



## **PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY**

**Date/Time:** December 10, 2008/5:00 P.M.

**Location:** Commerce City Recreation Center

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The I-70 East environmental impact statement (EIS) project team conducted public hearings on December 9th, 10th, and 11th as part of the on-going community outreach process. These notes reflect the public hearing held on December 10th. At the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, 65 members of the public attended, of which 7 provided written comments and 8 provided verbal comments. The primary purpose of the public hearings was to provide an update of recent study developments, summarize the draft EIS (DEIS), and provide an opportunity for public comment on the DEIS. The meeting included an open house, a presentation by the project team, and a formal public comment period. Comment sheets were also provided for the attendees in an effort to solicit additional comments on the project. Topics are listed in the following sections.

#### **1. Project Overview**

This study began in 2003 as part of the I-70 East Corridor EIS. The process was initially a joint effort among CDOT, FHWA, RTD, FTA, and CCD that included a transit and highway component. In June 2006, the projects split and the highway project is being conducted by CDOT and FHWA focusing on highway improvements between I-25 and Tower Road. The transit project is being conducted by RTD and FTA.

The Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, and the Draft EIS (DEIS) is now available for public review and comment. The document is available electronically through the project website and hard copies have been distributed to libraries throughout the corridor and in CDOT offices. The public can comment on the document by printing the comment form from the website and mailing it to the project team or bring their comments to the public hearings. The 45-day public review period was scheduled to end on December 31st; however, due to the requests for an extension, the review period is now scheduled to end on March 31st.

#### **2. Purpose and Need**

The project team reviewed the original purpose and need of the I-70 East Corridor EIS. The project's purpose was to improve safety, access, and mobility, and address congestion on I-70. There is increased transportation demand on I-70 with limited transportation capacity, safety concerns, and transportation infrastructure deficiencies (such as the I-70 viaduct). There have been no significant changes to the project purpose and need since the split of the I-70 East Corridor EIS.

#### **3. DEIS Alternatives Evaluated**

In addition to the No-Action Alternative, four build alternatives remain under consideration in the DEIS. These four alternatives all include a new interchange at Central Park Boulevard and

are combinations of new or existing alignment and new tolled or general purpose lanes, including:

### **No-Action Alternative**

Viaduct replacement from Brighton Boulevard to Colorado Boulevard. Replaces the aging viaduct between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard without adding capacity. Design options include building to north or south between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard at a cost of \$400 to \$600 million (2005 dollars).

### **Existing Alignment Alternatives**

Alternative 1 – General purpose lanes on the existing alignment. Keep I-70 on its existing alignment and add general purpose lanes between I-25 and Tower Road. Design options include building to north or south between Brighton Boulevard and Quebec Street at a cost of \$1,260 to \$1,440 million (2005 dollars).

Alternative 3 – Tolled express lanes on existing alignment. Keep I-70 on its existing alignment, add general purpose lanes between I-25 and Colorado Blvd. and between Chambers Rd. and Tower Rd., and add tolled-express lanes in each direction between Colorado Blvd. and Chambers Rd. Design options include building to north or south between Brighton Boulevard and Quebec Street at a cost of \$1,420 to \$1,590 million (2005 dollars).

### **Realignment Alternatives**

Alternative 4 – General purpose lanes on realignment. Realign I-70 to the north through north Denver and south Commerce City between Brighton Blvd. and Quebec St., including partial collocation with I-270, and add general purpose lanes between I-25 and Tower Rd. The existing I-70 alignment would be converted to 46th Avenue, a 4-lane roadway between Washington St. and Quebec St., including removal of the viaduct. Design options include a western and eastern connection to I-70 near Brighton Boulevard at a cost of \$1,530 to \$1,740 million (2005 dollars).

Alternative 6 – Tolled express lanes on realignment. Realign I-70 to the north through north Denver and south Commerce City between Brighton Blvd. and Quebec St., including partial collocation with I-270, add general purpose lanes between I-25 and Brighton Blvd. and between Chambers Rd. and Tower Rd., and add tolled-express lanes in each direction between Colorado Blvd. and Chambers Rd. The existing I-70 alignment would be converted to 46th Avenue, a 4-lane roadway between Washington St. and Quebec St., including removal of the viaduct. Design options include a western and eastern connection to I-70 near Brighton Boulevard at a cost of \$1,790 to \$1,990 million (2005 dollars).

### **Construction Cost Summary**

The project team reviewed the construction cost summary for each alternative. It was noted that the variation in cost was due primarily to the right of way costs.

### **Additional project details**

It was pointed out that this study does not identify a preferred alternative and does not have any pre-disposition on one alignment over another. A revenue analysis will need to be

conducted and the project team will update the traffic to 2035 forecasted volumes in order to develop toll revenue estimates.

