

CDOT AND CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER I-70 EAST/ ELYRIA AND SWANSEA JOINT PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

Date/Time: November 20, 2013/4:30-7:30 PM

Location: Swansea Recreation Center

Attendees:

Michael Richard	John Eno	Jin Tsuchiya	Reggie Grotewiel
Lauren Strain	Emily Eyce	Joseph Montoya	Kelly Clements
Tony Pickett	Taylor Lynch	Bemta Duran	Katie McKenna
James Pantera	Elizabeth Poole	Junko Kim	Liz Evans
Ken Hoagland	May Zhou	Larry Duran	Chelsey Berg
Jon Cox	Gene Levy	Armando Manzamay	Michelle Gutierrez
Patricia Carmody	Dennis Lovato	Doug Drummond	Elliott, Joseph
Maxine Chikawa	Nola Miguel	Cecil Trejo	Bernadette Trejo
Willie Stackhouse	Bonnie Stackhouse	Justin Schmitz	Angel Rivera
Josie Arrieta	Christof Kheim	David Aguado	Foley Gordon
Joe Huff	John Riecke	Josephine Lefeune	Judy Montero
Les Rogers	Matt Christenson	Michael A Fritts	Melody Mosley
Ray Ruppert	Curtis Stultz	Nora Stultz	Betty Wonder
Norberta Dominguez	Eva Vasquez	Juanita Ripota	Vicki Gallegos
Victoria Burke	Chelsey Berg	Darcy Wilson	Larry Duran
Jamie Marston	Gilberto Munoz	Joe Elliott	John Riecke
Juan Veloz	Lavonne Griffie	Maria Hernandez	Juan Ruiz
Sal Cerute	Todd Stanley	Tom Anthony	Ralph Romero
Maria Romero	Modesto Barrales	Linda Godoy	Roberto Godoy

I. INTRODUCTION

CDOT and the City and County of Denver joined together to engage the community and gather ideas on how to improve the communities surrounding the I-70 East project. A public open house was held on November 20, 2013 at the Swansea Recreation Center as part of this effort. Approximately 80 people attended the meeting. This meeting was the second in a series of meetings.

The purpose of the meeting was to gather input on five topics and two planning concepts. The five topics were:

- Frontage roads
- Steele Street/Vasquez Boulevard interchange and second highway cover
- Swansea highway cover programming
- 47th Avenue
- Broad road network

The meeting was held from 4:30PM to 7:30PM. At 5:00 PM a power point presentation was given in English and Spanish. The rest of the meeting was an informal open house.

There were five information stations with drawings, maps and staff available to explain the five different topics.

Each station included different elements that the facilitators were soliciting input on such as relationship of the cover with the school, removal of the Steele Street/Vasquez Boulevard interchange, frontage roads configurations, and neighborhood connectivity. Comment sheets were available for attendees to provide feedback.

The outcome of this public meeting helps the City and County of Denver to finalize an additional option to the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative which will be analyzed in the upcoming Supplemental Draft EIS. Food, childcare, and Spanish translation were available to encourage participation from all members of the community.

II. SUMMARY OF STATION DISCUSSIONS

This section lists a summary of the discussions and comments at the stations. Please note some comments have been translated from Spanish and are italicized.

Frontage Roads Comments:

- One manufacturer from Elyria expressed concern about potentially reduced freeway access for trucks with the 2-way street, favoring the original PCL.
- A few business owners on the south side of 46th Avenue were supportive of a 2-way 46th Avenue because they recognize the advantage for their retail and property.
- One person said they preferred the two-way frontage roads.
- One person said there would be possible additional traffic on 45th Avenue with the modified option.
- Another person said they prefer the two-way frontage road.
- Another attendee commented that bicycle infrastructure is needed.
- One attendee said that landscaping, pedestrian bridge design, signage and place making is important.
- Another person said that the modified option is best!
- One attendee said they liked the pedestrian bridge.
- A person said that the two-way frontage roads may create more traffic congestion and a one-way couplet will help decrease congestion.
- One person liked the cover connected to the school.

