# MEETING NOTES

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| **PROJECT:** | 21685 I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes |
| **PURPOSE:** | Technical Team (TT) Meeting #1 |
| **DATE HELD:** | February 7, 2018 |
| **LOCATION:** | Miller Ranch Community Center, 0025 Mill Loft Road, Edwards |
| **ATTENDING:** | TT Members:<br>    Joel Barnett, FHWA<br>    Stephanie Gibson, FHWA<br>    John Kronholm, Project Manager, CDOT Region 3<br>    Martha Miller, Program Engineer, CDOT Region 3<br>    Karen Berdoulay, Resident Engineer, CDOT Region 3<br>    Drew Stewart, CDOT Region 3<br>    Pete Wadden, Town of Vail<br>    Tom Kassmel, Town of Vail<br>    Greg Hall, Town of Vail<br>    JJ Wierema, Consultant Roadway Designer, Amec Foster Wheeler<br>    Ben Gerdes, Eagle County<br>    Greg Hall, Town of Vail<br>    Dick Cleveland, Representing Vail Town Council<br>    Jon Stavney, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments<br>    Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Association<br>    Don Connors, Consultant Project Manager, Amec Foster Wheeler<br>    Leah Langerman, Consultant Public and Stakeholder Involvement Coordinator, David Evans and Associates<br>    Kara Swanson, Consultant Environmental Task Lead, David Evans and Associates<br>    Bill Andree, Colorado Parks and Wildlife<br>    Craig Wescoatt, Colorado Parks and Wildlife<br>    Siri Roman, ERWSD<br>    Matt Montgomery, USACE<br>    Kevin Sharkey, ECO Trails<br>    Scott Jones, Colorado Snowmobile Association<br>    By Phone;<br>    Lisa Lloyd, EPA |
| **COPIES:** | PLT Members, Attendees |

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

**Project Background**

    a. The history of the project was discussed.

        i. I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS recommendations included auxiliary lanes on Vail Pass.

        ii. 2007 Environmental Assessment – the purpose being to improve safety of Vail Pass, work halted in 2007.

    b. The presentation focused on the current project and the desire to improve safety and operations.

        i. Crash data was discussed, and much of the pass has a LOSS of IV – which indicates a high potential for crash reduction.

            1) Crash type - WB crashes were generally fixed object – suggests people are having trouble staying in the driving lane. EB crashes were generally sideswipe, which suggests speed differentials.

        ii. Operational issues were reviewed, including; geometric challenges, truck volumes, and speed differentials.

            1) It was noted that truck volumes make up 10.8% of the total volume of traffic, and that there are two truck escape ramps in the project, which were used 15 times in one year.

                a) Greg wanted to see data extrapolated for trucks.

                b) Tracy clarified that truck use is lower during peak (under 1%).

            2) Figures for closures on the pass was discussed.

                a) 44 heavy tows needed in winter 2017.

                b) Pass closed for 177 hours in 2016 due to crashes, weather.

            3) Martha brought up that closures for maintenance should be added.

            4) Tracy would like to know data of trucks using runaway ramps – which ones are being used and how often?

            5) Discussion: How many hours is the pass closed for avalanche control?

                a) John mentioned it is tracked by maintenance.

                b) Don said it was included in the 177 hours.

             6) Siri asked what percentage of crashes involve trucks?

                a) John said it is included in the safety assessment details.

                b) Don mentioned that next meeting will cover those details.

            7) Bill asked how are you planning to handle snow storage?

                a) John said that will be covered in the alternatives analysis.

**Purpose and Need Review**

    a. The Purpose focuses on what expectations are for project (improve safety and operations), The Need is supported by data and addresses why project was started (safety concerns and operations due to geometric challenges and inconsistent speeds).

        i. Dick said he is concerned about the operational challenges and wants to make sure they are addressed thoroughly.

            1) Martha reinforced that it is a goal of this project.

       ii.    Martha commented on the project need, that the safety aspects are as important as the slow travel times.

      iii.    Bill is concerned that increased speeds will lead to higher crashes, and expects that the additional lane will result in increased speeds.

