



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT:	CDOT Subaccount 22922, Vasquez Boulevard, I-270 to 64 th Avenue
PURPOSE:	Freight Focus Group Meeting #1
DATE HELD:	February 3, 2020
LOCATION:	Colorado Motor Carriers Association
ATTENDING:	Project Team: Matt Fink, Ryan Sorensen (CDOT); Velvet Kuesel, Leah Langerman (DEA) Focus Group Members: Michelle Scheuerman, Craig Hurst (CDOT Freight Office); Tracy Sakaguchi (CMCA); Nicole Adinolfe (Direct Transport); Leonard Dittman (Colorado State Patrol); Scott Caylon (Wodek Systems); Mike Burback (Werts Welding & Tank Service); James Lee (Denver Freightways Express)
COPIES:	Project Management Team, Freight Focus Group

Summary of Discussion:

- Members of the project team gave a PowerPoint presentation to review the project history, project purpose and goals, study area, schedule and involvement opportunities (see attached). Additional discussion during the presentation included the following:
 - ◆ Realistically, the ultimate “fix” for this area is 20 years out because of funding. This current project will determine what can be built now with the money available.
 - ◆ I-270 Interchange
 - ◇ This project area doesn’t include the I-270 interchange.
 - ◇ CDOT is soon to begin a separate study of I-270, which will include recommendations for improvements at I-270/Vasquez.
 - ◇ Improvements at the Vasquez/I-270 interchange recommended by the I-270 study may occur in 2022 or 2023, depending on funding availability.
 - ◆ Initial Project Team Improvements Ideas
 - ◇ The team is starting to develop alternatives, and would like to use feedback from the focus groups to help with this process. The team is starting with the near-term improvements for this area recommended in the PEL Study, and considering tweaks to them and new ideas. Ryan explained that some ideas being considered include adding an intersection at 62nd Avenue with Vasquez (now accessed via Hwy 2) and finding alternate routing for the frontage roads rather than tying into the 60th/Vasquez/Parkway intersection.
 - ◆ A postcard was recently mailed to the properties in the project area, and homes to Holly to the east.
 - ◆ Leah explained that this group was assembled from the CDOT Truck Safety Focus Group and additional trucking contacts in the area provided by Tracy Sakaguchi. Michelle added that CDOT has received feedback from the Freight Advisory Council asking that the industry’s input be considered earlier in the process. This is a test case, where a freight focus group is being formed to give input into the process early.

2. Group Discussion

- ◆ Existing Transportation Feedback (important freight travel routes, specific transportation problems in the study area):
 - ◇ It is unbelievable, but it somehow works now. If you put another intersection in it will be crazier than to start with.
 - » Velvet noted that the team is looking for a solution that functions well now and into the future. Although some may think the area operates okay now, it could operate better and safety improvements could be made.
 - ◇ Large loads
 - » Craig Hurst works with local agencies and his CDOT Freight Office to approve the most direct access to the interstate for triple loads. Companies need an annual permit.
 - » Old Dominion runs triples through here, usually off-peak. Triples are a small percentage of their operation.
 - » Triples and doubles come out of UPS and FedEx.
 - ◇ The area has a lot of truck traffic. There are 72 truck fleet companies in Commerce City.
 - » The Suncor area produces many loads per day.
 - » There is a lot of liquid freight in the area and on Colorado Boulevard (General Air Services Supply, Amerigas, crude carriers, Polar, Offen, Sinclair).
 - ◇ Someone crossing 56th in a wheelchair was hit in the area not too long ago.
 - ◇ Congestion kills trucking. Improvements will be helpful to all area trucking businesses.
 - ◇ I'm at 64th and Colorado. It is tough to get trucks in and out there and they end up traversing through this project area.
 - ◇ 56th Avenue Businesses
 - » LTL carriers are located at 56th Avenue, but they have to travel through this project area. Traffic congestion is money lost.
 - » Any time there is an accident on I-70 trucks take 56th which makes the situation worse.
 - » Ryan noted the I-270 study will look at other issues in the area, such as where 56th necks-down to one lane under I-270.
 - » Some trucks in this area access I-270 via Vasquez instead of Quebec.
 - ◇ There is heavy pedestrian travel through the project area, and a lot of homeless people in the area. There is a food bank close.
 - ◇ I hope that improvements made as part of this project will improve congestion. The improvements this project makes will hopefully tie into the longer-term improvements.
 - » Ryan noted the ideal long-term solution could be 15 – 20 years out due to funding availability. He hopes to preserve as much existing pavement as possible when making these near-term improvements.

