

I-70 Collaborative Effort Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 26, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Chairs: Randy Wheelock Clear Creek County, Greg Hall Town of Vail

Members Present: Aaron Eilers (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Tamara Pogue (Summit County), Cindy Neely (Corridor Local Historic Preservation), John Uban (Headwaters Group), Danny Katz (COPIRG), Adam Burg (Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce), Eva Wilson (local transit provider), Holly Norton (State Historic Preservation Office), Jack Tone (Colorado Rail Passenger Association), Matt Scherr (Eagle County), Andy Marsh (Idaho Springs), Margaret Bowes (I-70 Coalition), Mike Goolsby (CDOT Region 3), Mary Jane Loevlie (corridor business representative), David Krutsinger (Public Works, City and County of Denver), Dennis Royer (Sierra Club, Rocky Mountain Chapter), Shaun Cutting (FHWA), and Amber Blake (Director of Transit and Rail, CDOT).

Alternates Present: Amy Saxton (Clear Creek County), Chuck Harmon (Idaho Springs), Tracy Sakaguchi (Colorado Motor Carriers Association), Becky English (Sierra Club), Mike Timlin (CDOT Division of Transit and Rail) and Matthew Marques (State Historic Preservation Office).

Members Absent: Andy Kerr (Jefferson County), Brendan McGuire (Vail Resorts), Xander Martin (Colorado Ski Country USA), Ann Rajewski (CASTA), Gary Frey (Colorado Trout Unlimited), Greg Fulton (Colorado Motor Carriers Association), John Martin (Garfield County), Tracey MacDonald (Federal Transit Administration), Mike Riggs (Automated Guideway System/High Speed Transit) and Adam Bianchi (U.S. Forest Service).

Interested Parties: Elizabeth Cramer, Jim Hancock, Mandy Whorton, Steve Coffin, Miller Hudson, Jeff Hampton, Brian Bosshardt, Janeth Stangle, Vanessa Halladay, Rob Beck, James Thompson, Don Stanton, Tamara Burke, Eric Mocko, JoAnn Sorensen and Matt Kireker.

Note: This meeting was recorded to assist with creating minutes

The Meeting was called to order at approximately 9:00 AM.

1. **Introductions and welcome new members**

Co-Chair Hall asked Steve Coffin to introduce the new members and alternates since the last meeting. They included:

Tamara Pogue, Commissioner from Summit County, replacing Bentley Henderson as the CE member. Bentley will be the alternate for Summit County.

Andy Marsh, City Administrator for Idaho Springs, replacing Mike Hillman, with the newly elected Mayor, Chuck Harmon, serving as the alternate.

Amber Blake is the new Director of CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail, replacing David Krutsinger in that position.

Adam Burg, the VP for Government Affairs for the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, is the new member representing the Chamber. He is also Acting Director for C3, and when they hire someone to fill that role on a permanent basis, that person will likely serve as his alternate.

Matt Marques from History Colorado is Holly Norton's alternate.

Steve Coffin also asked Janeth Stangle from Sen. Hickenlooper's staff, and James Thompson and Matthew Kireker from Sen. Bennet's staff, to introduce themselves.

Don Stanton, Vice Chair of the Colorado Transportation Commission, also noted his attendance.

Greg Hall mentioned that Paul Jesaitis has retired from CDOT. Don Stanton mentioned that Jessica Myklebust will be replacing Mr. Jesaitis for Region 1.

2. **Public Comment**

Co-Chair Hall asked for public comment and there was none.

3. **CE Business**

a. Approve Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and given consensus approval.

b. September 2021 Minutes

The minutes from the September 2021 meeting were approved by consensus.

c. Revisions to Operating Protocols

Two changes were proposed to the Operating Protocols, requiring all new members to go through an orientation and specifically stating that the CE doesn't lobby. A redlined version highlighting those changes had been sent out prior to the meeting. After brief discussion by Co-Chair Hall, consensus approval was given to those changes.

