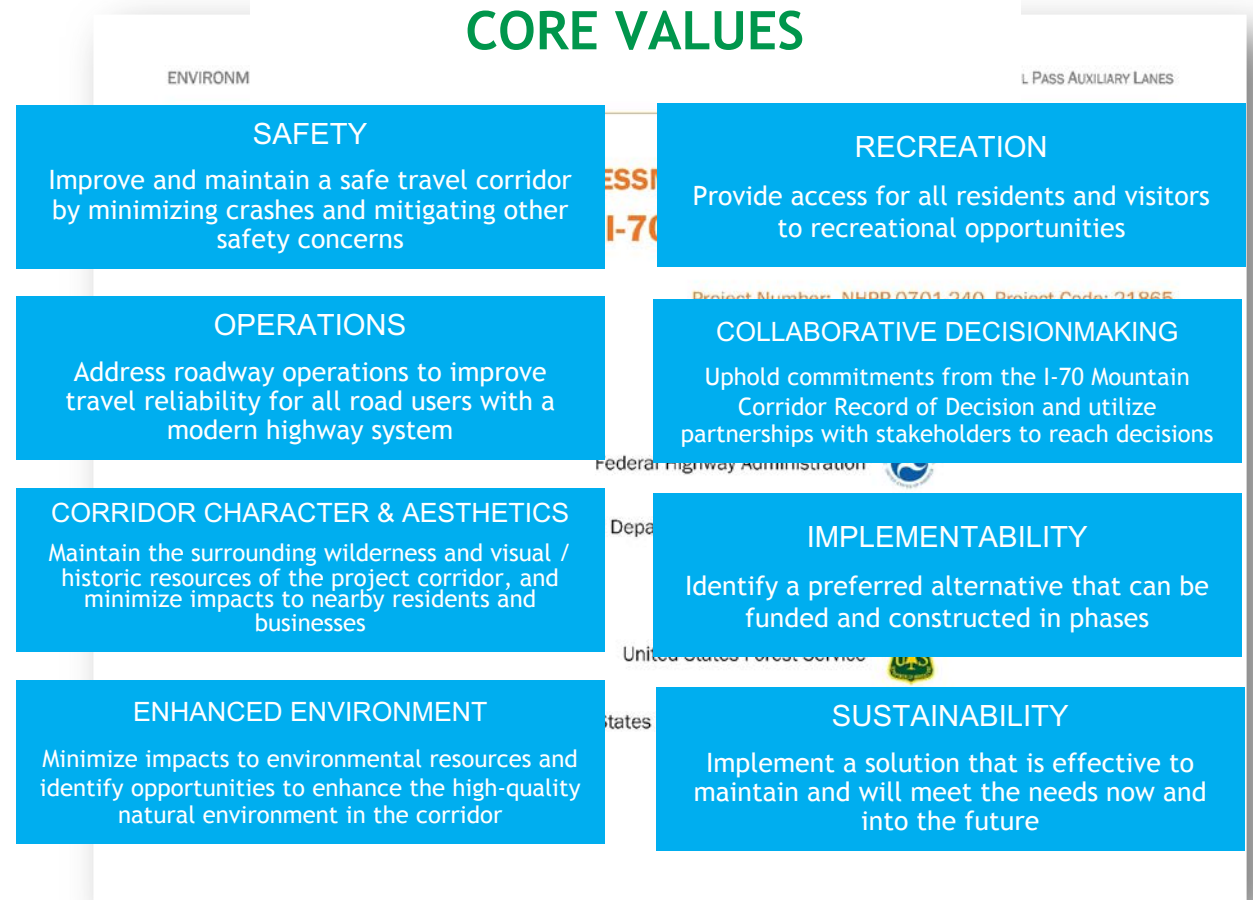
Environmental Assessment Commitments

As design and construction activities begin, CDOT along with the design and contractor teams will uphold the obligations and mitigation strategies developed throughout the CSS process and captured in the Finding of No Significant Impacts.

Commitments include:

- Creation of an Aesthetics Issues Task Force responsible for developing project-specific aesthetic direction based on the Crest of the Rockies Guidance and honoring the unique and historic nature of West Vail Pass.
- Updating the Black Gore Creek Sediment Control Action Plan and identifying opportunities for partnerships that continue the water quality improvement of Gore Creek and Black Gore Creek.
- Emergency Planning to maintain emergency response during construction and to improve access for emergency response to sections of the Vail Pass Recreation Trail.
- Six Wildlife Crossings - Two designed for large animals and four for smaller animals. Along with the installation of wildlife fencing, these crossings will improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.

CORE VALUES





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CONSTRUCTION STATUS



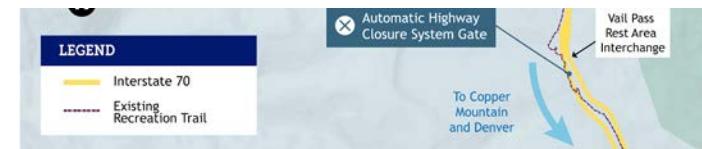
Minor Construction

Minor construction activities that should have little effect on I-70 traffic are scheduled to begin in August 2021. These initial construction activities will focus on reconstructing the truck ramp near Mile Point 182 just east of Vail, and installing a highway closure system near Mile Point 190 at the top of Vail Pass.

The truck ramp will be closed during construction this summer and fall, and is expected to reopen by the end of 2021.

The recreation trail will remain open. Construction flaggers will direct trail users to help maintain a safe buffer between construction.

The traveling public should expect to see construction equipment and crews mobilizing to the early construction areas.





Significant Construction

More significant construction activities will start in Spring 2022, spanning 10 miles of I-70 from East Vail to the top of Vail Pass.





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STAY INFORMED



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Thank You

More information is available at www.bit.ly/WestVailPass

Please join our email list by sending an email to
CDOT_WVailPassAuxLanes@state.co.us

Thank you for watching this I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes project virtual public announcement.