



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT:	23982-23929 I-70 West Vail Pass Safety and Operations Improvements
PURPOSE:	Project Leadership Team (PLT) Meeting #12
DATE HELD:	May 13, 2022
LOCATION:	Online Google Meet Meeting
ATTENDING:	Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3 John Kronholm, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3 Rob Beck, CDOT Region 3 Program Engineer Zane Znamenacek, CDOT Region 3 Traffic Program Engineer Matt Figgs, CDOT Region 3 Dick Cleveland, Town of Vail Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Stephanie Gibson, FHWA Randal Lapsley, R S & H Sam Stavish, CIG Jim Clarke, Jacobs Mary Jo Vobejda, Jacobs Amy Hopkins, Jacobs Loretta LaRiviere, Jacobs
COPIES:	Attendees

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions

- a. Karen began the meeting by introducing the PLT attendees' names and organizations.

2. Agenda Review and Meeting Goal

- a. Mary Jo said today we are going to give you an update on the project's design and construction.

3. Work Completed Since the Last PLT Meeting

Mary Jo said there has been a lot of work and meetings since we last met in February.

- TT Meetings on Feb 14th, March 14th, and April 18th
- 106/Aesthetic Guidelines submitted to Consulting Parties
- CP#2 Final Plans submittal - March 7th
- Final Maintenance Manual distributed for comments
- CP #3 FOR Submittal – March 23rd
- CP #3 Final Plan and Specification Submittal – May 11th
- I-70 Virtual Open House – March 31st
- Construction began on April 4th for the early work that needs to be completed prior to recreation path construction.
- SWEEP Meeting #8 – May 2nd
- ALIVE Meeting #6 – May 9th

4. Construction Progress

- a. Matt said construction started in early April. We are finishing up our punch list items for the Truck Ramp and the remainder of CP #1 which is the westbound highway closure system at the MP 190 exit. You will notice pull boxes being installed, and the sign mast arms are going up.
- b. We installed the Polk and Black Gore Creek stream crossings because we needed to be in and out of those creeks by May 1st for fish spawning.
 1. Stephanie asked if the pipe will be set in a way so there is not a big gap between the height of the pipe and the bottom of the channel. For fish passage it should be in line with the bottom of the stream at both ends.

Matt said this picture is of the downstream end, but he will take a look at it to make sure it is in line with the bottom of the stream.
- c. We also had to lay a significant amount of conduit for Lumen/Century Link. Their fiber optic line is right under the bike path, and we needed to get that out of the way for some of our excavation work.
- d. For CP #2 we just completed successful negotiations with Kiewit and received Notice to Proceed, so we have started the detour work on I-70. You will start to see shoulder and lane closures.
- e. We have also started setting up the rec trail detour. This will allow the rec trail to stay open in a safe configuration during the construction for the new trail. We started our detour paving this week and are starting to get barriers in place and will be restriping I-70 for the bike lane traffic. The bike path is open, and we have started to see some users up there. We will build the detour while people use the current trail alignment. Once we get this in place we will switch them over onto the detour trail and demolish the existing trail.
- f. The next things you will see are clear and grub work, pioneer work to do our initial excavation to get the rough grade of the trail in, and then continued work on the westbound closure system.

5. Construction Packages Timing and Design Highlights

- a. Randal said, we will soon be gearing up for construction on CP #2 this summer.
- b. CP #3 design is being submitted for CDOT final clearance approval.
- c. We are progressing on CP #4 design which includes the I-70 Eastbound Roadway and the wildlife crossings.
- d. CP #5 is the final package and will include the I-70 eastbound bridge at Polk Creek, wildlife fencing, and some other elements because we are still trying to determine the breakout between CP #4 and CP #5.
- e. A portion of rec trail under the eastbound I-70 bridge will be completed in CP #5. CP #2 and CP #3 include the rec trail realignment, but there is one small stretch of the trail under the westbound bridge that is in conflict with an existing pier of the eastbound bridge. We have to wait until the eastbound bridge is demolished before



that section of the trail can be completed. While in the interim stage we have a detour that will go around it and will allow riders to use the trail until that last piece is completed.

- f. CP#3 will also include some of the fen restoration in the area near the sand shed at the top of the pass. We are working closely with the rest area project because that project has some great wetland topsoil that we will bring over to our project and it will probably come in different phases. One of the keys for making sure the fen is restored and fully functioning is to make sure that with the topsoil the organics, seeds, and elements get placed and rehydrated in a timely manner.

At the end of the summer or early fall you will start to see widening along westbound I-70 for detour pavement. We need to do that during this construction season so we can move traffic early in the 2023 construction season to be able to start working on the eastbound permanent improvements to I-70 to make sure they meet the construction schedule.

- g. Through the course of the summer, we will be determining which elements will go in CP#4 and CP# 5 packages. Kiewit is only allowed to build up to a certain dollar amount based on the contract they were originally awarded. Because of the increase in construction costs, we are working to determine where that split is between elements Kiewit can do and what will have to be put out as a traditional design/bid/build procurement process.