4. **Subcommittee Updates and Discussion**

a. Environmental Review Subcommittee

Amy Saxton, subcommittee chair, reviewed the purpose of the subcommittee: review the overall environmental goals, analyze the environmental impact and effectiveness of environmental mitigation, and address the question of how transportation improvements have impacted the environment.

The subcommittee reviewed environmental documents, met five times, and came up with 3 recommendations: assess existing data, ask for a more inclusive and transparent process in determining the class of action CDOT or FHWA may use for a particular project, and adding a standing air and noise Issues Task Force.

The CE had decided at its September 2021 meeting that it would ask the agencies to make a presentation to the CE on how the decision of which class of action for a particular project is made. Since then, the subcommittee and the agencies determined that this presentation is also an opportunity to answer any other questions CE members might have on that topic or any other environmental regulatory issue in the corridor. It was agreed that the Environmental Review Subcommittee would solicit the CE for questions members would like to ask the agencies about the environmental review and regulatory process, and submit those to FHWA and CDOT to include in a presentation they will make at the May 2022 CE meeting.

b. Outreach and Communications Subcommittee

Margaret Bowes, subcommittee chair, explained that the subcommittee updated the new member packet with a link to the CDOT NEPA program so members could get an understanding of how that worked. She also mentioned that the packet has been used to orient new members and asked those new members to provide her with any feedback they have. She mentioned that a frequently asked question is the distinction between the I-70 Collaborative Effort and the I-70 Coalition, and that the subcommittee will soon be drafting some talking points on that answer. In addition, she has had conversations with CE members representing CASTA, COPIRG and Colorado Ski Country USA about supporting the I-70 Coalition's public outreach campaign around carpooling. Finally, she said that the next effort of the Coalition's TDM Committee is to launch a transit awareness campaign to raise awareness among Front Range residents about the transit options available to access the mountain corridor.

c. Capacity Subcommittee

Eva Wilson, subcommittee chair, explained that this subcommittee is tasked with evaluating whether the capacity calculation numbers in the PEIS are still accurate, and the impact of the minimum and maximum program compared to the ROD's capacity goals. As the subcommittee explained at the September CE meeting, they determined that the numbers were not accurate so are working with CDOT on its new travel demand model. COVID has slowed CDOT's progress on the model. It had planned to conduct an in-house survey to collect data but that is on hold because of the pandemic. CDOT's team is currently proceeding with work on the travel car phone app that is part of the survey on how people are traveling.

David Krutsinger, a new member of the subcommittee, added that even though the CE doesn't have new modeling data from CDOT, CDOT does have existing travel data (e.g., Bustang, ADT counts from CDOT counters) and that the CE should be trend-lining the information so we understand the trajectory of travel demand. We could put that data on a chart, show population trends, and see what percentage of traffic growth we are experiencing. That will be helpful not just for the capacity subcommittee, but it will also help the environmental review subcommittee in its work.

Greg Hall asked how much of that tracking CDOT is doing now, and Mr. Krutsinger explained that CDOT publishes traffic information on their website and Bustang

information gets reported regularly to the Transportation Commission so it is relatively easy to obtain.

Ms. Wilson suggested that the subcommittee gather again to review Mr. Krutsinger's idea and determine how to break out the tasks and deliverables among the subcommittee. She committed to report back to the CE on their plan.

Ms. Neely added that CDOT does a variety of monitoring in the corridor and suggested the environmental subcommittee include in their questions to the agencies a question about the status of CDOT monitoring in the corridor so we know what the gaps are and the jurisdictions across the corridor can determine whether there is any additional data that is important to obtain. That comment led Greg Hall to ask if the environmental subcommittee included representatives spanning the geographic length of the corridor, to which Amy Saxton replied it did. Ms. Neely clarified that there are some representatives on the subcommittee who are not with a governmental entity and may not know that information.