          1)    John agreed that there will be issues with trucks and cars sharing middle lane, but noted a study showing that adding a lane has led to a 20% reduction in crashes on other projects.

      iv.    Stephanie thinks that the term mobility needs to be more defined in the need statement.  What aspects of mobility are being addressed?  It can mean different things to different people. **Kara will add the definition to the P&N.**

**Work Plan** – including the strategy to involve the TT in making recommendation for the project

    a.    The desired outcomes were discussed.

      i.    Karen commented that CDOT's current funding will get us through the EA process, not further.

    b.    Project Inputs – the various studies and reports used to develop project plan.

      i.    Greg commented that project should include the original plan and vision from Vail Pass construction (1973) and how the context was a consideration. **Kara agreed to include this on the "Background" display board at the public meeting.**

      ii.    Stephanie suggested adding a slide about 1970s project to address original plan.

          1)    Martha agreed, noting the original concept to cut through directly from Silverthorne.

          2)    Greg commented there was a wildlife element that went into bridge construction (noting the wildlife underpasses).

    c.    Schedule and Milestones

      i.    John commented that we will add Issue Task Force (ITF) meetings to discuss more details, and mentioned some of the items they will be covering.

          1)    Martha talked about strategy to get project done despite funding shortcomings.  The process will identify construction funds and there are grants that we can pursue, including freight money.

          2)    Karen noted that this project has been identified as one of the top 5 in the State by CDOT.

    d.    Alternatives Analysis

      i.    Greg asked how an Advanced Guideway System (rail) will be included in process, as this was one of the preferred alternatives from the Mountain Corridor PEIS.

**Stakeholder and Project Teams**

    a.    Project Teams – discussed the individual teams and how they relate: PLT to TT to ITF

      i.    The required ITF meetings were listed, with the addition of the first optional meeting to be added.

          1)    SWEEP (streams, wetlands, water quality)

          2)    ALIVE (wildlife)

          3)    Section 106 (historic)

          4)    Adding Emergency Services Provider ITF

b. How information about the project is going to be disseminated to concerned parties was discussed.

    i. Other agencies (locals, federal…) are being involved in the project teams.

    ii. The project team plans to hold elected officials briefings to update local stakeholders.

    iii. Public meetings will be held to brief local residents and gather their input. The importance of clear concise messaging was emphasized.

        1) The first public meeting (scoping) is planned to be held on Feb. 22. The meeting is being advertised with postcards to East Vail property owners, email blast to project mailing list, web page, news releases, CDOT social media.

        2) Two other public meetings will be held later in the project.

          a) Karen commented this is the minimum required to get to EA decision document. There will likely be more public meetings in future phases.

        3) Trail intercept surveys – taking surveys in the field from users.

          a) Stephanie asked if there will be outreach to snowmobilers.

            ▪ Leah commented that it might be done electronically due to challenges in contacting that group on the trail.

          b) Joel asked if the plan to capture information would represent travelling public.

            ▪ CDOT staff noted that multiple methods are being planned to cover a sizable representation.

          c) Dick noted majority of project land is in USFS and has concerns that they need to be involved so efforts move forward (USFS not in attendance at this meeting).

            ▪ John assured Dick that Matt Klein is involved and may not be at the meeting due to a redundancy with the PLT meeting that Matt attended.

          d) Greg thought it could be good to explain any easement issues that the public would be concerned about.

          e) Dick noted that bike path will most likely move to FS land and they need to be involved.

          f) Greg concerned about how the project might impact the roadway (I-70) leading up to MP180. Would the scope of the project need to change and would this impact the schedule?

            ▪ Martha addressed that constraints need to be identified. Karen reiterated.

            ▪ Greg noted the chain station may be impacted but it is outside the scope

            ▪ Karen said we could address those problems in other projects but the problems specific to this project extend from MP 180-190.

