

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment



Purpose:	Project Leadership Team and Technical Team Combined Meeting		
Day:	Thursday	Date:	September 22, 2011
Location:	CDOT Traffic Operations Center, Golden, Fossil Trace Conference Room		

Participants:

Project Leadership Team

Attendee	Representing	
Ben Acimovic	CDOT R 1	Y
Chuck Attardo	CDOT R 1	Y
Jim Bemelen	CDOT R 1	Y
Allan Brown	Atkins	Y
Janet Gerak	CDOT R 1	N
Stephanie Gibson	FHWA	Y
Vanessa Henderson	CDOT EPB	Y
Gina McAfee	Jacobs	Y

Attendee	Representing	
Tim Mauck	Clear Creek Co.	Y
Jack Morgan	Idaho Springs	Y
Pat Noyes	Pat Noyes	Y
Melinda Urban	FHWA	Y
Mary Jo Vobedja	CH2M HILL	Y
Rebecca White	CDOT Local Affairs	Y
Mandy Whorton	CH2M HILL	Y

Technical Team

Attendee	Representing	
Ben Acimovic	CDOT R 1	Y
Chuck Attardo	CDOT R 1	Y
Phyllis Adams	Upper CC Watershed Assn.	Y
Carol Anderson	EPA	N
Rick Beck	Clear Creek Co Public Works	Y
Jim Bemelen	CDOT R 1	Y
Rena Brand	USACE	Y
Allan Brown	Atkins	Y
Steve Cook	DRCOG	Y
Maria D'Andrea	Jefferson Co.	Y
Jim DiLeo	CDPHE	Y

Attendee	Representing	
Carol Kruse	USFS	Y
Gina McAfee	Jacobs	Y
Bill Macy	Idaho Springs	Y
Alison Michael	USFWS	N
Cindy Neely	Clear Creek Co.	Y
Ty Petersburg	Colorado Parks & Wildlife	N
Amy Pallante	SHPO	N
Bob Quinlan	Jacobs	Y
Colleen Roberts	CH2M HILL	Y
Martha Rudolph	CDPHE	N
Steve Rudy	DRCOG	Y

Attendee	Representing	
Gary Frey	Colorado Trout Unlimited	Y
Janet Gerak	CDOT R 1	N
Stephanie Gibson	FHWA	Y
Vanessa Henderson	CDOT EPB	Y
Nicolena Johnson	Clear Creek EMS	N

Attendee	Representing	
Tom Schilling	Intermountain Corporate Affairs	Y
Paige Singer	Center for Native Ecosystems	N
Melinda Urban	FHWA	Y
Mary Jo Vobejda	CH2M HILL	Y
Mandy Whorton	CH2M HILL	Y

Discussion Items

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress on the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment. Handouts (**Attachment 1**) provided additional information to support the discussion. Items show in **bold** are action items. Items **highlighted** represent decisions made during the meeting. Both action items and decisions are summarized at the end of these notes.

Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

Jim Bemelen reviewed the handouts (**Attachment 1**) and suggested finalizing the work plan. Gary Frey noted that the core value for water quality does not reflect changes requested at the last Technical Team meeting. Jim asked for clarification about the change Gary would like to see. Gary noted that his concern is the over-excavation of the tunnels and the mineralization of rock affecting water quality. Jim said he thought the core value does capture the water quality value. Stephanie suggested that the descriptions of all the core values are general. Gary asked that all the core values be more detailed and address water quality specifically. Jim suggested adding water quality as a separate value beyond the value already identified for Clear Creek elevates its importance too much. **All agreed to work with Gary directly to craft language that he was comfortable with.**

Cindy Neely suggested the context statement needs to acknowledge that the area is geologically constricted and is expected to carry a number of facilities, including the frontage road and transit facility. Mary Jo suggested adding text stating that the narrow canyon is a geologically constricted area that will house multiple transportation facilities. Cindy agreed this would help. **All agreed to modify the context statement accordingly.**

Mandy asked about how work products and meeting notes would be finalized. After discussion, some participants indicated that project notebooks would be helpful, while others were not interested in keeping paper copies of documents. **The group agreed that the project website would contain current versions of documents, and individuals would let Mandy know if they were interested in notebooks and hard copies of documents.**

Update on Tolling

Although not on the agenda, Jim explained that the project is moving quickly and he wanted to provide an update to the group on a recent development regarding tolling. The current thinking as of this week is that CDOT is looking at a managed lane for the third lane in the tunnel. CDOT's current philosophy is that if a project adds new capacity, some element of tolling will be included. Jim is working through issues with management and technical staff to determine if

and how tolling would work in this corridor. If tolling is included, CDOT expects only peak period pricing.

Tim Mauck asked if the decision should be made first on tolling throughout the corridor, before deciding on tolling for this specific project. Jim said that is one thought, but there is concern that if it is not tolled now, it would be more difficult to toll in the future.

Jack Morgan said federal law would not allow CDOT to toll the interstate facility without a project. Randy Jensen clarified that federal law would allow tolling of tunnels in the future. Randy also clarified that even though there are two tunnels, it is one facility so westbound improvements could reconsider tolling for both tunnel bores when westbound improvements are being implemented. Jim said there are different ways to do tolling, including barrier-separated or buffer-separated. Right now, CDOT is thinking it is buffer-separated and is studying how wide the buffer might be and how that might affect the roadway template. Jack said I-15 in Utah does not include buffer separation.

Jim explained that the decision on tolling for this project is complicated because tolling generally self-polices if the tolled lane is free flowing and the rest of traffic is congested. In this case, CDOT wants to make the price of the toll low enough that people will use it, but not so low that the tolled lane has the same level of congestion as general purpose lanes.

Jim asked for thoughts about tolling. Steve Cook mentioned that DRCOG has received interest in tolling and is encouraging CDOT to explore tolling on all new facilities, as is being done in this case. If there are good reasons not to do it, that would be fine, but tolling should be considered for all new facilities.

Cindy said tolling one lane is a much more palatable consideration. Tolling the entire facility with no alternate route is not fair. Jim said even under a full tolling scenario, CDOT would toll during peak period times only.

Kevin suggested tolling the frontage road. Cindy said that is how most mountain roads were built originally. Jim said that could be considered but he wasn't sure if Clear Creek County could administer or enforce tolling.