Steve Coffin suggested that the environmental committee send an email to the CE requesting specific questions members would like the agencies to answer or specific information they would ask the agencies to provide. Ms. Neely agreed.

d. **AGS/Transit Subcommittee**

Randy Wheelock, subcommittee chair, explained there has not been much activity since the last meeting. He reviewed the asks that came out of the 2020 Reassessment for this subcommittee for the benefit of the new members.

The subcommittee asks fall into two categories, AGS/fixed guideway and highway-based transit. For AGS/fixed guideway, the first ask is to acknowledge that this is a long-term effort because it is the single biggest piece of the minimum program and is not just an aspiration but a goal of the ROD and the PEIS. A second is to get an updated ridership study, but this requires a thoughtful approach because it is expensive and because COVID impacted travel in significant ways. Moreover, the new state modeling will provide information that will be relevant to this ask. Additional asks are an updated technology study and participation in the Front Range Passenger Rail Authority. Mr. Wheelock will be the I-70 Coalition's representative on that group once the Governor ratifies his appointment and he will report back on this at the May meeting. The final asks are to develop a library of data and updating relationships and technological understanding.

Re: the transit category, the subcommittee will continue to collaborate with CDOT and the Coalition to promote micro-transit and seek funding to measure the effectiveness of new efforts in transit such as Pegasus.

He concluded the subcommittee report by saying that he will pull together another meeting of this subcommittee once he has been ratified as a member of the Front Range Passenger Rail Authority.

5. **CE Operational Issues**

Mr. Wheelock explained that a significant amount of work for the CE grew out of the 2020 Reassessment which, coupled with the 2025 Re-evaluation, suggests that the CE will continue to remain active through at least 2025. He further explained that all the work of the CE involves a heavy administrative load which Clear Creek County has been paying since the CE became more active approximately 5-6 years ago. The County has been paying about \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year to keep the CE operating and it can't continue doing this.

Mr. Wheelock, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Coffin discussed this and wanted to ask the CE to approve the formation of an Operations Subcommittee to include representatives of each of the lead agencies, each of the five counties that have remained active in the CE (Denver, Jefferson, Clear Creek, Summit and Eagle) Greg Hall and Margaret Bowes of the I-70 Coalition. Steve Coffin would also participate at some level so the group can understand the tasks involved. He mentioned that if others were interested, they would be welcome. This group would meet 2 to 3 times and come to the May meeting with a cost-sharing plan for the CE.

Mr. Hall mentioned that per the ROD, the CE needs to stay in place at least through 2025 and that it is not fair for the County to pay for this effort.

Mr. Coffin added that the plan the group would come back with in May would not be just a cost-sharing plan but also an analysis of how much staff support is needed.

Ms. Wilson asked about pursuing a CDOT 5304 planning grant to pay for this? Ms. Blake replied that 5304 grants would not be a reliable, consistent source of funding. Ms. Blake also said that another alternative might be to go through the TPR process and perhaps split it up year after year and look at the multi-modal fund as a potential option but if she understood more about the scope of work, she might have additional thoughts.

Mary Jane Loevlie suggested that getting these funds through a grant process will take a significant amount of work and an easier approach might be to just split the cost among existing CE members. Mr. Wheelock thought that was a great idea but since not all potential CE contributors were present at the CE meeting, it was necessary for the subcommittee to come up with a plan. Mr. Hall added that the Operating Protocols put some responsibility for this with CDOT so taking the time to understand CDOT's perspective on this is needed before we start soliciting funds from the CE.

Ms. Bowes asked how this was funded prior to Clear Creek County assuming this responsibility. Mr. Hall and Ms. Neely explained that CDOT had initially funded this effort but then there was a lull in CE activity. When the 2020 Reassessment was approaching, it was clear that the CE needed to meet more frequently and get re-focused, but were unsure why CDOT stopped assuming this financial responsibility.

Mr. Wheelock asked who from the lead agencies would participate in the subcommittee. Mr. Cutting replied Melinda Urban would represent FHWA and Vanessa Halladay suggested she and Jessica Myklebust should be included.