6. SWEEP ITF Meeting #8

- a. Mary Jo said at the May 2nd SWEEP ITF Meeting we reviewed the Maintenance Manual comments and updates. Many of the comments were addressed one-on-one with the commentor so we could get a really good understanding of their issue and desires. The Maintenance Manual is being completed now.

We reviewed the status on the fen and wetlands progress. The fen restoration is a really exciting thing because it is unusual. Mary Jo said she has never worked on a project where a fen could be restored.

Karen also gave a very informative presentation and discussion about CDOT's Winter Maintenance procedures and protocols regarding the use of sand and mag chloride. It was a good overview of how CDOT conducts their maintenance and how the use of sand and mag chloride has changed over time and continues to be reviewed and the involvement with the Clear Roads organization.

Karen said she wanted to thank Tyler Weldon who was a tremendous help in gathering information for the presentation.

7. ALIVE Meeting #6

- a. John said the recent study completed was a statistical analysis on successful wildlife underpasses: [A Literature Analysis to Determine Optimal Wildlife Crossing Structure Size](#). Using that study and some other justification about the wildlife presence on Vail Pass, we had approached our project team about refining the sizes of the larger wildlife underpasses and the conclusion was to keep the wildlife



crossing at the top of the pass the original size of 50' wide and then one a little further down the pass will be 40' wide. One of thoughts there was there are more mule deer lower and more elk up higher. We met with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and CPW and got their buy in and then presented the final recommendations to the ALIVE ITF.

Mary Jo said it's no secret that she is a huge fan of the CSS process and thinks both of these are excellent examples of that process. The designers recognize all the values people hold on this Corridor and are working within the parameters of construction and doing something to advance the surroundings and making sure the project fits in and continues to be sensitive to the surroundings.

8. Fen Restoration

- a. Jim said, as most of you know, fens are unique, high-quality wetlands found in high alpine environments. This particular fen provides a unique opportunity for restoration because it is technically a fen but not a highly functioning one. The hydrology has been affected by a ditch that was cut through it several years ago. The intent is to restore the original fen hydrology and in doing that over time, along with some of the other measures we are talking about, will restore some of the vegetation in the fen. There is wetlands material available from the rest area that can be used. We are also doing an added mitigation area between the fen and the maintenance shed. It is not a coincidence, and everyone has worked very hard to make sure to look for an opportunity like this.

9. Public Involvement Update

- a. Sam said in late February and March we were promoting the virtual public open house. We placed an ad in the Vail Daily, and they ran an article about the project. There was also media coverage along the western slope and Denver area. We sent out over 6,000 postcard mailings to the Vail Valley with information about the project starting and the open house.

The Zoom meeting was held on March 31st. We had only 17 attendees, but it turned into a very productive discussion, and we had some meaningful questions that we were able to answer live during the meeting. There were a couple of questions about the rec trail, and a few questions about the construction schedule, lane closure strategy so we were able to answer those live on the webinar.

One of the innovative ways we are informing the public is through an interactive project map on the website. This is an embedded map that is almost like a virtual tour, you can click on buttons for different improvements along the corridor for both last year and looking ahead to future construction packages. There are photos and an audio tour that explains details about the improvements.

We are also able to use the virtual open house video to link to direct sections of that video so if people have questions about the rec trail, for example, we can send them a link that is directly to that portion of the open house so they can see the most relevant information about the project.



Tools that we are using to continue to get the word out on construction and impacts are:

- Weekly email updates, hotline message, and lane closures posted to COtrip
- Ongoing media relations activities
- Meetings with key stakeholders
- Social media posts
- Distribution of fact sheets and flyers
- Website updates

Outreach for the Recreation Trail includes:

- Meetings and communication with major events and offering rec trail tours before their events
 - Keeping an eye on the trail for start of summer path traffic
 - Communication to recreation stakeholders and businesses
 - Fact sheets and flyers
 - Recreation trail signage will be posted at each end of the trail with QR code to website
1. Dick said he thought the post cards were very informational, easy to read and understand and I think people really liked them.

10. Schedule and Next Steps

- a. Mary Jo said we show you the schedule at every meeting because we want to make sure you see how the different packages get built and how our meetings interact with CSS and the team you are on.
- b. We are interested in hearing your feelings on combining the PLT and TT meetings. We originally planned to do this in the middle of 2023 when the design was complete, and then just have the PLT meetings because once we are in construction, we can cover everything in a quarterly meeting. The two meeting topics have become very repetitive, and we are concerned that people who are attending the TT meetings are not learning any new information at the PLT Meetings and most of the PLT members are coming to the TT meetings.

Our proposal is to combine the two teams now but continue on the TT monthly schedule until sometime next year when the design is complete and then we would move to quarterly meetings. The only time we will hold an additional meeting is if we have a Design Exception that requires endorsement from an ITF.

1. Dick and Tracy said they support combining the PLT and TT.
 2. Mary Jo said, hearing no objections, we will move forward with combining the PLT & TT meetings starting in June.
- c. Construction Package #3 construction starts in August
 - d. Construction Package #4 DOR in July
 - e. SWEEP ITF Meeting #9 on August 22nd