**Review of Draft CSS Materials**
  a. Context Statement – based on I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Statement.
     i. Stephanie noted that her previous comments were not addressed. The description of the corridor character does not address the natural setting (on USFS land) and the historic quality of I-70 on Vail Pass.
        1) **Kara said the team will address this.**
     ii. Stephanie asked where the success factors came from.
        1) Leah mentioned they came from PLT meeting.
     iii. Discussion whether more clarification is needed to define I-70 as the only East-West Interstate. **Decision was made to not change anything other than capitalizing "interstate".**
     iv. Scott brought up the importance of emphasizing access points to the recreational areas. Currently they are identified more as trails.
     v. Kevin added natural environment should be preserved.
     vi. Bill added wildlife corridors should be preserved.
        1) John noted that it mentioned "enhancing" natural environment.
        2) Bill thinks wildlife needs to be addressed specifically.
  b. Core Values – importance to stakeholders
     i. [Enhanced Environment] Craig has concerns about how the enhancement of the environment is going to be achieved.
        1) Karen brought up methods that it could be achieved – noted sand removal.
     ii. [Enhanced Environment] Kevin thought that trails needed to be moved to a different core value.
     iii. Leah asked if there were any values needed to be added
        1) Stephanie thought recreation should be added as a core value. She noted that it doesn't fit in the other values, and is a critical component for I-70.
           a) Scott noted that it is partially addressed in connectivity but not completely.
        2) Bill noted that endangered species should be addressed as well as water quality.
        **Decision: "Recreation" will be added as a core value. All recreation-related critical issues will be moved to this new core value.**
  c. Critical Issues – aspects of core values that are being addressed.
     i. [Safety] Martha brought up safety should include sight distance issues, and shadowing. **Kara agreed to add sight distance.**
     ii. [Safety] Kevin wanted to add trail concerns in safety. He said that commercial operations are putting more people on the pass and e-bikes are adding another element to safety. The team thought it might be better added to the recreation core value.
     iii. [Safety] Craig asked if headlight blindness has been considered for safety?
        1) John said the glare screen wasn't originally added when the barrier was installed so wildlife could cross the road. However, there have been successful installations in other locations since then.
        2) Martha noted that there has been environmental push back on glare screens, but some opportunities existing to add in critical areas.

3) Dick mentioned that we may be getting too detailed.

    iv. [Enhanced Environment] Siri thought Black Gore Creek should be mentioned for impacts to aquatic wildlife (macroinvertebrates).

        1) John thought we could address in water quality for Black Gore Creek and note it in efforts for sand removal. This section of Black Gore Creek isn't impaired for macroinvertebrates.

  d. Success Factors – describe what would address the issues.

    i. Kara asked if any factors should be added or addressed.

        1) Karen suggested rewording shoulder area adding "to allow for".

        2) Craig suggested adding to improved clear zone, a snow storage element.

           a) Leah recommended wording, "with adequate snow storage." **The group agreed to add this.**

    ii. [Safety] Leah asked Tracy about the "truck ramp improvements" wording

        1) Tracy was OK with it.

    iii. [Safety] John brought up how the chain station should be handled.

        1) Tracy noted it belongs under safety and operations.

    iv. [Corridor Character] Tom noted noise complaints would be an issue and highway noise should be addressed as a whole (currently only addressed for night construction noise).

        1) Dick followed up that future iterations for work on the pass will most likely include required noise study.

        2) Martha noted that Summit County follows federal guidelines with respect to noise studies.

        3) Dick suggested looking at the Simba Run guidance from underpass project.

        4) **Kara agreed to add text about compliance with FHWA noise regulations.**

    v. [Operations] Dick mentioned traction law should be included under operation.

        1) Stephanie mentioned that CDOT can't enforce traction law.  This falls to Colorado State Patrol.

        2) Dick thinks it's a part of the solution for the operational problems in the winter.

        3) Stephanie asked if we need to look at installing a chain up area for passenger vehicles.

        4) John thought it will come up in the ITF meetings.

        5) Karen noted that the success factors can be adjusted later in the process. She thought it should be added as a topic for future TT meetings and we can cover it then.

        6) Dick said messaging for when traction law is in effect can be vague and that should be addressed for pass operations.

        7) Kevin thought a measure of success could be compliance to traction law.

        8) Stephanie noted that this is a construction project and tying the success to compliance to a law might not make sense.

        9) Dick thought that success is measured in number of closures, and it wouldn't make sense to widen the road and not enhance traction messaging.

10) Tom said it would be good to track which accidents are caused by traction problems.

11) Don noted that not all the crash data can determine traction issues.

12) Dick believed that CDOT is tracking traction problems.

13) **Kara said that the project team can talk to the consultant traffic engineer, Stacy Tschuor, to find out what data we have.**

vi. [Enhanced Environment] Scott wanted to bring up an issue with recreation trails on the pass, the cross country ski trail impede on the ROW.

vii. [Safety] Kevin would like to see increased capacity and safety on trail system. The project should enhance the user experience. **The team agreed to add this to the new core value for recreation.**

viii. [Connectivity] Tom thought that recreation could be removed from connectivity. He feels like connecting recreation users has been addressed in operations and safety.

ix. [Operations] Joel commented on real time data system. What does it mean?