Kevin expressed his concern that the existing capacity is paid for and should not be tolled in the future. He explained that the traffic that needs to be tolled is the traffic that caused the need for the expanded facility. In the case of I-70, there is no need to expand the facility for Clear Creek County or for the metro residents heading to Clear Creek County. There is also no need to add capacity for demand from the west to Clear Creek County. The excess demand is from metro area to western slope. Tolling has to identify why new capacity is needed, and the cause for the expanded capacity needs to be explored and tolled fairly. He said it is important that we don't toll trips that are within the existing capacity that was paid for by taxpayers.

Kevin suggested a new concept should be explored to set parameters for tolling so that local jurisdictions are not punished by tolling decisions. He said CDOT needed to explore the cause for the need for expansion, toll the cause, and exempt the users that have been using the capacity since it was built. Tim suggested a system that would toll only those users who pass two points, for example the Twin Tunnels and Bakersville or the Twin Tunnels and Berthoud Pass. This would effectively toll drivers who are traveling from the metro area to points beyond Clear Creek County, and these are the drivers creating the need for additional capacity. The

decision would be different in different circumstances and other locations, based on who is causing the need for the extra capacity. Jim said this discussion is too broad for this small project but that CDOT is working on a statewide policy. Tim agreed that Clear Creek County is comfortable with tolling depending on how it is done. He said Clear Creek County wants to understand how the decisions are made and ensure that decisions are consistent and clear for future projects too.

Allan explained that the current thinking is managed lane and congestion pricing only. Kevin said that is fine but doesn't address the larger issue of asking people to pay for what they use. Kevin suggested the discussion would be more productive as a complete tolling decision rather than a managed lane.

Mary Jo recommended that the tolling discussion be continued with the PLT at the next PLT meeting.

Transportation Commission Involvement

Jack said this process needs more political involvement. Transportation commissioners and elected officials need to attend these meetings. Rebecca stated that the executive director and governor are briefed regularly on this project and it is one of the two high-priority projects for which CDOT regularly provides updates to the governor.

Randy summarized that this is the beginning of a conversation. It provides a basis for discussion, and those discussions will continue. Randy suggested that a workshop with the Transportation Commission would be an ideal forum for a tolling discussion. He suggested that the project team do an update at a commission workshop. Rebecca stated that the October 6 PLT meeting would include Mike Cherotes and would give an opportunity for the project to have specific discussions with CDOT management. Randy voiced concern that considering two alternatives in the EA - tolling and non-tolling - would likely slow the schedule.

Engineering Update

Jim gave a project update.

Tunnel widening. The tunnel will be widened but not sure how much yet. CDOT is still considering the possibility of widening to allow four lanes for a future westbound detour through the eastbound bore. CDOT is also considering reduced shoulders to reduce the template needed.

Typical Roadway Section. Cindy asked for clarification about the smaller template. Is this a smart widening with narrower lanes or narrow shoulders? Jim said both could be options, although 11-foot lanes are not currently being considered. He referenced the restriping west of the Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnels with three 11-foot lanes and minimal shoulders. Operations have improved, and crashes have not increased. For this project, however, three 12-foot lanes with narrower shoulders are being considered. Randy stated that the original standard when the highway was constructed was for a 4-foot inside shoulder and 10-foot outside. Now the standard is 10 feet on both inside and outside. However, FHWA will talk with CDOT about narrower shoulders and could grant a design variance.

Another consideration is two 12-foot lanes and hard shoulder running.

Hard Shoulder Running. CDOT is still considering hard shoulder running, which allows shoulder to be used in congested periods. Hard shoulder running has the advantage of reducing throw-away work but can lead to concerns about adequate emergency response. CDOT has been in discussion with transportation officials in the United Kingdom about this concept. The UK emergency responders have indicated that, although they had concerns about the hard shoulder running concept, they have not experienced problems responding to incidents. Jack said he was not convinced by the UK experience.

Kevin said he feels hard shoulder running is a useful concept in Colorado and in portions of the I-70 mountain corridor, but he feels the Twin Tunnels area is the wrong place to try it because it presents too many safety issues. Kevin said as of today, if hard shoulder running is proposed, he would move from a willing to an unwilling participant. He would be willing to consider narrower lanes and shoulders but not hard shoulder running. Jack indicated he agreed with Kevin.

Jack asked about the US 6 bridge. He is concerned that it is not safe. Jim said the project to shore up the bridge is ongoing and would provide several more years of life for the bridge. CDOT will continue to monitor the bridge condition to be sure it is safe for travel.

Interim Improvements. Carol asked what amount of throw-away work would result with the full shoulder template. Jim said any work that does not meet a 55mph or 65mph design speed would be throw-away when the design speed decision is made in the future. Because the alignment of the highway would change under either a 55mph or 65mph design, much of the work on the current alignment would be throw-away. Retaining walls and the bridge over Clear Creek west of the Hidden Valley interchange are two of the larger items that would be throw-away.

Speeds. Jack asked why the speed limit was posted above the design speed. Jim and Allan explained that speed studies analyze the actual speed at which vehicles travel, and the posted speed is revised to reflect actual travel speeds rather than design speed. Sight distance also factors into speeds, and for the future design, the curves can be flattened, but sight distance around the walls may still be challenging, and the speed limits must balance these considerations.

Accommodation of AGS

The group discussed the handout, Variations to Be Considered. Cindy asked how CDOT knows the project won't preclude AGS in this narrow stretch. Jim said that CDOT does not yet know what the AGS alignment will be, and this is one of the reasons that CDOT decided not to determine a design speed 55 mph or 65 mph with this project; determining a design speed will require coordination with the AGS study in the future. Allan said the team can consider each cross section to determine if AGS can be accommodated with that section. Cindy agreed this would be needed.

Kevin said that if CDOT does not want throw-away work, then the project should be delayed until decisions are made regarding the AGS alignment and the ultimate design speed. Clear Creek County doesn't want to delay this project but needs to be done right, with three full travel lanes available at all times, along with appropriate shoulders, as opposed to hard shoulder running. Kevin said a managed lane concept is acceptable to Clear Creek County at a conceptual level.

Cindy voiced concern that this narrow section of the canyon cannot fit the proposed highway improvements, frontage road improvements, and AGS. Randy noted that the PEIS committed to providing all of these improvements in this portion of the canyon. Cindy suggested a graphic showing where AGS goes through the Twin Tunnels area would be acceptable. Gina clarified that the Twin Tunnels project team will coordinate with the AGS team during the design of the Proposed Action. **Mary Jo noted that she will change the language on the Variations to Be Considered handout to clarify that the Twin Tunnels team is coordinating with both the AGS and frontage road teams.**

Project Costs

Jack noted that he wants to the cost of the Twin Tunnels improvements analyzed on a 24/7 basis rather than just during peak periods. He feels an analysis of the latter time period will not show adequate cost benefit for the project.