The discussion concluded with the CE giving consensus approval to the formation of this Operational Subcommittee.

6. **Agency Updates**

Mr. Cutting mentioned that Ms. Cramer has been added to the FHWA team as Team Leader handling all region 1 projects and he will cover the rest of the state, including Region 3, so will continue to be involved.

Ms. Halladay gave the update for CDOT Region 1. She mentioned that CDOT has hired a project director for Floyd Hill, Kurt Kionka, who has hired Jeff Hampton as construction manager. CDOT has been working through the process of bringing on the construction management and design teams and those will be announced soon. Kurt Kionka also has a few more positions to fill. CDOT is also working on bringing on the construction manager and design team and those will be announced soon, after which they will move forward with the CMGC process with Floyd Hill which means CDOT will look at the alternatives with the new teams on board and potentially refine those through the CSS process and likely do a re-evaluation on the project, concluding with a decision-document. CDOT plans to start construction in 2023, and in the meantime, work on the “early projects” for Floyd Hill: two wildlife crossings at Genesee and Empire and the roundabouts at the top of Floyd Hill.

Rob Beck, Program Engineer from Region 3, presented a power point outlining all the construction projects in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. They total \$232 million, the most expenditure in the region for several years. His presentation will be posted on the CE website.

Mr. Wheelock asked how Exit 205 did not make the list of priority projects, and Mike Goolsby explained the TPR process prioritizes projects and 5 interchanges on the corridor were prioritized higher than Exit 205. Mr. Wheelock then strongly encouraged that as the design work on Floyd Hill continues, egress in the case of a fire be carefully considered because that poses a critical risk to residents in the area. Ms. Henderson said that would be something they consider as they move forward.

Mr. Hall asked about the status of the Bakerville climbing lanes. Ms. Halladay explained that CDOT is close to advertising for that project and expects it to kick off in the next couple of months. Margaret Bowes asked about the timing for a PLT for the project and Ms. Halladay said she was uncertain but thought it was imminent.

7. **Corridor Updates**

Greg Hall mentioned that within Eagle County, IGA's have been signed to look at the potential of forming a regional transportation authority that would go before voters for approval in the fall, the ultimate goal of which is to be able to live in Eagle County and not need to own a car. Commissioner Scherr explained that the tax question to fund the RTA cannot go before voters until 2023.

Commissioner Pogue explained that Summit County's highest priority is to get Exits 203 and 205 on the Intermountain TPR list. These are significant pain points for the county.

Ms. Bowes said the I-70 Coalition is focused on public outreach and education on carpooling and transit options and on conducting surveys around transit. They are also purchasing mobility cell phone data for the last couple of years to understand more about travel patterns in the corridor.

Mary Jane Loevlie gave an update for Clear Creek County, mentioning that Clear Creek's roundabout bus did 11,000 trips last year. She also mentioned Idaho Springs is working hard on the mobility hub at Exit 240, with plans to get it built in the next two years.

Mr. Wheelock mentioned that Pegasus will add transit capacity in the corridor and asked Mike Timlin to update the group on that program. Mr. Timlin mentioned that supply chain issues have slowed down the delivery of the 10 vans CDOT ordered last summer. CDOT also discovered that of the 10 vans they ordered, Ford only built 8. CDOT is in the process of ordering 6 more vans. CDOT plans to start service on April 29 with the 8 vehicles and is looking to add two rentals for backup.

David Krutsinger mentioned that Denver has now nearly completed Denver Moves Phase 2, which includes investing in Colfax Bus Rapid Transit which will hopefully go into construction in 2024. Denver is also working with CDOT and HPTE on looking at Burnham Yard, roughly 60 acres that is critical to understanding whether Front Range Passenger Rail can get to Union Station and important in terms of interoperability.

8. **Wrap Up**

Steve Coffin explained that the May 25 meeting is expected to be in person from 10:00 to 2:00 at the Frisco Senior Center.

The meeting concluded at 10:51.