1) John defined it as an ITS solution.

2) Martha believes this is a RoadX issue.

3) Kara thought it was a maintenance issue brought up by Randy during the PLT meeting.

4) Martha thinks it is a I-70 Corridor Operational issue that wouldn't get addressed with this project, since it wouldn't make sense to add another TMC (there are currently TMCs at the tunnel and in Golden).

x. [Connectivity] Stephanie asked if the connectivity issues are covered under operations. She suggested eliminating connectivity to reduce redundancy. **The team agreed, and thought that the messaging might need development.**

Decision: Remove "Connectivity".

xi. [Connectivity] Tom thought that RoadX deserves mentioning.

1) John thought this should replace real time data system.

xii. [Aesthetics] Ben noted that aesthetics could be moved/combined to different category (corridor character suggested).

1) Stephanie commented that the character is open forest land and Vail does not define it. She thought the factors should reflect this, and noted the original intent of the builders was to capture context of surroundings.

2) Bill thought that success factors are missing the wilderness element.

3) **Corridor Character and Aesthetics Core Values, Critical Issues and Success Factors will be combined.**

4) **Kara agreed to review the document in its entirety and make sure wilderness is carried throughout the flow chart.**

xiii. [Enhanced Environment] Bill thought that a success factor for wildlife would be a reduction in road kill.

1) Don noted that 5% of crashes attributed to wildlife, so roadkill is not much of an existing issue.

2) Stephanie mentioned that the percentage would likely increase if you could capture unreported strikes.

xiv. [Collaborative Decisionmaking] Tom thought that "meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to provide input" could be augmented with "meaningful outreach". **The team agreed to edit this.**

xv. [Implementability] Karen noted that "impacts to the travelling public" could include a few words about noise. This is included under Corridor Character.

xvi. [Implementability] Stephanie suggested combining items 1 & 3 (phasing).
   1) John agrees they are redundant. **This change will be made.**

xvii. [Implementability] Scott would like to change "minimal closure of trail" to include all recreational facilities.

**Technical Team Charter Review** (only items that had discussion are included here)

i. Membership
   1) CDOT & FHWA main agencies
   2) Involving others to ensure all needs are met
      a) John mentioned that Alison Michael will participate in the ITF meetings but does not need to be on TT.
      b) Bill wants to add Craig from CPW to the permanent list (attending).
      c) Leah confirmed that Pete will be a representative for Town of Vail, and Tom will stay in the loop to sit in for Greg.

ii. Attendance
   1) Topics will be sent out prior to meetings, so members can attend those needed.
   2) Weather – please inform team if you cannot make it. Meeting can be rescheduled if many can't attend. School closures will cause a meeting to be rescheduled.

iii. Team Performance Assessment – ways to ensure team is successful.
   1) Karen mentioned that expectations should be clear so they can be carried out.
   2) Stephanie wanted to make sure that information is sent with enough time in advance of meetings so there is time to review.

iv. Consensus building process
   1) Email will be used as the primary way to communicate, and team members should add "21685 WVP Aux Lanes" to subject line for tracking purposes.
   2) John is main contact for the entire team.

v. Meeting Notes
   1) Notes will be sent after meeting for review and finalized after a week review period.

vi. Public Coordination
   1) TT meetings are open to the public but not publicized. Public can observe but not comment during TT meetings.
   2) Final TT meeting notes will be uploaded to project web page for public view.
   3) John mentioned that one-on-one meetings can be offered for any public stakeholder group that is interested in more involvement. (For example, an HOA affected by the project).

       vii.    Communication with other organizations.
            1)   Discussion: keep TT meeting size manageable by allowing a representative from each agency.
      viii.   Constituent Communication
            1)   Members should not speak publicly for the entire group.
            2)   Information with group should be shared two-ways.  TT meetings are for sharing information, not strictly as an information gathering source.
       ix.    Measuring success
            1)   Stephanie added a goal – having an implementable solution.

2. **Schedule and Next Steps**  *(3:50 – 4:00 PM)*
   a. Incorporate comments
   b. ITF invitations
   c. Agency Scoping  2/12 1:30-300
   d. Public Meeting  2/22 4:30-6;30
   e. TT meeting #2  3/7 1:00 – 4:00