Proposed Action and Addressing the Core Values

Mary Jo discussed the core values with the project team. Cindy indicated she would like to add that the gateway value indicate that this is a visual gateway. Mary Jo said the description could be revised. Mandy said she understood the original intent of the wording to incorporate an access as well as visual gateway. **The group agreed to revise the wording to encompass the visual importance of the tunnels as a gateway feature.**

Public Open House

The public scoping meeting is scheduled for next week. Based on time, the group decided to review the public open house materials independently and not discuss at the meeting. Any comments or concerns should be passed on to Pat Noyes or Mary Jo.

Status of Environmental Analysis

Mandy noted that a field trip was conducted with resource specialists and that information from the field trip would be incorporated into the environmental considerations for the EA.

Issue Task Forces

Mary Jo explained that the three planned issue task forces would be kicking off soon. The Section 106 consulting parties met, and the SWEEP and ALIVE meetings are being scheduled. Carol Kruse expressed some concern that the SWEEP and ALIVE groups not be called issue task forces since they have specific membership and meaning to the members. Mary Jo explained that the Issue Task Force description is consistent with the CSS process and did not change the meaning of the SWEEP and ALIVE meetings on a project-specific level. Pat said she would be getting invitations out soon. Carol suggested using doodle to schedule meetings so that participants could select dates that worked for them.

The meeting was adjourned.

DECISION LIST	
Decision	Made by
Project website will contain current versions of PLT/TT documents. Individuals would let Mandy know if they were interested in notebooks and hard copies of documents.	Group

ACTION ITEMS			
No.	Agency Coordination Meeting	Responsibility	Status
1	Revise description of core value to encompass water quality interest.	Mary Jo and Gary	
2	Revise the context statement to acknowledge the narrow canyon is a geologically constricted area that will house multiple transportation facilities.	Mary Jo	
3	Revise the language on the Variations to Be Considered handout to clarify that the Twin Tunnels team is coordinating with both the AGS and frontage road teams.	Mary Jo	
4	Revise the wording of the gateway core value to encompass the visual importance of the tunnels as a gateway feature.	Mary Jo	

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Project Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Notes, 9/22/2011

Attachment 1



I-70 Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Combined Project Leadership and Technical Team Meeting

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Golden Residency

9:00 am – 12:00 am

1. Introductions (Bemelen)
Final Work Plan

2. Tunnel Visioning Recommendation becoming the Proposed Action (Bemelen)
Addressing the Variations

3. Proposed Action and Addressing the Core Values (Brown and Vobejda)

4. Public Open House (Noyes)
Date, time, location
Invitation methods
Layout and handouts

5. Status of Environmental Analysis (Whorton)
Agency scoping

6. Issue Task Forces (Noyes)
Preparations
Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting

7. Next PLT Oct. 6, 2011 (Bemelen)
Next TT meeting Oct. 20, 2011

Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Work Plan
3. Variations on the Proposed Action
4. Addressing the Core Values
5. Public Open House Materials

Date	Group	Purpose
Sept. 22	PLT and TT	Discuss Proposed Action Discuss Public Meeting
Sept. 26	Agency Scoping	Review the Process and Teams Present the Proposed Action Discuss the Environmental Resources
Sept. 27	Public Meeting	Present Process and Teams Present Alternatives and Analysis Present Proposed Action
Oct. 6	PLT	Discuss results of the Public Meeting Review Schedule and Process steps Discuss Refinements to the Proposed Action Discuss tolling
Oct. 20	TT	Review Environmental Scoping Discuss Refinements to the Proposed Action Present Issue Task Forces Progress
Nov. 3	PLT	Present Environmental Status
Nov. 17	TT	Present Environmental Status Present Issue Task Forces Progress
Dec.	PLT and TT	Proposed Action Footprint Dates for future meetings Present Issue Task Forces Progress
Jan	NO PLT or TT	
Feb	PLT	Schedule and Project Status Discuss Impacts
	TT	Discuss Impacts Present Issue Task Forces Progress
Mar	PLT	Schedule and Project Status Discuss Mitigation
	TT	Discuss Mitigations Final Reports from Issue Task Forces
Apr	NO PLT or TT	
May	PLT and TT	Present highlights of the EA Discuss the Public Hearing
June	NO PLT or TT	
June	Public Hearing	Present the Process, EA results, solicit comments
July	PLT	Next Steps for the PLT Discuss results of the Public Hearing
July	TT	Discuss results of the Public Hearing Close the TT

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Project Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Notes, 9/22/2011

Attachment 2

Project Work Plan and Public Information Plan

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment



Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment
Idaho Springs/Clear Creek County

September 2011





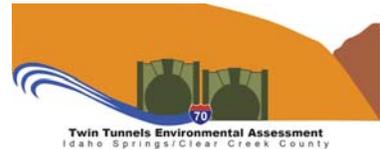
PREFACE

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is committed to using a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to all projects on the I-70 Mountain Corridor. This Project Work Plan was developed to ensure that the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment follows the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Process. A significant component of CSS is stakeholder and public involvement, supported by proactive public information initiatives.

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Work Plan is the roadmap for CDOT and the project stakeholders to accomplish the priorities described by the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Context Statement and Core Values. CDOT has pursued a coordinated approach that involves a broad range of stakeholders in a multidisciplinary approach to this project to strengthen the I-70 Mountain Corridor project delivery.

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Public Information Plan outlines the specific activities that CDOT will undertake to provide timely and accurate information to stakeholders throughout the project.



