



Frequently Asked Questions

General Project

What is the latest with the Central 70 Project?

On Aug. 24, 2017, Kiewit Meridiam Partners (KMP) was selected as the preferred contractor team to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Central 70 Project. Negotiations with KMP are underway with construction scheduled to start in early 2018. This follows the Jan. 19, 2017 final approval from the Federal Highway Administration for the Central 70 Project. This approval (a Record of Decision) concludes the 14-year environmental study process and allows the project to move forward.

What does the Central 70 Project include?

The project is designed to improve the safety, mobility and community connections along one of Colorado's most congested interstate segments. It will bring the first infrastructure improvements to I-70 since this stretch of interstate was opened to traffic in 1964. Since then, usage of this highway has skyrocketed to nearly 200,000 vehicles daily.

These improvements include:

- The addition of one new Express Lane in each direction from I-25 to Chambers Road.
- Removal of the 53-year-old viaduct and lowering of the interstate between Brighton and Colorado boulevards.
- Construction of a new, 4-acre cover over the interstate between Clayton and Columbine streets that is modeled after dozens of similar, successful public spaces over highways across the nation. CDOT is working closely with the City and County of Denver and local residents to design an active, thriving, year-round space to connect the neighborhood.
- Project mitigations such as support for new low-income housing development and significant improvements to Swansea Elementary School.

We've heard about this project for a long time. Is this really going to happen, or is CDOT still studying options? What if we have a different idea for where this project should be built?

This project has been studied for 14 years and has involved one of the most extensive outreach processes in CDOT history. Multiple alternatives have been reviewed and analyzed and hundreds of public meetings have taken place. The preferred alternative has been selected based on a number of criteria, and we are ready to move forward with actually building the highway. The final Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration was issued on Jan. 19, 2017 and the preferred contractor team, Kiewit Meridiam Partners was selected on Aug. 24, 2017. Construction is expected to begin in 2018.



How much will Central 70 cost to build? How will it be paid for?

The total estimated project cost for the Phase I Project is \$1.17 billion.

- Funding is provided through a variety of sources. See the list below.
- There is no new tax increase required to construct the project.
- Although KMP will design, build and help finance Central 70, the state will receive the tolls collected from the Express Lanes. The tolls are not part of the public-private partnership agreement with the winning developer team.

Source	\$ Amount
Colorado Bridge Enterprise Safety Surcharge	\$850 Million
Denver Regional Council of Governments	\$50 million
Senate Bill 09-228 Transfers	\$180 million
City and County of Denver	\$37 million

Construction

How long will this project take to build and when will it be complete?

Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2018 and will take approximately four to five years to complete. KMP has committed to finishing the Project a full construction season ahead of schedule.

How will traffic be managed during construction?

The final details of how traffic will be managed during construction will be determined by KMP; however, they have committed to maintaining three lanes of traffic in each direction on I-70 the vast majority of the time. In addition, only two major traffic shifts will occur in the lowered section throughout the duration of the project. It is expected that lanes will be narrowed and realigned as construction takes place, so some delays may occur. CDOT is working with Northeast Transportation Connections to develop programs that encourage carpooling, biking and use of RTD’s new A-line to help reduce construction delays.

Drainage

Does CDOT have a plan for drainage on Central 70?



Yes, the project includes a comprehensive and independent drainage system designed to handle a 100-year storm event. The Central 70 drainage plan addresses water from two sources: water that falls directly into the lowered highway (known as the onsite system) and runoff from surface streets (the offsite system).

[Drainage Fact Sheet](#)

Is the Central 70 Project dependent on the drainage improvements planned by the City of Denver?

The drainage system for the Central 70 Project described in the Record of Decision is a stand-alone system that is separate from the City's projects proposed for City Park and Park Hill. The I-70 system is independent and includes a series of underground pipes and detention ponds. It has been designed for flows, assuming the City's projects are never built. With the approval of Denver's drainage projects, CDOT will re-evaluate drainage required for Central 70. If changes are needed to the Central 70 drainage system, those will be separately evaluated prior to the start of construction.

Express Lanes

When you say Express Lanes, what does that mean?

Express Lanes use tolls to manage congestion and keep travel times reliable for all motorists. Express Lanes will use a dynamic pricing system in which tolls can change in price depending on the level of congestion. As traffic increases, the toll price goes up, helping to keep you moving on the Express Lanes. Carpoolers and motorcyclists travel for free. These lanes are currently in place on I-25, US 36 and the I-70 mountain corridor.

Lawsuits

I understand there are several lawsuits filed against Central 70, how does that affect the project? Will design and construction stop until it is resolved?

The Central 70 Project will continue to move forward while the court considers the case, as it does in most cases of this type. Lawsuits are very common on projects of this magnitude. CDOT is confident in this project and the 14-year community outreach process but ultimately, it will be up to the judge to decide. In the meantime, the Project is moving forward, specifically with executing the mitigation commitments.

Will this lawsuit impact CDOT's current community commitments?

At this time, no. CDOT has already provided \$17 million in improvements to Swansea Elementary School. CDOT is also partnering with Gary Community Partners to provide a comprehensive workforce development and construction training program to support the Project's local hiring goals.

