

City of Aurora

Office of Mayor/City Council
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, Colorado 80012
Phone: 303-739-7015
Fax: 303-739-7594
www.auroragov.org



September 16, 2014

Don Hunt, Executive Director
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Hunt:

RE: I-70 East Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The City of Aurora supports CDOT's preliminarily identified preferred alternative for improvements to the I-70 East Corridor as identified in the I-70 East Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (August 29, 2014). This alternative is titled the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Managed Lanes Option. Aurora recognizes the significant efforts that have been put forth working with an amalgam of stakeholders comprised of corridor residents, businesses and a variety of jurisdictions over the last decade, to reach a package of proposed improvements for the I-70 Corridor between Brighton Boulevard and Tower Road. I-70 is rapidly deteriorating and continues to experience increasing congestion throughout major time periods during the day and night throughout all segments. It is crucial that improvements focusing on safety and congestion are realized throughout the I-70 East Corridor. I-70 is and will continue to serve as a key east-west mobility corridor for Aurora and the greater eastern metro area.

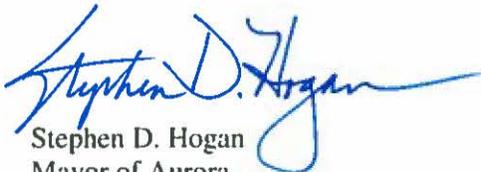
We have identified a variety of items associated with the proposed project and look forward to receiving responses from CDOT as this project advances through the environmental clearance process. These items are represented as follows:

- Toll lane customers must weave across a buffer zone and three or more general purpose traffic lanes to exit at desired interchanges. This seems to present a considerable traffic operational and safety issue particularly during peak periods, when general purpose lanes are congested and operating at low travel speeds, while the toll lane travel speeds are high. How will this situation be addressed in project design and eventual operation to ensure safe and efficient traffic operations?
- The necessary direct connection ramps to/from I-225 seem to be an essential element for the toll lane system and interconnection to/from I-70. Will the direct connect ramp systems be provided in the early phases of this multi-phase project?
- Toll rates will need to be at sufficiently high levels to maintain a congestion free, high travel speed operating condition within the toll lanes, particularly during a.m. and p.m. peak time periods. Have surveys been conducted to ascertain the likely use patterns by Aurora travelers and others in choosing to use toll lanes with variable toll rates during peak travel periods?

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- Existing general purpose lanes will continue to experience increasing congestion and lower levels of service in the future since no additional general purpose lanes are be added to I-70. How is this improving operations for our non-toll lanes using residents with destinations throughout the I-70 corridor and beyond?
- Interchange improvements at Havana, Peoria and Chambers, serve key employment and activity centers. Customers using these interchanges today are regularly experiencing congestion and travel delays. The City supports improving these key regional interchanges as soon as possible with this project.
- CDOT project funding relies heavily on programing a substantial amount of funds from the statewide Bridge Enterprise Fund for the next 20 years (approximately 45-50 percent). Given this, what is the impact for continued bridge funding and for other critical bridge projects throughout the metro area?

Aurora requests that top priority be given to responding to the above presented items. We look forward to continued coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation as this critically needed project advances into the design and construction phases. Feel free to contact Mac Callison, Transportation Planning Supervisor at (303) 739-7256 should you have any questions or require additional information.



Stephen D. Hogan
Mayor of Aurora

CC: City Council
Skip Noe, City Manager
Bob Watkins, Planning and Development Services Director
Dave Chambers, Public Works Director
Kevin Wegener, City Engineer
Mac Callison, Transportation Planning Supervisor
Kirk Webb, CDOT NEPA Program Manager
Rebecca White, CDOT Local Government Liaison
Peter Kozinzki, CDOT Program Development Engineer