POINTS OF CONTACT

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

CDOT Program Manager:

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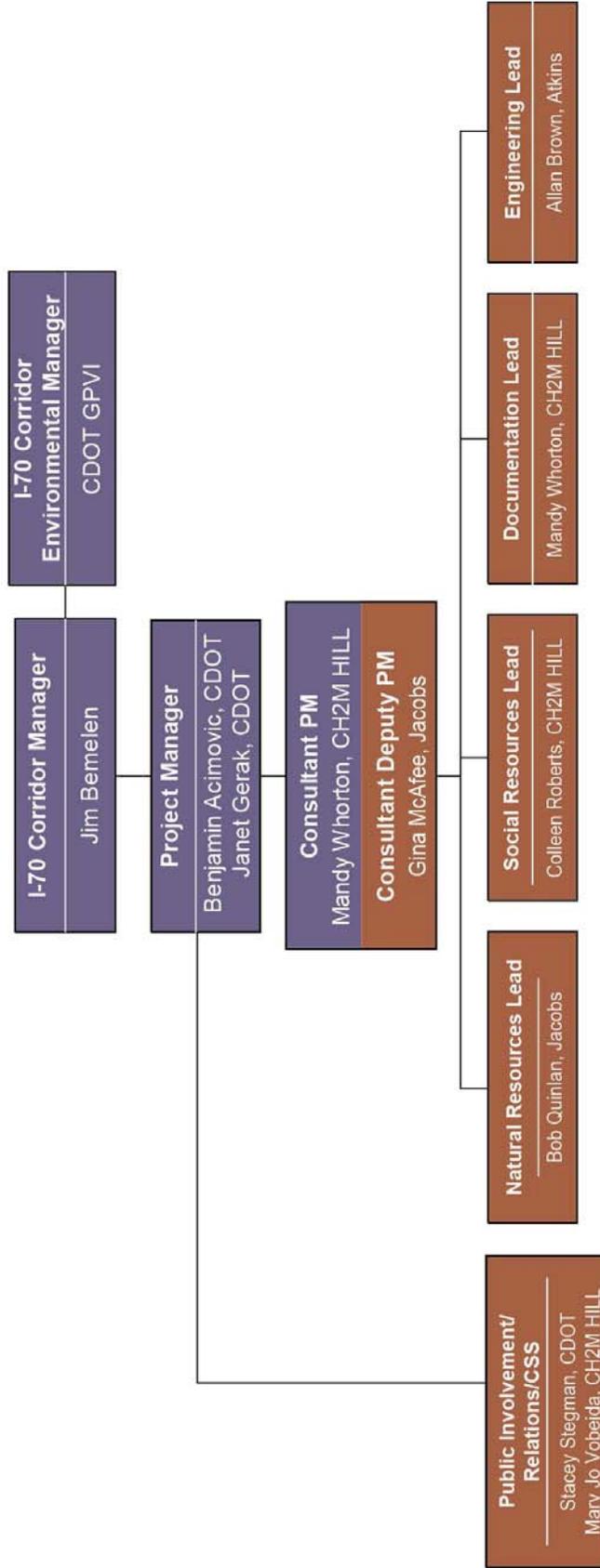
Consultant Project Manager:

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Twin Tunnel Project Staff Organization



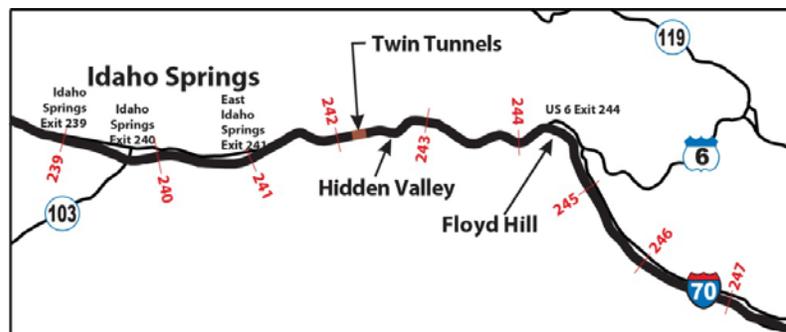
PROJECT SCOPE

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

I. Project Overview

The Colorado Department of Transportation is proposing to make improvements to the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) is a Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that builds on the I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEIS) Record of Decision, issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on June 16, 2011.

CDOT and FHWA, in coordination with numerous stakeholders, have prioritized making improvements in the Twin Tunnels area east of Idaho Springs as one of the first actions needed to address an area of substantial congestion in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The agencies are preparing this Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) as part of a Tier 2 NEPA process to evaluate alternatives, impacts, and mitigations to address problems along an approximately three-mile stretch of I-70, including the Twin Tunnels, between the existing interchange at milepost 241 east of Idaho Springs and approximately milepost 244 west of the Tunnels where the roadway transitions to three lanes in the eastbound direction.



The general study area for the Twin Tunnels EA extends from exit 241 in Idaho Springs east to Floyd Hill at approximately milepost 244

The purpose for transportation improvements is to relieve roadway congestion that occurs in the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor during peak travel periods. Improvements must be consistent with the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Record of Decision and I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions process.

The ultimate improvements in the Twin Tunnels area approved in the PEIS Record of Decision include increased roadway capacity and added transit capacity along the existing I-70 highway alignment. Short-term mobility options in the Twin Tunnels area also were evaluated in late February 2011 when CDOT convened a week-long visioning workshop that included local, national and international design and construction experts.

The following Context Statement and Core Values for the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment were developed by the Project Leadership Team.



I-70 Twin Tunnels Context Statement

I-70 is Colorado's only east-west Interstate, providing a link over the Continental Divide, interstate commerce and mountain access.

Blasted through a geological feature, the Twin Tunnels symbolize Colorado's historic endeavors to improve access to and from the mountains. The tunnels now are a constriction to travel and create a safety problem.

The Twin Tunnels are a gateway for arriving and departing the mountains, provide a natural crossing for wildlife and connect local communities to national and regional services. Running parallel to I-70 is Clear Creek, a natural and recreational resource.

Core Values

- **Safe** travel for people and goods. **Safety** for emergency responders and maintenance workers. A **safe** crossing for wildlife.
- **Mobility** through safe and reliable transportation facilities.
- A **gateway** to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.
- **Wildlife** habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.
- **Clear Creek**, a quality water source, recreational asset, aquatic resource, fisheries habitat and a defining natural feature of the corridor.
- **Tourist destinations and community facilities**, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, the water treatment plant, the planned Clear Creek Greenway, the frontage road, and Clear Creek.
- **History** as a defining element of Clear Creek County; celebrating mining, mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation as part of the construction of I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.



II. Desired Outcomes

Complete the first step, the NEPA Process, to allow improvements to be implemented in 2013.

Maintain the symbolic gateway announcement of the Twin Tunnels.

Improve the congestion and safety problems at the Twin Tunnels.

Maintain the collaboration and communication successes of recent studies.

Bring 21st Century solutions into the discussion for greater understanding of the options.