The Record of Decision also includes a commitment to deliver home improvements to an estimated 300 homes and to provide a \$2 million contribution to affordable housing.



Is CDOT concerned about the safety of the viaduct if there is a delay?

The I-70 viaduct is being closely monitored by our bridge engineers. In June, another series of repairs were made after several post tension rods (which essentially hug the structure together) failed and sprung loose from the bridge. CDOT will continue to keep the structure safe to use. However, any significant delay in the Central 70 Project could mean additional costly repairs, weight restrictions and possibly an emergency bridge replacement, which would involve rebuilding the viaduct in kind with a new 6-lane bridge.

Lowered Section

Is the lowered section a tunnel?

The highway between Brighton and Colorado boulevards (about 1.8 miles) will be built below ground level. It will look very similar to I-25 between Broadway and University Boulevard. However, there will be a 4-acre cover built over the highway for about three blocks of this lowered section -- between Columbine and Clayton streets.

Has a 'cover' been added to other highways in the country or is CDOT the first to try this plan?

This is not a new idea. There are examples across the country over the past 60 years where covers have been added over freeways to form parks and join neighborhoods. Cities that have highway covers include New York, Seattle, Boston, Phoenix, Duluth and Dallas. St.

Louis has one under construction, and Los Angeles and Chicago have proposed a cover park over upcoming highway construction. As with any public space, the success of these covers relies on creating a safe, active and vibrant space. CDOT has partnered with the City of Denver, Swansea Elementary School and local residents to design this cover. The City of Denver will have ultimate responsibility for programming and maintaining the space. [View the most recent rendering of the cover.](#)

What happens to 46th Avenue that currently runs under the viaduct?

46th Avenue will be rebuilt to carry traffic on both sides of I-70 and will remain at ground level. The street will be rebuilt to current city standards, including sidewalks and street lighting.

What about the danger of tanker trucks driving under the covered park along future I-70 like the one that crashed on I-25 near the Denver Tech Center in summer 2017?

Trucks carrying hazardous materials (HAZMAT) are not allowed on the portion of I-70 between I-25 and 270 now and won't be in the future. HAZMAT trucks are routed onto I-270 or I-225. In addition, the design of the covered section of future I-70 includes an advanced fire suppression system to ensure the safety of those



traveling on the highway and the residents surrounding the highway. To find out more about the designated HAZMAT routes, visit www.colorado.gov/pacific/csp/hazmat-routing-map.

Mitigations/Air Quality

Has CDOT fully examined impacts on air quality as a result of the project?

Yes, CDOT conducted a comprehensive analysis of the air quality impacts of the Central 70 Project following guidance and protocols set by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This work, which accounts for the growth in traffic through the year 2040, has shown that the Project meets all national health-based air quality standards set by EPA. CDOT would not have received Federal approval for the Project without making this determination.

How has CDOT addressed concerns about environmental justice neighborhoods next to I-70?

CDOT has provided an unprecedented level of public involvement tailored specifically to communities adjacent to I-70 in order to find ways to improve the project and lessen its impacts. Through this process, the following specific and innovative commitments were developed:

- Lowering the highway and providing a cover with urban landscape adjacent to Swansea Elementary School.
- Providing residents close to the highway construction with storm windows, furnace filters, attic insulation and two free portable or window-mounted air conditioning units
- Providing \$100,000 to facilitate access to fresh food
- Providing an HVAC system and new doors and windows for Swansea Elementary School, plus two new additional classrooms
- Providing \$2 million in funding to support affordable housing in the Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood
- Providing eligible residents of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea with free transponders, pre-loading of tolls or other means to reduce barriers to using the Express Lanes after the project is completed

Reroute

Did CDOT evaluate options to reroute I-70?

Yes, CDOT has examined options that would reroute portions of I-70 at many different junctures over the 14-year study process. The concept of entirely moving a section of interstate that serves hundreds of thousands of commuters and freight vehicles every day is not a reasonable alternative nor is it one that would benefit



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local communities. At an estimated \$3.2 billion cost, a reroute would result in significant traffic increases to the local street network and the construction of a major six-lane boulevard through Elyria and Swansea that would need to serve some of the region's largest freight distribution centers.

How did CDOT analyze future traffic demands along I-70?

Traffic forecasting for the Central 70 Project was done using the 2035 Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) trip-based travel demand model, which is the latest Compass model released by DRCOG. Compass is a regional model that applies projected land use data, including population and employment growth, to project future traffic conditions. This model incorporates household and employment data for the region and accounts for roadway and transit projects, including RTD's commuter rail line (the A Line).

DRCOG owns and maintains this regional base model that incorporates every municipality within the DRCOG region, which includes the nine counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, Jefferson and the southwest portion of Weld County. Each alternative considered in the Final EIS was incorporated into DRCOG's base model to determine future travel forecasts within the study area. These projections were used to determine the number of lanes needed for each alternative to accommodate future traffic growth.

Right-of-Way

Will CDOT be buying my property?

All questions on property acquisition should be directed to Tawana Kelly, the Central 70 CDOT Right-of-Way Manager at tawana.kelly@state.co.us or [303.757.9846](tel:303.757.9846).