



MEETING NOTES

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| PROJECT: | 21685 I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes |
| PURPOSE: | Technical Team (TT) Meeting #10/PLT Meeting #6 |
| DATE HELD: | August 12, 2020 |
| LOCATION: | Online Zoom Meeting |
| ATTENDING: | John Kronholm, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3 Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3 Kristin Salamack, CDOT USFWS Liaison Emmalee Blender, CDOT Region 3 Traffic Tom Gosiorowski, Summit County Dick Cleveland, Town of Vail Scott Jones, Colorado Snowmobile Association Kristen Gray Bertuglia, Town of Vail Ben Gerdes, Eagle County David Cesark, Environmental Manager, CDOT Region 3 Vanessa Henderson, I-70 Environmental Manager, CDOT Greg Hall, Town of Vail Pete Wadden, Town of Vail Larissa Read, Consultant to ERWSD Michelle Cowardin, Colorado Parks & Wildlife Shannon Anderson, Bicycle Colorado Kevin Sharkey, ECO Trails Stephanie Gibson, FHWA Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Association Kara Swanson, Consultant Environmental Task Lead, David Evans & Associates JJ Wierema, Wood Matt Figgs, CDOT Region 3 |
| COPIES: | PLT and TT Member and Attendees |

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions & Meeting Purpose

- a. Karen reviewed Zoom meeting attendees and reviewed the agenda.
- b. The purpose of the meeting is to review EA findings and next steps in advance of the public review period.

2. EA Overview

- a. A PowerPoint presentation was used to review progress and findings (see attached). Additional discussion is included in these notes.
- b. Noise - Greg Hall asked if berms or barriers can be used rather than walls in some locations to help with noise. Vanessa noted that those types of things can't be considered noise mitigation, but they could possibly be added to the project, if applicable, and could provide incidental noise reduction benefits. Greg would like that added into the EA. Karen stated that it is not appropriate to include additional noise mitigation in the document as it does not meet federal guidelines.
- c. Under Historic Resources mitigation, Greg pointed out that it says "Create Aesthetic Guidance". He asked if we will be following that guidance as well. Kara noted this is a summary and yes, the guidance will be followed during design and construction.



d. Water Quality - Greg noted there is a lot of commitment to sediment, but how is Gore Creek listed/discussed? Black Gore is listed as impaired for sediment, but Gore Creek is only listed for macroinvertebrates. Kara noted that the EA focuses on the accumulation of sediment. John added that Gore Creek isn't listed as 303d impaired in the limits of the project. Pete agreed, but noted it is important to keep in mind that the listed sections of Gore Creek are downstream. Is there any potential to address other pollutants such as mag chloride, etc. Kara explained that CDOT has created a menu control measures that convey and treat water and have identified areas where we can restore wetlands that would also help as secondary water quality treatment. Karen noted that the WQ Tech Memo is very comprehensive and identifies all of the common pollutants and then which ones the project would address.

i. Pete corrected there are two locations of Gore Creek that are 303d listed for macroinvertebrates within the corridor.

Updated: There is one section of Gore Creek, from the confluence of Black Gore Creek to the confluence with the Eagle River, that is listed provisionally for Aquatic Life Usage.

ii. John stated that CDOT is not treating water specifically for mag chloride.

iii. Greg asked that the WQ section talks about the listing status.

iv. Vanessa noted macroinvertebrates are also discussed in the biological resources section.

v. USFS monitors about 4 – 6 sites. Eagle River Watershed Council may know more.

e. Wetlands - Loveland Ski Area expansion stopped short due to fens- is that possible on this project? Can we avoid impacts? Kara stated that some of the fens are very close to the road but all efforts will be made during design to first avoid, and then minimize, impacts to them.

f. Greg – There needs to be a section in the EA that describes how the project doesn't preclude the AGS and that maybe that would be included in the transportation report appendix.

g. Larissa asked – new NEPA CEQ guidance starts in Sept. Is FHWA going to be using this guidance? Will we see reference to direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts?

i. Stephanie noted that this document was written under existing guidance. HQ hasn't provided guidance on proposed changes and FHWA is not proposing any changes to the EA. Won't see direct and indirect because that isn't the way Colorado does it. There is a section of cumulative impacts in this EA.

h. Construction mitigation - Tracy noted CMCA's concern with rerouting and detours during construction. There are limited reroutes for commercial vehicles so need to be clear on that. This is a hazmat route- Tracey asked if construction will reroute require variance for transport of hazmat onto another route.

i. Construction – Shannon noted that Two Elk Trail connects to another trailhead off of US 24. There is a traverse over a wall and you can't easily turn around and go back up. She asked how CDOT will notify trail users of that before they come down. She mentioned that there is a place at the top where sign could be placed to warn riders to not go down toward I-70.