III. Project Inputs

All team members must be familiar with these documents found at the following links:

I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Record of Decision, SWEEP (Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), ALIVE (A Landscape Level Inventory of Valued Ecosystem Components) MOU, and Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA)

<http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/i-70mountaincorridor/final-peis/final-peis-file-download.html>

Twin Tunnels Visioning Study:

<http://i70mtncorridorcss.com/design/areas> (in the Nice to Know on the bottom right)

I-70 CSS:

<http://i70mtncorridorcss.com/>

Idaho Springs Visioning Study:

<http://i70mtncorridorcss.com/design/areas> (in the Must See Must Do on the top right)

Clear Creek Greenway Plan

<http://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/oswebsite/Greenway.htm>

IV. Project Approach

The Twin Tunnels project is the first action to be proposed after the approval of the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Record of Decision. It is also the first project on the I-70 Mountain Corridor to begin after the CSS website's completion. This project will be:

- A test of the flexibility of the CSS guidance
- Proof to stakeholders of CDOT's commitment to the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS process
- An example to the State of Colorado of the quality of work that will be done on the I-70 Mountain Corridor



This project will also prove that with agency and stakeholder commitment, projects can be supported and completed on time.

V. Tasks and Deliverables

Tasks and deliverables are found in the schedule.

PROJECT TEAMS

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

- 1. Project Leadership Team (PLT):** The PLT is a collaborative stakeholder team that leads the project and ensures that decision making is consistent with the CSS 6-Step Process.
- 2. Project Staff:** The Project Staff is a multidisciplinary team that includes experts in planning, design, public process, and communication.
- 3. Technical Team:** The Technical Team is a multidisciplinary team that includes experts in all of the Core Values.
- 4. Issue Task Forces:** It is expected that ITF will be formed around the SWEEP MOU, ALIVE MOU and Historic issues.

I. Project Leadership Team

Roles and Responsibilities:

The PLT's primary roles are to:

Lead the Project: The PLT will be established and will lead the project throughout the Life Cycle Phases of the project using the 6-Step Process.

The PLT will identify all relevant materials for the project -- such as the I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Guidance, I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision, other environmental documents, and local plans. The PLT will discuss and establish project goals and will identify the actions and decisions needed to reach those goals. The PLT will also determine the teams that are needed to reach the project goals and will identify the members needed for each team.

A Goal set by the PLT

The PLT will maintain the collaboration and communication of recent studies, streamlining this process to reach the goal of "Open to traffic in October 2013", and bring 21st century solutions into the discussion



Along with the Project Staff and attendees at County-Wide Coordination Meetings, the PLT will assist in staffing the other teams needed for the project.

Champion CSS: The PLT will ensure that the CSS Guidance, the Context Statement, the Core Values, and the 6-Step Process are integrated into the project. The PLT will identify CSS checkpoints as events in the project timeline upon completion of a formal review for consistency with CSS.

The PLT will have primary responsibility for ensuring that *Step 1: Define Desired Outcomes and Actions* and *Step 2: Endorse the Process* are accomplished with *all project stakeholders*.

Enable Decision Making: The PLT will approve the Project Work Plan for its project and keep the project on track according to the work plan.

When policy issues arise that cannot be resolved within the project teams, the PLT will identify and implement the steps needed to resolve the issue and make a decision. The PLT is not empowered to make policy decisions. Instead, it is responsible for identifying who must be involved in making the decision, bringing the decision makers together, and proposing solutions or approaches to move the project forward.

The PLT will facilitate formal actions required by councils, boards, and/or commissions to keep the project moving forward. These are anticipated to be Clear Creek County Commissioners, Jefferson County Commissioners, Idaho Springs City Council, and the Transportation Commission. The PLT will also be informed on the status of local elected officials.

For The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Project the PLT will have an added responsibility to lead the completion of the NEPA process, with the complete project, including potential design and construction, in mind.

Membership:

The PLT is the leader of the project and consists of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), CDOT, and corridor leaders. The following entities will have representation on the PLT:

- Melinda Urban/FHWA
- Jim Bemelen/CDOT
- Benjamin Acimovic/CDOT
- Tim Mauck/Clear Creek County Commissioner
- Jack Morgan/Idaho Springs
- Mandy Whorton/CH2M HILL
- Mary Jo Vobejda/CH2M HILL
- Alan Brown/Atkins
- Gina McAfee/Jacobs
- Janet Gerak/CDOT
- Future CDOT Environmental Lead
- Future Contractor



Meetings:

The PLT will meet at least monthly, through active times of the project, see the Schedule for more detailed information.

The PLT will remain intact through all the phases of project.

II. Project Staff

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Project Staff has several roles and responsibilities, including:

- Overseeing the day-to-day activities of the project
- Implementing CSS
- Developing the Project Work Plan
- Setting goals for the project, identifying the actions and decisions needed to reach those goals, and organizing the County-Wide Coordination Meetings used in staffing the Technical Team
- Laying out alternatives and options
- Analyzing alternatives and options
- Planning and holding team meetings identified in the Schedule.
- Planning and holding all public meetings identified in the Public Information Plan
- Documenting the project

The Project Staff will have primary responsibility for accomplishing *Step 3: Establish Criteria; Step 4: Develop Alternatives or Options; Step 5: Evaluate, Select, and Refine Alternative or Option, and Step 6: Final Documentation and Evaluate the Process.*

Membership:

The Project Staff will include the CDOT staff and consultant staff needed to reach the project goals. The PLT will guide the Project Staff.

Meetings:

The Project Staff will be led by Jim Bemelen/CDOT, Benjamin Acimovic/CDOT, and/or Mandy Whorton/CH2M HILL and will meet, at a minimum, every other week.

III. Technical Team

Roles and Responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of the Technical Team include:

- Assuring that local context is integrated into the project



- Recommending and guiding methodologies involving data collection, criteria, and analysis
- Preparing and reviewing technical project reports
- Supporting and providing insight with respect to community and agency issues and regulations
- Assisting in developing criteria
- Assisting in developing alternatives and options
- Assisting in evaluating, selecting, and refining alternatives and options
- Coordinating and communicating with respective agencies

Documents provided for review will identify what input is needed, how the input will affect the project, and the timeframe requested for response.

Membership:

The Technical Team will be comprised of experts in the Core Values relevant to the project goals. These may include, but are not limited to, technical staff such as planners, engineers, maintenance personnel, historians, emergency providers, and environmental specialists.

