



## **I-25 South Gap Project Monument to south of Castle Rock**

### **PROJECT BACKGROUND:**

CDOT initiated a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study in the Fall of 2016 to identify a long-term vision for the 34-mile stretch of I-25 south from Monument to C-470. Over the last year, the project team has:

- Defined safety, mobility, and trip reliability problems;
- Evaluated over 100 alternatives;
- Conducted detailed engineering and topographic surveys;
- Engaged in advanced environmental data collection;
- Compiled detailed traffic counts and modeled future traffic projections; and
- Coordinated with resource agencies and local governments.

Through the study to date, CDOT and stakeholders have identified the 18-mile segment from Monument to Castle Rock—known as "the Gap"—as the most urgent and highest priority.

### **PROJECT NEED:**

I-25 links the state's two major metropolitan areas and is critical to the state's economic and business development. Last year brought almost 100,000 new residents to Colorado - 96% of them to the Front Range. This obviously affects I-25, and we've seen a noticeable increase in traffic volumes and delays on I-25 between Colorado Springs and Denver.

**In fact, based on evaluation of travel times in the corridor, there were NO DAYS in 2016 without delays of 40 percent or greater for some period of the day. And extreme delays of hours are increasingly common.**

In order to address safety, trip reliability, and mobility choices, the I-25 South Gap Project needs to modernize the highway and provide an additional lane in each direction, wider shoulders, wildlife crossings, improved lighting, and enhanced bus operations.

### **THE PROJECT:**

The proposed action for the I-25 South Gap EA is to add one travel lane in each direction between Monument and Castle Rock. This action will address the existing bottleneck and balance lane capacity with the adjoining 3-lane sections North and South along the corridor. The proposed action will also widen shoulders to provide safe space for disabled vehicles, maintenance, law-enforcement, and emergency response, as well as reduce wildlife vehicle collisions.

## ABOUT THE CORRIDOR:

- I-25 South is a 34-mile stretch that links the state's two major metropolitan areas and communities between and is critical to the state's economic and business development vitality.
- The Interstate system in Colorado was designed in 1950s, built in 1960s for a 1980s population projection of 3 million. Current population in Colorado is 6 million and we are expected to grow to 8 million in the future.
- The 18-mile "Gap" section of this corridor is the only remaining 4-lane segment and, as a result, creates a "bottleneck" resulting in increased congestion and safety concerns.

## PROJECT STATUS:

In January of 2017, CDOT announced plans to accelerate the environmental and planning process on this corridor to have a shovel-ready project in the 18-mile "Gap" section from mile marker 161 to 179 by late 2019. That schedule has been further accelerated, and CDOT's new goal is to have a project ready for construction in the Gap section by November of 2018 - a year ahead of the originally accelerated schedule. This will be the fastest large project ever completed by CDOT.

## NEXT STEPS:

- The I-25 South project team is moving to the next step and focusing on preparing the segment known as the Gap for construction.
- The PEL study schedule will be extended to allow a specific focus on the Gap section and consideration of the Gap improvements in the implementation plan recommendations for next steps in the corridor.
- CDOT is holding these December 2017 public meetings to confirm what we have heard from the public to date, share the accelerated schedule for the project that has been defined with this input, and collect input regarding the Gap project and corridor priorities.
- The PEL Study will continue after the Gap project construction is underway. Issues that have been identified and discussed as part of that PEL process that fall outside of the Gap project (including elements within the 18-mile segment) will not be precluded for consideration in the future.

## COST OF THE PROJECT:

- CDOT and local partners have identified \$350 million for the Gap project. This funding includes an application of \$65 million for a federal grant. While El Paso County (the applicant) and CDOT believes this application is strong, the program is very competitive, and funding is not guaranteed. The Colorado Transportation Commission has set aside \$250 million identified in S.B. 267 to this project. In addition, El Paso and Douglas Counties and the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority have targeted \$35 million in local funding to support the project.