- ◆ Improvement Suggestions (things to consider when developing alternatives, ideas for improving transportation in the study area):
 - ◇ The Mile High Greyhound Park (MHGP) development has been top priority for Commerce City since 2011. All of their commercial development is being built in the southwest corner of their site, so it is important that project improvements don't impact this. The rest of the development will include at-rate and low income housing and an educational facility (in talks with Metro State). The commercial tax revenue is very important to the development.
 - ◇ Someone had previously presented an idea of a European-style roundabout at 62nd to Craig. Craig thinks a roundabout could be a good solution.
 - » Scott asked for a guarantee that no roundabout will be included. Trucks tip over on roundabouts and people don't understand how to use them.
 - » Craig noted that CDOT has a new roundabout design that can accommodate large trucks with windmill blades. CDOT is planning a roundabout in Hudson that works well for trucks.
 - » If something is safer for trucks that means it is safer for cars.
 - » ACTION: Michelle noted that CDOT's Freight Office did a design charrette with the trucking industry for roundabouts. She will share notes/findings from the charrette.
 - ◇ It would work better if the frontage road inputs were taken out of the intersection at 60th. Still need the frontage road access somehow. If we can take some of the inputs out, it will help remove some pedestrian conflicts.
 - » Ryan noted this is something the project team is considering.
 - ◇ Could consider making a connection of 64th and Vasquez. It seems like this could be more feasible than making a new intersection at 62nd since some of the infrastructure is already there.
 - ◇ Is it feasible to construct a new route in the SW quadrant if you close Dexter? There are a lot of businesses on the south end of Dexter that don't have any other access.
 - » Craig noted it is more feasible since Commerce City is highly engaged and redevelopment could be occurring in that area. The old Taco Star property is currently redeveloping.
 - » Domenico (on the very south end of Dexter) was invited to this meeting but didn't attend. Tracy will reach back out to them again.
 - ◇ Medians
 - » The median length dictates which lanes trucks need to be in and which lanes they would track over.
 - » Building 90 degree curbs at the end of the median doesn't make as much sense as making it a rolling edge.
 - » Velvet explained that the team will use software to determine turning movements, but the team understands value the real-world review by this group.
 - » Need to accommodate turns for more than WB 67s. Usually CDOT design uses standard 53' trucks for standards, but some companies are using 57' trailers and also triples.
 - » ACTION: Craig will provide permitting data about truck lengths and large loads.

- » Should set back signs five or ten feet from the end of the medians.
- » Should do a field review now and note what curbs are already damaged.
- » Minor improvements to median curbs and sign placement will reduce long-term maintenance.

3. Closing and Next Steps

- ◆ ACTION: Craig will pull data for companies using longer vehicle combinations and send contacts to Leah, so more people can be added to this group in the future.
- ◆ ACTION: Tracy will send a list of additional contacts to Leah to be added to this focus group (including liquid freight, crude and haz mat carriers). Since the business focus group will be held on February 18th, they will be invited to participate in that meeting for the first round of focus groups.
- ◆ CSP appreciates the invite and would like to stay engaged and help as they can.
- ◆ Leah encouraged the group to participate in the online public meeting and survey in April, and the second focus group meeting this summer to review the 30% design of the preferred alternative.