Technical Team membership will be comprised of representatives from:

Organization
Audubon Colorado
Bicycle Colorado
Rocky Mountain Wildlife
City of Idaho Springs
Clear Creek County
Clear Creek County Sheriff
Clear Creek EMS
Clear Creek Watershed Foundation
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife
Colorado Environmental Coalition
Colorado Historical Society
Colorado Motor Carriers Association
Colorado Preservation, Inc.
Colorado Public Utilities Commission
Colorado State Patrol
Colorado Trout Unlimited
Colorado Water Quality Control Commission
DRCOG



ECO-Resolutions
Environmental Defense
Federal Highway Administration
I-70 Coalition
Jefferson County
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Sierra Club - Rocky Mountain Chapter
Upper Clear Creek Watershed Assn.
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
US Forest Service

The Project Manager will be responsible for organizing and facilitating the Technical Team.

Meetings:

It is expected that the Technical Team will meet monthly for the first nine months of the project, generally until the design, selection and refinement of the alternative is completed.

The Technical Team’s meeting topics will generally parallel the Project Schedule.

The meeting format will be structured for open conversations and information sharing.

IV. Historic Issue Task Force

Roles and Responsibilities:

This ITF will focus on the issues, processes, documentation, mitigation, and agreements needed around all historic issues. This includes compliance with Section 106 PA, 4(f), and meeting with Consulting Parties.

The Issue Task Force will be responsible for documenting the process and making recommendations.

Membership:

Consulting Parties as defined in the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

This ITF will be managed by Lisa Schoch/CDOT and independently facilitated by the consultant.

Meetings:



Meetings will occur during key points of the Section 106 process, including initiation, eligibility determinations, effect determinations, and mitigation or as defined by Lisa Schoch/CDOT.

V. Water Issue Task Force

Roles and Responsibilities:

Compliant with the SWEEP MOU, this ITF will develop recommendations consistent with the MOU in matters related to water issues within the project area.

The Issue Task Force will be managed by Rebecca Pierce/CDOT and independently facilitated by the consultant. The ITF will be responsible for documenting the process and making recommendations.

Membership:

Stakeholders as identified in the SWEEP MOU.

This ITF will be facilitated by the consultant.

Meetings:

It is expected that this ITF will meet four times concurrent with initiation, methodology review, impacts, and mitigation analyses.

VI. Wildlife Issue Task Force

Roles and Responsibilities:

Compliant with the ALIVE MOU, this ITF will develop recommendations consistent with the MOU in matters related to wildlife crossing issues within the project area.

The Issue Task Force will be managed by Jeff Peterson/CDOT and will be responsible for documenting the process and making recommendations.

Membership:

Stakeholders as identified in the ALIVE MOU.

This ITF will be facilitated by the consultant.

Meetings:

It is expected that this ITF will meet four times concurrent with initiation, methodology review, impacts, and mitigation analyses.



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PUBLIC INFORMATION PRINCIPLES

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

CSS Context Statement and Core Values

The Stakeholders on the I-70 Mountain Corridor came together during the development of the CSS Guidance and developed a Context Statement and Core Values for the Corridor. One of the Core Values states that:

Methods for **decision making** must be fair, open, equitable, and inclusive. Collaboration moves decision making beyond individual and agency interests. New ideas will always be considered with respect and an open mind.

The 6-Step Process for decision making in the I-70 Mountain Corridor provides a structure for collaborative decision making and an opportunity to involve corridor stakeholders in the decisions that affect the I-70 Mountain Corridor. This project will follow collaborative principles and the CSS Guidance to involve the public on this project.

Public Information plays a critical role in supporting the decision-making core value. Informing the public about upcoming decisions allows stakeholders to be involved in decision making in a meaningful way. Additionally, effective public information initiatives are critical for informing impacted stakeholders in advance regarding construction and maintenance activities.

Integration in the 6-Step Process

The I-70 Mountain Corridor 6-Step Process includes the following steps:

- Define Desired Outcomes and Actions
- Endorse the Process
- Establish Criteria
- Develop Alternatives or Options
- Evaluate, Select, and Refine Alternative or Option
- Finalize Documentation and Evaluation Process

This Public Information Plan supports the 6-Step Process by ensuring that project stakeholders and the public are adequately informed in advance to be engaged at each step in an open and meaningful way.

Implementation

Effective public information supports effective implementation of CSS-based decisions because it provides easy-to-understand information to stakeholders in advance so they can make informed decisions. For construction and maintenance projects, public information makes implementation easier for all involved.



PUBLIC INFORMATION APPROACH

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Public participation and public information for the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment will be based on the 6 step process. The primary public interaction will be staged around 3 workshops: Scoping, Alternatives, and a Public Hearing. The workshops will use an open house with a presentation followed by a question and answer period.

Workshops will be announced through several mediums: mailed invitations with project background and current status included, website announcements, email invitations, press releases, and other media coverage.

Clarifying Project Goals

Complete the NEPA Process in a timely manner to allow improvements to be implemented in 2013.

Maintain the symbolic gateway announcement of the Twin Tunnels.

Improve the congestion and safety problems at the Twin Tunnels.

Maintain the collaboration and communication successes of recent studies.

Bring 21st Century solutions into the discussion for greater understanding of the options.

Key Milestones and Activities

WORKSHOP 1	PROJECT STATUS; PROJECT GOALS; PROJECT SCHEDULE; SCOPING; SELECTION OF PROPOSED ACTION; INPUT ON REFINEMENTS TO PROPOSED ACTION	SEPTEMBER 27, 2011
PUBLIC EA	REVIEW PERIOD	MAY 29, 2012 - JUNE 27, 2012
WORKSHOP 2	PUBLIC HEARING	JUNE 11, 2012
	RESPONSE TO COMMENTS	JUNE 14, 2012 - JULY 27, 2012



AGENCY COORDINATION

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Key Milestones and Activities

Environmental Methodology

August 17 – October 3, 2012

Agency Scoping Meeting

September 26, 2011

Historic Field Work

September 19- September 23, 2011

Officials with Jurisdiction (parks and recreation sites)

