

Stakeholder Workshop #7

Location: Eagle Pointe Recreation Center

Date/Time: August 27, 2024 / 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Purpose: Discuss topics identified for further discussion by stakeholders. Tonight's topics included reviewing potential construction phasing and best practices and discussing environmental justice.

Discussion

Welcome and review of last workshop

Participants introduced themselves. A summary of the last workshop was included in the briefing book. Inserts to the briefing book were distributed to provide information and background for tonight's discussions.

Construction

Mandy Whorton introduced the discussion on potential construction phasing and highlighted other projects in the area that are planned or could be in construction at the same time as I-270. Several larger projects, like the connections between I-270 and I-25 and I-70), will require careful coordination to manage traffic. Other improvements for roadways that intersect with I-270, like York Street and Vasquez Boulevard, will also require coordination.

Pat Stein and Matt Brahler discussed potential construction phasing for the I-270 project. They outlined a three-phase approach to building new bridges and road infrastructure while minimizing traffic disruptions. The proposed approach would build bridges in phases that accommodate maintaining two lanes of traffic in each direction throughout construction:

- Phase 1: New bridges and a portion of the highway to the north of I-270 will be constructed. During this phase, eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) traffic will remain in the current lanes without any changes.
- Phase 2: Once the northern lanes are completed, WB traffic will shift onto these new lanes and bridges. While WB traffic uses the new infrastructure, construction will begin on the bridges and highway sections between the existing EB and WB lanes. EB traffic will remain in its current position.
- Phase 3: EB traffic will then be moved onto the newly built lanes from Phase 2. Afterward, new bridges and highway segments to the south of I-270 will be constructed while WB traffic continues to use the lanes completed in Phase 1.

This phased approach and adherence to best practices will help minimize disruption while maintaining safety and communication with the public and local stakeholders throughout the construction of the I-270 Corridor Improvements project.

Comments and Discussion:

- A question was raised about whether old bridges are being replaced by new ones.

- Answer: Generally, the intent is to replace the existing bridges with new structures. A few bridges, such as the Vasquez bridge that was replaced in 2000, will likely not need to be replaced.
- A question was asked about how bridge construction will impact the South Platte River and what will happen to the water and surrounding habitats.
 - Answer: The team is working with a contractor to study and limit the impact. Potential options were discussed such as using cranes to lift out sections of existing bridges for removal, building in low water seasons when the Platte is narrower, and designing piers further back from the creek bank when possible.
- Mandy asked the group about their experience during the emergency bridge repairs on I-270 in fall 2023.
 - Matt noted some lessons learned about lane configuration and avoiding extended closures as much as possible. Requested people share any suggestions or recommendations with CDOT.
- A question was raised about the possibility of any full closures.
 - Answer: The need for full closures is still being evaluated. Full closures will be limited to the extent possible. Some construction tasks, such as delivery of girders, may necessitate closures.
- Mandy requested any suggestions from the group for communicating during construction.
 - Comments and suggestions from group members included; you can't over communicate, text updates in local languages, ask the community about what they need and what is important to them, paper fliers, go door to door (especially to reach older residents), consider some in the community may not read.
- Mandy asked for input on how the team's current outreach efforts are going.
 - Group members noted it is good and they have seen the team at lots of community events. Suggestions for continued outreach included coordinating with school and school districts to send information home with students and working with faith-based organizations.
- A question was asked about how air quality will be monitored during construction and what will be done to mitigate any impacts.
 - Answer: Air quality monitoring will occur during construction, and a baseline study with initial data collection has already begun.

Environmental Justice

Mandy provided an overview of the I-270 project, outlining the alternatives and key design elements. The group reviewed briefing book materials summarizing environmental justice in the context of NEPA.

State Environmental Justice processes were described. At the state level, Senate Bill (SB) 21-260 aims to remove barriers that prevent disproportionately impacted (DI) communities from fully participating in decisions affecting their health, quality of life, and well-being. The Environmental Justice and Equity Branch within CDOT works closely with these communities to promote more equitable involvement in transportation decisions. The Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) has also developed the EnviroScreen tool, which helps identify areas affected by environmental health injustices.

At the federal level, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) serves as the primary framework for addressing environmental justice. During the NEPA review process, CDOT assesses potential adverse health and environmental impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns. The

EPA's EJScreen tool combines environmental and demographic data to identify communities that face environmental burdens.

For the I-270 project, CDOT will conduct an environmental justice evaluation in compliance with both state and federal requirements. Community outreach and public engagement are essential to both processes, ensuring meaningful involvement from affected communities.