- i. Matt noted that during design, the Recreation ITF will discuss all of the closure issues and this information is very helpful. Contractor will participate in the ITF.
- j. Construction – Greg noted that some places where Big Horn Road closures are discussed is actually a USFS Road. Columbine Drive is listed under recreation but it is also a neighborhood road.
 - i. John explained that the mention of Big Horn Road was referring to the section that goes under I-70.
- k. Construction – The Two Elk Trail won't be impacted in INFRA scope, but the recreation trail will be relocated as part of the INFRA project.
- l. CSS Commitments – Greg noted that the Aesthetics ITF advises before the Design Criteria ITF. Seems like should initiate aesthetics first and then that could help guide design exceptions.
 - i. John noted the EA doesn't commit to the order the meetings happens, but the concept now is to parallel both efforts with final results reported to each other. CDOT wouldn't build anything that requires aesthetic review before completing the aesthetic guidance. This will be an iterative feedback process.

3. Next Steps and INFRA Grant

- a. EA public review
 - i. Dick noted the Vail Library is open 8 hours per day and reservations are not required- it would be a good place to have a copy.
 - ii. ERWSD was hoping for extension to 45 days review, due to all of the extensive tech reports. FHWA requires an official request sent to CDOT with reasoning.
 - iii. Greg noted it would be good to have a few copies available in the Town offices. The Town Clerk may be able to keep that.
 - iv. Stephanie noted that the public engagement for the EA shouldn't be called a meeting.
- b. INFRA Grant Improvements
 - i. Tom asked if the descent lane was more of a safety issue – as he remembered. So how do we explain why the climbing lane was chosen to be included in this instead?
 - 1. Karen noted that this was a data exercise, because the uphill lane has a major benefit by reducing crashes and travel reliability with less closures. That showed a very large benefit – in order to get the grant needed to maximize safety and operational improvements and show a good cost/benefit ratio.
 - ii. Greg thought that the Intermountain TPR committed \$80M.
 - 1. Karen said that during CDOT's recent planning projects a new list of projects was developed. As part of that effort, TPRs were asked to assign potential funding to each priority as if there was a funding stream that would continue like SB 267 and it was like the year 5 – 10 list for SB 267. This exercise resulted in a list with some larger funding for Vail Pass. The current funding match came from other



- projects in the Region to fund West Vail Pass. Not sure if years 5 – 10 will happen. \$33.5 is from years 1 – 4.
- iii. Wildlife underpasses will be constructed under EB and WB. The final decision hasn't been made yet if it will be built wide enough to accommodate third lane– need to figure out if it makes sense to make it extra long to accommodate future widening.
 - iv. Karen described the order of how things will happen: CDOT committed to some construction next year. Need to maintain commitment to holding all of the ITFs. CDOT looked at which parts of the scope could be done first that isn't tied to triggering major impacts (possibly de-icing, signage). Will have three packages for construction. There is a separate paving package not part of this INFRA grant. First package May 2021, second May 2022, third done by Dec. 2022.
 - v. Bringing on design team and contractor and design work will start in the next month.
 1. Have selected design team. Expect to have contractor on board in Oct or Nov.
 2. RS&H is prime design. Prime environmental is Jacobs. Julia Kintsch wildlife. Holly Huyck with Pinyon is SCAP lead. MaryJo Vobejda with Jacobs will be CSS lead. Diane Yates is Jacobs' aesthetics lead.
 - vi. The improvements will be delivered in multiple packages.
 - vii. Greg – what happens years down the road, the conditions of the approval are long-term commitment. What is the penalty for not maintaining commitments for ongoing maintenance after project is completed?
 1. Karen noted commitments are project related, not long-term. CDOT will track mitigations and how they were met during construction.
 2. Greg noted that stakeholders have expressed concern about maintenance of items– what if control measures are put in and then not maintained. Or if the contractor seeds but doesn't make sure that areas are revegetated, etc.
 3. Stephanie noted CDOT Environmental Programs Branch continually works on making sure WQ control measures are working in perpetuity. For vegetation, there are requirements before permits can be closed out – have to reach at least 70% of pre-construction vegetation before permit is closed. Including something else in the EA isn't going to help.
 4. Kara noted this is a CDOT maintenance issue, larger than this project.
 5. Larissa asked for clarity for the stakeholders about chain of responsibility for things that go into the future.
 6. Stephanie suggested adding something at beginning of mitigation section saying CDOT is responsible for making sure long-term mitigation elements are kept in good repair. Facilities are owned and operated by CDOT. FHWA can't force that maintenance.
 7. Tom asked if CDOT would commit to maintaining specific mitigation features, beyond what EPB already does. Would like to express in this document that CDOT is committed to long-term maintenance,



monitoring in perpetuity. A lot of frustration from local communities and public because mitigation is initially installed by CDOT but then stops working because it isn't maintained by CDOT.

8. John noted this could have statewide implications and would need to be taken to leadership and further discussed with FHWA. Karen asked that this should be submitted at a comment during formal comment period and CDOT will start doing homework behind the scenes.
- viii. Tom congratulated the team on the progress and receiving the grant.