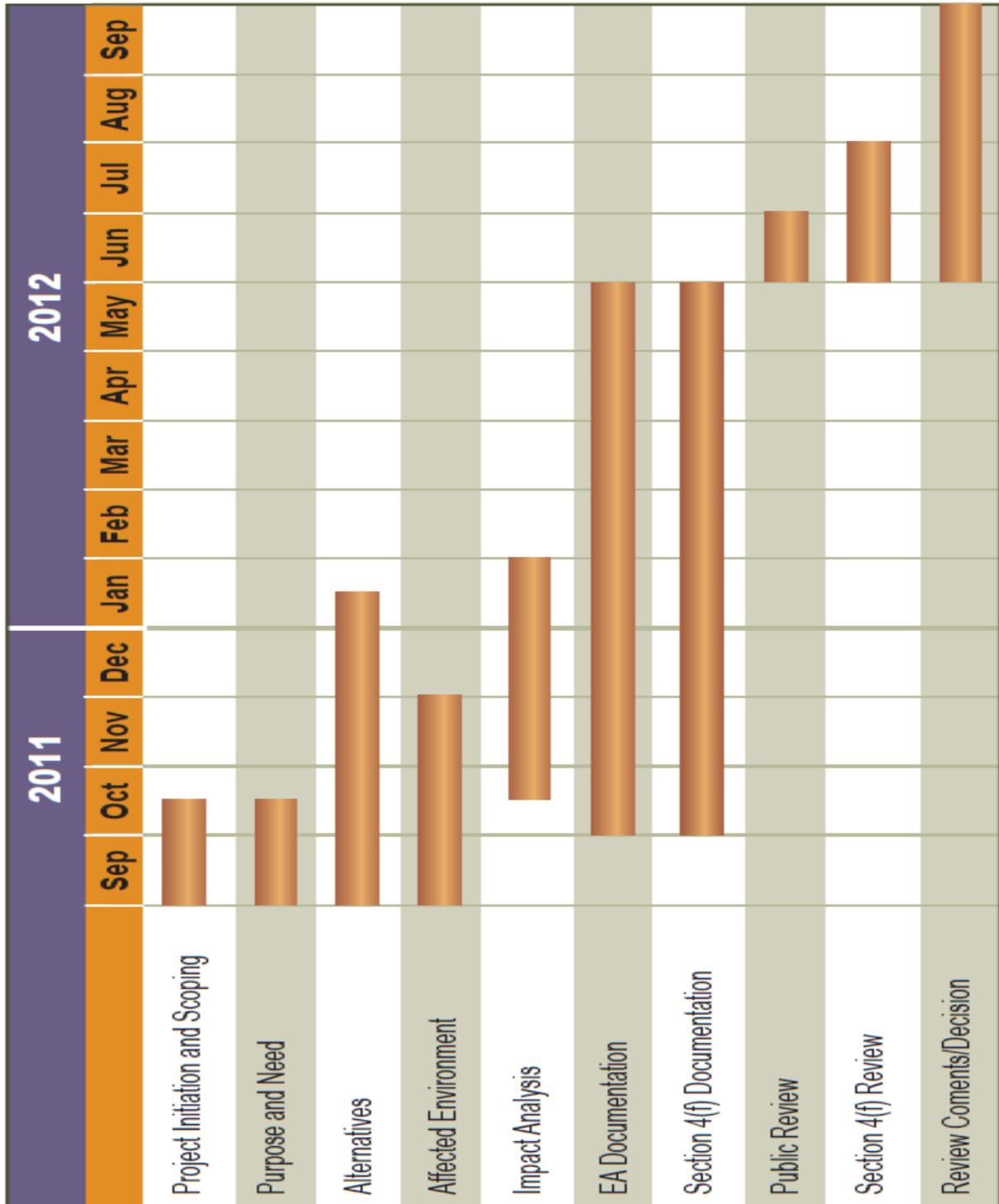
September 1 – October 12, 2011

Other resource field work as needed

October 4 – October 24, 2011

SCHEDULE

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment



Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Project Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Notes, 9/22/2011

Attachment 3

Variations that were recommended for consideration and eliminated

Variation	Major issues
Eliminate 45 mph curve reconstruction	Does not address the safety issues east of the tunnels
Don't build 3 rd lane or reconstruct 45 mph curve	Does not address the safety issues east of the tunnels
Reconstruct all the curves to 55 mph design	Results in impacts to the westbound lanes, to Clear Creek, and to rock faces. This work would be throw away work if the corridor design speed becomes 65 mph.
Reconstruct all the curves to 65 mph design	Results in impacts to the westbound lanes, to Clear Creek, and to rock faces.
Add cross-over to accommodate westbound reversible lane for peak periods	Reversible lane concept is no longer under consideration.

Variations that were recommended for consideration and remain under consideration

Variation	Major issues
Don't build 3 rd eastbound lane – improve the eastbound shoulder and use it for 3 rd eastbound lane during peak periods	This use of the shoulder during peak periods does not provide a shoulder for emergency responders or other users in an emergency. This does not add capacity during off-peak periods.

Other considerations for the Proposed Action

Peak Period Pricing	Placing a toll, which would vary based on congestion, on the new eastbound lane is being explored.
Frontage Road	The Proposed Action will be designed to ensure both I-70 and the Frontage Road have adequate room for safe effective operations.
Advanced Guideway System (AGS)	The Proposed Action will be analyzed to identify AGS alignment options and possible conflicts as they relate to the Proposed Action.
Improvements to the US6 exit ramp	This could improve operations for the eastbound lanes
Wildlife fencing	Will be discussed in the ALIVE Issue Task Force
Enhancements to aquatic/fishery resources	Will be discussed in the SWEEP Issue Task Force

Permanent water quality features	Will be discussed in the SWEEP Issue Task Force

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Project Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Notes, 9/22/2011

Attachment 4



Twin Tunnel Stakeholder's Core Values	How the Core Values are being addressed
<p>Safe travel for people and goods. Safety for emergency responders and maintenance workers. A safe crossing for wildlife.</p>	<p>Crash history analysis Application of State and Federal design standards Emergency responders as members of the Technical Team ALIVE Issue Task Force and review of ALIVE Recommendation Purpose and Need</p>
<p>Mobility through safe and reliable transportation facilities.</p>	<p>Application of State, Federal, and I-70 Mountain Corridor design standards and operational improvements Purpose and Need</p>
<p>A primary access and visual gateway to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.</p>	<p>Application of the CSS Design Guidance and Application of the Mountain Mineral Belt Aesthetic Guidance NEPA resource evaluations</p>
<p>Wildlife, wildlife habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.</p>	<p>ALIVE MOU and Issue Task Force Review of ALIVE Recommendations NEPA resource evaluation</p>
<p>Clear Creek, as a clean, high-quality water resource, a recreational asset, an aquatic resource with sustainable fisheries' habitat, a drinking water source, and a defining natural feature of the corridor.</p>	<p>SWEEP MOU and Issue Task Force Application of SWEEP process NEPA resource evaluation</p>
<p>Tourist destinations and community facilities, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, the waste-water treatment plant, the planned Clear Creek Greenway, the frontage road, and Clear Creek.</p>	<p>Application of the CSS Decision Process and Design Guidance Consultation with Idaho Springs, Clear Creek County, and local stakeholders Section 4(f) Process NEPA resource evaluations</p>
<p>History as a defining element of Clear Creek County. Celebrating the cultural resources associated with mining and mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation as part of the construction of I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.</p>	<p>Historic Issue Task Force, application of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, and review of Historic Context Report Section 4(f) Process NEPA resource evaluation</p>

Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment

Project Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Notes, 9/22/2011

Attachment 5

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is CDOT proposing for the Twin Tunnels area?

