



## Stakeholder Workshop #1

**Location:** Eagle Pointe Recreation Center

**Date/Time:** March 5, 2024 / 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

**Meeting Purpose:** Develop common understanding of project, project area, and alternatives to be considered. Understand stakeholder goals and project success factors.

### Discussion

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#### Who is here and why?

- Participants introduced themselves and their interest in the project. Most of the attendees represented local residents and businesses, and some also represented environmental and transportation interest groups. Others included Commerce City, CDOT, Colorado Motor Carriers, and project consultant staff. Peak Consulting Group (Mandy Whorton) facilitated the meeting, and CIG (Christian Jimenez) and FHU (Sebastian Montenegro) provided Spanish translation and facilitation. (See list of attendees attached)
- Mandy reviewed the agenda (attached) and purpose of the workshop, with a focus on collaboration and open discussion. Everyone was encouraged to share their experiences.
- A briefing book was provided to participants. The draft materials were provided for reference and background. The materials will be updated and supplemented as the workshops progress. CDOT intends this to be an ongoing collaboration as the project evolves.

#### Breakout groups

Three breakout groups discussed the project context, project goals, and critical success factors. Notes developed during these discussions were shared with the full group and are summarized below. The groups had many common topics, which are summarized together in the list below. Every group expressed the need to “fix I-270” and to avoid residential and business displacements.

#### What is important about the project and project area? (Project context and goals)

- Safety
  - Safety for I-270 users, including drivers and emergency services, and for users on local roads, including peds, cyclists
  - Safety in the area
    - Public safety
    - Homelessness
    - Spaces to attract crime
  - Emergency turnouts; Emergency response/bigger turnarounds
  - Road safety, paint lines, snow, better signage, better shoulders
- Traffic problems
  - Flow of traffic - safety would improve
  - Longer merge ramps
  - Fix I-270 so that it functions
  - Traffic congestion
  - Reliable (highway)

- Additional capacity - another lane
- Railroad crossing impacts
- Regional traffic
  - Travel through/commuter traffic
  - Bigger highway brings more traffic and congestion
- Location-specific improvements
  - Fenceline along Sand Creek - vehicles bailing off stopped highway
  - Brighton Blvd ramps/access
  - EB I-270 from 56th to Vasquez fixing the flow
  - Vasquez (This improvement addresses several concerns)
    - Mobility is poor
    - EB on is challenging
    - Have to rely on personal car
    - Exclusive bike lane
    - Better pedestrian
    - Lots of lanes to cross
- Freight
  - I-270 is an important freight corridor and only east-west hazmat route through the metro area
  - Freight drivers deliver and work in the area
- Multimodal options
  - Connections to Denver/beyond
  - I-270 barrier to connectivity
- Transit
  - Assumed to not be as safe as own vehicle
  - Convenience/cost
  - Transit could help serve bigger developments outside the corridor
- Meaningful improvements to the area
  - We want nice streets, sidewalks, bike lanes
  - Aesthetically pleasing
  - Can Commerce City be first?
  - Opportunity to do both - fix I-270 and improve neighborhood conditions
  - Environmental improvements/presentation
  - Constructability & quality of life
- Community and Environmental Impacts/Values
  - Community well-being/mental health
  - Avoid displacing businesses and residents
  - Minimize/avoid property impacts
    - Preserve north side residential area WB I-270 Quebec to Vasquez
    - Space required at interchange (new interchange configurations would likely require property)
  - Development without displacement
    - Direct - acquisition
    - Indirect - gentrification
  - Preserve Latino businesses
  - Green space
  - Trucking communities
  - Historical inequities
    - Gentrification, crime, avoid some of the side effects of I-70

- Construction - access, time
- Wildlife protection/habitat
- Addressing homeless (concerned with their proximity to the highway and interchanges and safety from vehicles)
- Funding
  - What additional elements will actually be included?
  - How much does CDOT have, and is it enough?
  - Costs - taxes
  - Toll revenue - if we have tolls, keep money in the area

#### **What does success look like? (Critical success factors)**

- Smooth and safe traffic flow
  - Incremental is better, speed limit would be nice.
- Reduction in VMT (vehicle miles traveled)
  - Carpool, alternative modes
- Industrial and community areas need to coexist
- Good access to and from I-270
  - Really only access is at Vasquez
- Community buy-in, seeing the big picture
- Access from 56th to I-270
- Community and environmental issues/goals from question 1 incorporated
- Another lane each direction
  - General purpose
- No impact to wildlife
- No cloverleaf
- New pavement
- Question - is Sand Creek Drive needed?

#### **Review of Multimodal options**

- The project team summarized the approach to developing potential bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvement options referencing the potential multimodal improvements table on page 31 in the briefing book
- Reviewed the potential improvements on CDOT facilities map (briefing book page 32) and discussed some of the options the team has developed so far
  - Comment - I don't see the need for connectivity across I-270. I know no one who would use it, other than maybe the homeless.
  - Comment - multimodal improvements are good but fix the highway first.
  - Comment - You don't see transit on I-270. A transit only lane would be a waste.
  - Comment - You need to look at future transit demand; just because there aren't a lot of buses on I-270 now, doesn't mean there couldn't be in the future or that project improvements could facilitate
  - Discussed potential for a commuter bicycle trail on the north side of I-270 and what that would look like. There was some interest as long as it wouldn't impact the interstate or require any property impacts.
  - Discussed a potential bicycle and pedestrian underpass; mentioned potential benefits around access to Sand Creek Greenway but also concern around safety and homelessness issues in the area.

#### **Other Alternatives**

- Alternatives will be reviewed in more detail at the next stakeholder workshop

### Wrap up and next steps

- General comments:
  - The speeds noted in the traffic section of the briefing book seem much faster than they generally experience.
  - Just added capacity isn't going to change anything except 3 lanes of traffic bumper to bumper.
  - Let's get the big things done to fix I-270 and its congestion as the primary focus.
  - I-270 needs more capacity.
  - noted they have seen vehicles stuck in traffic drive through the fence and go into the neighborhoods to get off I-270.
  - Request to consider traffic calming measures getting on and off the highway, especially near schools
  - It is of high importance to many participants not to see homes taken for this project.
- Mandy thanked participants for their engagement and asked them to provide any feedback on improvements. She said the next workshop would get into more detail on alternatives, and project traffic and design staff would provide more information on how they were developed and how they would perform. She asked everyone to bring their books back to the next meeting - and to add page numbers for better reference.
- The CDOT project director (David Merenich) thanked the participants for attending and said that he looked forward to building a partnership with community members.
- The next workshop is March 19 at the same time and location, hopefully in a larger room.