



23982-23929 I-70 West Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements Meeting Notes

Date: March 11, 2023

Purpose:

Combined Project Leadership Team (PLT) and Technical Team (TT) Meeting #35

Location:

Online Google Meet Meeting

Attending:

Attendance list:

- John Kronholm, Project Manager, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 3
- Sarah Navarro, CDOT Region 3
- Jon Leyba, CDOT Region 3
- David Cesark, CDOT Region 3
- Veronica McCall, CDOT
- Zane Znamenacek, CDOT
- Patrick Chavez, CDOT
- Kristin Salamack, CDOT U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Liaison
- Stephanie Gibson, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Jeff Bellen, FHWA
- Melvin Woody, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Dick Cleveland, Town of Vail
- Greg Hall, Town of Vail
- Pete Wadden, Town of Vail
- Ben Gerdes, Eagle County
- Larissa Read, Eagle River Water & Sanitation District (ERWSD)
- Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers
- Shannon Anderson, Bicycle Colorado
- Pete Remington, Kiewit
- Mark Gutknecht, Kiewit
- Adam Geist, Kiewit
- Randal Lapsley, RS&H

- Sam Stavish, CIG
- Mary Jo Vobejda, Jacobs
- Amy Hopkins, Jacobs
- Jim Clarke, Jacobs
- Loretta LaRiviere, Jacobs

Summary of Discussion:

The following is a summary of the subjects discussed during the meeting.

1) Introductions & Meeting Purpose

Mary Jo said today we will review work completed since the last PLT/TT meeting, provide a recreation trail update, design status update, 2023 construction plan update, public outreach plan for the upcoming construction season, and the schedule and next steps.

2) Review of Work Completed Since the Last PLT/TT Meeting

Mary Jo said we did not have a PLT/TT meeting in February. Construction Package (CP) #4 design has been completed and has been put out for bid. CP #5 design is advancing to a 90% (FOR) level. We continue to track environmental compliance.

3) Recreation Trail Update

Adam reviewed the recreation trail schedule.

- a) Trail will remain closed until May 26 to allow construction of Wall 3-2 and bridge precast elements in place.
 - Comment #1: Greg asked if the trail will be open before Memorial Day and if the trail along the interstate will be open during the two-week closure in June.
 - Reply #1: Adam said maintenance crews will not plow the trail prior to Memorial Day.

John said maybe we could discuss maintenance clearing a portion of the Big Horn Road, the old US 6 that goes all the way up to the cul-de-sac, then riders from the town can ride up just on that portion if the snow is clearable by then.

Adam said we don't intend to use the temporary interstate trail this season; the riders will use the new trail. The two-week closures will just be intermittent closures and not closed 24/7. When we have those closures, we will have flaggers to temporarily stop trail traffic or have them walk their bikes around the impacted areas.



- b) The trail will be open for Memorial Day Weekend
- c) Scheduled trail closure for 2 to 3 weeks around mid-June to complete punch-list activities and tie-in paving. The closure dates will be determined with coordination with Project Team.
- d) General comments:
 - Comment #1: Shannon said if we could get to the cul-de-sac most of the time, which would be awesome. At least people could get that much of a ride in. And another important thing is we really need to make sure people on both the east and west sides understand the closures ahead of time. We need to let them know if they're coming up from Copper Mountain that they can't get all the way through.

4) Design Update

- a) Randal said CP #4 is expected to be awarded in early summer and construction will begin in July or August.
- b) CP #5 FOR (90%) meeting will be in May and the final submittal package ready in July. This package will include the environmental assessment (EA) commitments to move the eastbound bridge further away from Black Gore Creek and for an unpaved access road underneath the bridge which will give maintenance easy access to clean out the sediment control pond.
- c) Fill and pipes were put in the channel of Polk Creek for an access pad for the cranes to cross the creek to install the bridge girders.
- d) General comments:
 - Comment #1: Melvin asked if any mitigation work has been done on the creek to stabilize the bank during spring runoff season.
 - Reply #1: Pete said this section of Polk Creek is going through a culvert because of the crane pad and we have best management practices set up in place on each side to make sure that any of the runoff coming down there is going to hit those first before it goes into Polk Creek.

Randal said when we go back to restore this area, we have a good control base of the creek, and we know where some of the plantings, logs and other things to create fish habitats could be placed. We're continuing to work with Pat Hickey, our wetlands consultant, and our landscape architect to make sure we get it right.

Pete noted that because there will be more construction going on in the next few years, CP #5 includes the new eastbound bridge and demolition of



the old bridge in this area, therefore the creek restoration will be one of the final things to be completed in late 2025.