#### **4. Transportation Benefits and Environmental Impacts**

Analysis was conducted to determine the impacts of the project alternatives on different social, environmental, and economic resources. The resources that are impacted are discussed in detail in the DEIS and include mitigation measures. The project team reviewed the resources not impacted by the alternatives and they include:

- Wild and Scenic rivers
- Prime and unique farmlands
- Section 6(f) – Park property or features paid with Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants

The project team also identified the resources not impacted by the alternatives, but that have standard mitigation measures, these include:

- Geology and soils
- Paleontological resources

The list of resources impacted by the alternatives without distinguishable effects were identified. These resources (including their mitigation measures) are included in the DEIS.

These resources include:

- Visual
- Air quality
- Energy
- Noise
- Biological resources
- Floodplains and drainage/hydrology
- Water quality
- Utilities
- Construction
- Cumulative effect

A list of resources impacted by the alternatives with distinguishable differences between effects were also identified and reviewed in more detail. These resources (including mitigation measures for each resource) are included in the DEIS. These resources include:

- Social and economic conditions
- Land acquisition
- Historic
- Parklands and recreation areas
- Hazardous materials
- Wetlands and waters of the U.S.

#### **5. Next Steps**

Following the public comment period, the project team will focus on reviewing and addressing public comments and will work closely with local jurisdictions to identify a preferred alternative. The project team will continue to hold stakeholder meetings as well as compliance committee meetings as necessary.

During the Final EIS (FEIS) process, the project team will update the impact analysis of the No-Action and Preferred Alternative. The project team will also be preparing the finance and phasing plans while continuing our public involvement activities.

## **II. SUMMARY OF COMMENT SHEETS**

The following section details the comments received to date from the comment sheets distributed at the meeting. These comments are recorded verbatim.

### **1. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about the I-70 East Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).**

- I can see no reasons for toll lanes. The two lanes that run north and south along I-25 has little traffic during rush hours, while the main freeway lanes are plugged. If the two toll lanes were to be used as regular freeway lanes during rush hours, I feel that it would free up a lot of traffic during the rush hours.
- I was surprised to see that dollars earned by toll options weren't reflected versus the non-toll options in total dollars involved in the project – because toll lanes could potentially reduce pay back time of the financed project. Please reflect this on future things offered! Leave the I-70 where it is and choose the least costly alternative as to whether to expand north or south or split the difference! Create, don't realign to I-270 and further congestion in our area.
- I think that they should tear it down and use I-70 underneath – rebuilt underneath now. It cost a lot of money now to repair it all the time. They could use that money to build underneath and it will be safer.
- I feel that the choices have already been made. Ralston Purina seems to carry more importance in where their plant is than anyone else. Just the fact that they have begun construction on their plant shows that Alternative #1 and #3 will never come to pass. Bad luck for Commerce City.
- Remove elevated portion and put I-70 on 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue. No elevated portion to freeze. Less cost to maintain old elevated structure.
- Put a flyover through – fence for I-70 for people to drive direct and drive straight through (a layered highway).
- I am against I-70 over the bridge. The bridge is deteriorating and there is no sound barrier. There is a school nearby too. I-270 is flat land, nothing extreme. It is easier to pave a flat road than one on top. I-70 has the Pilot station that attracts a lot of accidents. Trucks are constantly coming in and out; heavy polluter. Used as main road to pull into the station. Tractor-trailers stop traffic. On the north or south side, there are possibly 5 or 6 homes that would be affected. If you stay in that area, there needs to be a sound barrier. Move it to I-270; it is less residential, carbon monoxide would mix in and thin out. Putting it by the school, the carbon monoxide would go down to the school.

## **III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following section provides a summary of the public comments received during the formal comment period. Public comments were recorded by a court recorder and will be transcribed verbatim.

- There are a lot of homes in the area that one of the alignments would affect. There would also be a lot of fumes and noise. Against the realignment options
- Leave I-70 where it is. It was a mistake to put it there in the first place and bringing it into Commerce City would be another mistake.

- What about the school that is there? Are you going to move the school? What about all the homes in the area?
- What about the money from President-elect Barrack Obama?
- The cost of the northern bumps would be \$300 to 400 million more than keeping the existing alignment; money would be wasted.
- Do something we could all use so there isn't a parking lot on I-70 and I-270.
- Would like to know about the impacts to the Purina plant.
- Fighting the realignment because it is another huge negative for Commerce City.
- This will completely pollute Commerce City and the Sand Creek Greenway.
- Homeland Security shouldn't allow you to put a highway by a major refinery and the confluence of railroads.
- Don't see a benefit for Commerce City with these realignments.
- Reinforce and expand the current alignment.
- It is unfair to the homeowners and business owners in the area that have worked so hard to have their homes or businesses taken away from them.