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) proposes widening the interstate to three eastbound lanes between Idaho Springs and the base of Floyd Hill, enlarging the eastbound bore of the tunnels and addressing safety issues on the eastbound highway curves between the tunnels and Floyd Hill.

What is the purpose of the Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment?

The Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment (EA) will define the proposed improvements, provide information on impacts to environmental and community resources and determine appropriate mitigation to minimize any impacts, following the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It will be conducted by CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA is expected to issue a decision by the fall of 2012. CDOT is required by law and the FHWA to complete the NEPA process before any construction occurs.

When will the project be built?

If the project receives the federally required approvals, construction would begin in the spring of 2013, with completion expected approximately six months later. During this construction period, eastbound interstate traffic would be rerouted around the Twin Tunnels.

How will the process work?

This environmental assessment is expected to take about a year to complete. Tonight, CDOT will present background information about the proposed action, as well as gather input about the NEPA process and timeline and the environmental and social resources in the project area. The project team will study the proposed action's impacts on environmental and community resources and evaluate measures to avoid or minimize impacts. A public hearing on the study's findings and recommendations will occur in summer 2012. The FHWA is expected to issue a decision document by fall of 2012. The EA will honor all commitments in the I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) Record of Decision (ROD) and will comply with the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) guidance.



Welcome to the I-70 Twin Tunnels Environmental Assessment Public Open House September 27, 2011

Agenda

- 5:30 – 6:00 Open House
- 6:00 – 6:30 Presentation and Questions and Answers
- 6:30 – 7:30 Open House

Objectives of tonight's meeting:

- Provide information on the proposed improvements
- Solicit input from the public and other stakeholders

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Twin Tunnels project is to improve eastbound highway safety and operations, and travel time reliability in the Twin Tunnels area of the I-70 Mountain Corridor east of Idaho Springs.

The project is needed to address:

- **Safety.** A high number of crashes occur in the project area related to tight curves, poor sight distance, narrow shoulders, and congested traffic conditions.
- **Mobility.** Slow and unpredictable travel times in peak traffic periods (Saturday and Sunday afternoons) frustrate travelers, affect economic conditions, and decrease safety.
- **Operational characteristics that slow travel.** Capacity in the most congested portion of the I-70 Mountain Corridor east of Georgetown is largely controlled by the Twin Tunnels. Real and perceived narrowness of the tunnels causes drivers to slow down and reduces capacity by up to 30 percent. Curves in the project area between the tunnels and Floyd Hill (east of the tunnels) also cause drivers to slow down.

What is CDOT proposing?

The Twin Tunnels project proposes to add a third eastbound travel lane between the Idaho Springs East Interchange (milepost 241) to the base of Floyd Hill (milepost 244) where a three-lane highway section currently exists. The project is approximately two and a half miles long and includes widening the eastbound bore of the Twin Tunnels.

Schedule

	2011				2012								
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Project Initiation and Scoping	★												
Purpose and Need													
Affected Environment													
Alternatives													
Impact and Mitigation Analysis													
EA Documentation													
Section 4(f) Documentation													
Public and Agency Review											★		
Section 4(f) Review													
Review Comments/Decision													

★ = Public Meetings

How to Stay Involved

- Provide comments tonight & give us your contact information
- Follow the Project at: <http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/i70twintunnels>
- Participate in the Public Hearing
- For More Information contact:
 - James Bemelen, I-70 Mountain Corridor Manager: James.bemelen@dot.state.co.us or 303-365-7010
 - Ben Acimovic, CDOT Project Manager: Benjamin.acimovic@dot.state.co.us or 303-512-5814
 - Bob Wilson, CDOT Public Relations: bob.j.wilson@dot.state.co.us or 303-757-9431
 - Mandy Whorton, Consultant Project Manager: mandy.whorton@ch2m.com or 303-987-5940
- Mail comments to I-70 Mountain Corridor Program, c/o Ernestine Meadows, Program Assistant, CDOT Region 1, 18500 E. Colfax Avenue, Aurora, CO 80011-8017

I-70 Twin Tunnels Context Statement

I-70 is Colorado's only east-west Interstate, providing a link over the Continental Divide, interstate commerce and mountain access.

Blasted through a geological feature and contained within a narrow canyon, the Twin Tunnels symbolize Colorado's historic endeavors to improve access to and from the mountains. Currently occupying this canyon are Clear Creek, the Frontage Road, and I-70. The vision for the future includes an Advance Guideway System with these transportation facilities.

The Twin Tunnels are a gateway for arriving and departing the mountains, provide a natural crossing for wildlife and connect local communities to national and regional services. Running parallel to I-70 is Clear Creek, a natural and recreational resource. The tunnels now are a constriction to travel and create a safety problem.

Core Values

- **Safe** travel for people and goods. **Safety** for emergency responders and maintenance workers. A **safe** crossing for wildlife.
- Mobility through **safe** and reliable transportation facilities.
- A primary access and visual **gateway** to the Mountain Mineral Belt, historic Idaho Springs and Front Range communities.
- **Wildlife**, wildlife habitat, migration routes and access to Clear Creek.
- **Clear Creek**, as a clean, high-quality water resource, a recreational asset, an aquatic resource with sustainable fisheries' habitat, a drinking water source, and a defining natural feature of the corridor.
- **Tourist destinations and community facilities**, including the Scott Lancaster Trail and Bridge, the waste-water treatment plant, the planned Clear Creek Greenway, the frontage road, and Clear Creek.
- **History** as a defining element of Clear Creek County. Celebrating the cultural resources associated with mining and mining towns, and the first successful tunneling operation as part of the construction of I-70 west through Colorado's mountains.