The group was divided into four smaller groups for more focused discussions, during which stakeholders addressed the following questions and provided these comments:

- What does environmental justice mean to you?
 - Protecting the environment.
 - Protecting people.
 - Land use for all.
 - Historically harmed communities.
 - Win/win-reducing impacts.
 - Pollution combined with less access to healthcare.
 - Access to decision-making.
 - Reconsider alternatives.
 - Creative solutions.
- How do you think the I-270 project contributes to issues?
 - Exhaust/emissions from vehicles.
 - I-270 leads to more traffic on local roads.
 - Noise-construction.
 - How to ensure safety / reduce risk to over travelers and others near refinery due to incidents?
 - During construction, how will emergency response access be maintained to refinery and other locations?
 - Worker and traveler safety during construction.
 - Are the speeds appropriate?
 - Do lane diversions cause issues/incidents if speeds are too high, especially with trucks?
 - Construction light pollution and noise at night affecting residents.
 - Will trucks/freight detour through residential neighborhoods during construction?
 - Cumulative effect of multiple construction projects (such as central 70, I-270, Vasquez).
 - Concern about Vasquez/60th intersection if not fixed prior to I-270 construction.
 - Concern about signal outage at 60th and Vasquez.
 - Flat tires/ poor conditions.
 - Timber bridges-lots of failing infrastructure.
 - Litter.
 - Historically marginalized.
 - Racism.
 - Redlining.
 - Treated like we are not worth it.
 - Heavy truck traffic-conflicts with 69th.
 - Unsafe roads for kids/nondrivers.
 - Spills and hazardous waste on I-270 but nonhazardous waste on I-70.
- What are meaningful things that could improve conditions and/or reduce environmental burdens?
 - Build green space near the community that wants to use them and care for them.
 - Ensure that green spaces are safe and people feel safe accessing them.

- Protect the green spaces.
- Think about construction impacts on lower income.
- Respect and value is foundation of where we've been and where we go.
- Infrastructure that looks good and clean.
- Dollars to schools, Cultivando, community organizations
- Visible goodwill-show you care.
- Air filters/fans.
- Bus passes.
- Support for broken down vehicles.
- Debris from construction/potholes.
- Communicate-show up, leverage community leaders.
- Cater to working residents—more than one job.
- Passionate community members will help.
- Public safety.
- Improve homeless.
- Montbello connector funding.
- Compensation for community for shared experience.
- Stipends.
- King Sooper gas card.
- Childcare.
- Translation/interpretation.
- Visualization shows us what it will look like.
- Sustainability initiatives
- Clean up days.
- Noise walls.
- Let the community know what type of equitable approaches are being considered.
- Connectivity.
- Artwork.
- Park improvements.
- Green space.
- Trees.
- Communicate air quality monitoring during construction to community and travelers.
- Provide a visual form of communication along roads.
- Communicate with community the types of impacts being considered/addressed so the community knows CDOT is thinking about these things.
- Can construction traffic planning minimize this?
- Traffic signal timing improvements on local roads like Vasquez that people may detour onto during construction.
- Comfortable underpasses for pedestrians.
- Aesthetics- make the area look nicer.
- How can the design/aesthetics reflect the pride of the community and the identity of the community?
- Beautify the area.
- Provide better access to existing services/amenities especially to community west of highway 85.
- More/better effective communication with the community about all the projects and how they are collectively progressing.
- Send alerts during construction.
- Create a mall of all the projects is helpful and people want to know about them all.
- All projects communicate the same information.

- Noise walls that collect pollution and have native plants, greenery, and local art installations.
- Freight (Fuel on I-70).
- Emergency Services.
- Commuters-managed lanes.
- Keep traffic moving.
- Limiting closures and not diverting traffic.
- Sound mitigation walls on York (for AQ as well).
- Community & RTD coordination on detours.
- Opposed to free EV charging.
- Opposed to charging station construction.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities, underpass.
- Lighting.
- More trees.
- RTD Voucher.
- Alert system for construction issues and hazards (this is a historic issue for this community. (Feeling unaware of harm) (texts and automated calls).
- Water and air purifiers.
- Pollution catchers.
- Transit/multimodal options.
- Access housing, jobs resources.
- Credit (EV).
- Fuel delivery trucks on neighborhood streets.
- Other Comments
 - Impressed with limited construction impacts of C-70.
 - Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge bus access.
 - Reconnecting communities grant.

Conclusion

A final group discussion occurred, where facilitators of each small break out group shared common themes of discussion.

The aesthetics of the project were brought up, and groups had ideas on including plants, and artwork along the construction area. Additionally, there was a combined desire for continuous updates of information about the project during construction and providing ample notice of anticipated closures. A common idea the groups had was the inclusion of walls along the project to minimize noise pollution and capture air pollution into one area, as air and noise pollution are high concerns from the group of attendees. Further comments described a desire to include more pedestrian and bike safety with underpass connectivity. There was a collective desire to be informed as members of the community that are impacted by the I-270 project.