5) 2023 Construction Plan Startup

- a) Adam gave a recap of the work that has been completed for CP #3:
 - i) All bridge substructure concrete is complete. The last pour was December 20 and the crews finished stripping the pier cap forms the week of December 26.
 - ii) Finished mobilizing equipment off-site on January 10
 - iii) Currently casting tub girders at Plum Creek
 - iv) Plan to set Girders mid-May
 - v) Wall 3-1 Drilling and Initial Shotcrete suspended for season on December 15
 - vi) Completed Drill/Install of 11 EA temporary drains. These needed to be installed last season to divert the spring runoff and make for better drilling conditions this spring.
 - vii) Completed 4400 LF of Nail Install (125 EA Nails) in 2022
- b) Adam reviewed the upcoming work for CP #3 in 2023:
 - i) Mobilization on-site and snow clearing will begin April 3
 - ii) Mobilization of Drill Tech, the soil nail wall subcontractor, will start on April 10 and they will resume nail install and temporary drain installation on April 17
 - iii) Mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) Wall 3-2 Construction will start on April 24
 - iv) Bridge girders will be set on May 15

6) Public Outreach Plan for 2023 Construction Season

- a) Sam said because there is no construction going on it has been quiet this winter. We really have not had any messages coming in to either the hotline or project email, but we do monitor those channels throughout the winter just to make sure we're responding to questions as we normally would.
- b) With CP #4 construction being done by a different contractor, we've been working closely with Kiewit and CDOT to come up with a plan for public information integration between the two contractor teams, and whether they would have a separate hotline number and email account for their construction package activities. We all agreed that it would be best to maintain the current information channels for anything that's going out to the public via the hotline,

email inquiries, and weekly email updates. So, we have a mechanism in place where we will be coordinating with the public information team from that construction contractor, and they will be providing us information, so we have one seamless public information presence moving forward.

- c) For project startup activities we are going to be doing our normal public information outreach, and also specific to the trail path. We will be hitting our normal spots to get information about the trail out to the bike shops on both sides of the Pass. We will also be doing press releases ahead of the mobilization for the start of construction season. The trail path may warrant its own press release just because we know that is probably going to be everyone's top question going into the season. We will be explaining when those 2 to 3 weeks will be and that it won't be an entire closure. We will explain where there will be a noticeable presence of construction and that there will be flaggers for trail holds, detouring, or getting path traffic through safely during construction.
- Comment #1: Shannon asked for confirmation that people will still be able to ride the trail, they just may have to get off their bikes and walk through in some areas at some times.

Reply #1: Adam said that is correct. There might be some temporary closures, and they might have to wait a little bit, or walk their bike through. It will be the same as we dealt with last season.

d) General comments:

- Comment #2: Mary Jo asked if there will be traffic impacts and lane changes on the interstate this season?
- Reply #2: Adam said yes, there will be some lane changes. We're building a new bridge on I-70 with the intent that at the end of this upcoming season, we will transfer traffic onto the new bridge and even prior to that, paving work will require some lane changes and moving traffic around.

Randal said the CP #4 contractor will also move traffic. We've put together suggested Phasing and Construction Traffic Control Plans. The contractor can sometimes make changes or suggestions to those for how they want to approach the work, which we would review and approve. But there will be areas where the shoulders get narrow, and lanes may shift to one side to allow a work area.

- Comment #3: Tracy said with all the construction last summer, we had some difficulty getting our permitted over-width loads around the state. Who can we work with to ensure the road is open and cleared so we can get these



loads hauled? We've been getting conflicting information on the width and the days these loads can be hauled.

- Reply #3: Jon said all project construction information is submitted to Greg Smith in the permitting department and he compiles that information for the permits. If you have any questions, he would be the person you should talk to.
- Comment #4: Greg said the public information plan sounds very thorough. Kiewit has done a great job engaging with the PLT and TT. Will we be able to have the CP #4 contractor attend our meetings before construction starts so they understand our issues and concerns?
- Reply #4: John said plans and specifications clearly outline all of the EA commitments the contractor needs to adhere to, and it is CDOT's responsibility to make sure they are meeting those commitments. The contractor probably won't get Notice to Proceed until June and then it takes them a few weeks to get mobilized so maybe they could attend our July or August meetings.
- Comment #5: Mary Jo said she will make a note to make sure the new contractor is invited to our meetings once they have Notice to Proceed.

7) Schedule and Next Steps

- a) Randal said this will be a busy construction season. When the CP #4 contractor starts work, we anticipate they will generally start on the walls that are along the eastbound lanes to widen out that portion of the highway to allow them to move traffic around during different phases. They will also be starting construction on the wildlife structures.
- b) The next PLT meeting is scheduled for April 17.
- c) John said he recently received some statistics on the new truck escape ramp at mile post (MP) 182. The Colorado State Patrol official records say that it has been used 14 times, but our information based on first-hand experience from maintenance is that it has been used upwards of 25 times. It's possible that it gets used lightly and it may be that trucks are able to get out quickly before the State Patrol does a full accident report. Maintenance thinks they've seen a decrease in truck fires, which usually happen at the westbound chain station around MP 179. This truck ramp has been a successful design, successful implementation, and use.

8) Other Discussion Topics

- Comment #1: Tracy said they have noticed there are increased speeds on the Corridor, and they are working with the State Patrol and CDOT for more

enforcement and signage and also working to see if we can get some legislation passed for commercial drivers speeding on a downhill grade. Hopefully this will help with the fires and truck ramp use around the state.

- Comment #2: Shannon thanked Tracy for that information and hopes it can be implemented. She drives the Corridor frequently and she sees trucks speeding down the hills and it's terrifying.
- Comment #3: Melvin asked if the SWEEP ITF will continue to meet. The USFS still has some water quality concerns for deicing salts for Straight Creek.
- Reply #3: John said no, the SWEEP ITF have finished their work. Straight Creek is out of this project area, but Jenn Klaetsch and David Cesark should be able to work with you on your concerns.