- An attendee preferred the one-way option, suggested detaching the sidewalk and would also use the arched bridge from the other option.
- There were mixed opinions regarding the location of the frontage roads, either south of the cap or on either side of the cap. There was not a clear consensus of opinion.
- Very few people expressed a desire for a street between the school and the park but had a hard time understanding how traffic will move.
- One resident preferred the modified option but wanted to know how people bike on the frontage roads.
- Another person said the south frontage road is safer in the preferred option and asked if a stop light could be added.

Steele Street/Vasquez Boulevard Interchange and Second Highway Cover Comments:

- One person prefers the modified option.
- There were mixed reviews on the cap at Steele/Vasquez. There was concern over cost of the cap and the reality of future development. Some people voiced concerns for the truck traffic if the interchange is removed.
- Some people said that not having an interchange in that area would create massive traffic issues trying to get onto the interstate.
- Access to businesses was a concern with the removal of the interchange but people really liked the idea of new neighborhood businesses at that cap. They were also concerned about what type of businesses would go there.
- One woman really wanted “open space.” At first she liked the fact that the interchange had a lot of green around it but when I explained that this was not public land she said that it was not an efficient use of space.
- There was still some concern on where all the traffic will go if we remove Steele/Vasquez

Swansea Highway Cover Programming Comments:

- One person liked the removal of the frontage road between the school and highway cover because it would be better for the neighborhood.
- A 1st, 4th and 5th Grader had these comments:
 - Like the combined facility
 - Like soccer, basketball and football
 - Too bad I will be in middle school when this is built.

- One attendee suggested that there should be a bike path travelling east to west between the lid and the school from Columbine to Clayton.
- A couple of parents living in Elyria liked combined facility.
- One person preferred the combined facility.
- Another person liked the modified concept.
- An attendee commented that it is safer to have the park connected to the school.
- A person felt it is unsafe to have the park and the school on top of the highway.
- One person liked the combined facility because it replaces school recreation grounds and provides space for annual field day and other events.
- An attendee stated that commercial trucks need convenient access to I-70, that the two-way street is a concern and that Brighton access should be very convenient.
- One person prefers the two-way street because it is good for business.
- Another person prefers the original lid because it has better access; is more visual and is 11x10 green.
- Another person prefers the second lid because there is enough space to do it. It doesn't matter that it creates a half interchange because Colorado Blvd is two minutes away.
- A person preferred two lids and only one frontage road.
- Several people voiced support for the modified option lid, and also commented that there would not be enough "eyes" on the open space without the road.

47th Avenue Comments:

- Another attendee commented that bigger sidewalks are very important because most people walk their kids to school. This person lives across from proposed school drop-off and is not concerned about vehicular traffic around the school.
- A person commented that the sidewalks on 47th Avenue should be widened because people walk in the street.
- Another person likes the modified option even though getting on/off highway from her house (45th & Cook) will be more difficult. She is worried about what kind of future development will occur around Steele Street / Vasquez Boulevard. She does not want any more little side stores or strip malls. If it's like Stapleton town center, she would support it.
- An attendee was concerned about how industrial/commercial traffic will be handled in the modified option. Is it possible for the south side of highway to be a two-way frontage for commercial traffic and north side be a one-way and be for residential traffic?

- One person said they were concerned about kids riding bikes at drop-off and pick-up time because there is lots of traffic.
- An attendee commented that a grocery store is needed on the north side of the neighborhood.
- A person had concerns about traffic congestion at Colorado Boulevard with second lid option.

Broad Road Network Comments:

- None recorded.

III. GENERAL COMMENTS

- Several property owners understand that this project will create energy to develop around the proposed parks. They are ok with that because it will increase their land value.
- A married couple from Golden absolutely loved the modified option because it started to connect the neighborhood. The second lid started to bring an identity to the area. It reminded them of Copenhagen and some of the big city center markets. 'Place making is key!'
- Every single person that commented on the uses of the second lid mentioned a grocery store.
- A man said that the 4.5' walls might be too short. A curious kid could try and climb up the walls.
- A woman said safety is a concern with the modified option. She was concerned about creepy people being right next to where the children play. She loved the second cap option.
- Older couple loves the combined option because it will start to slow traffic.
- A 4th grader pointed to the images he liked on the boards and they were all the modified option! He said that if kids were playing in the park it would be dangerous to have a road because a kid could get hit. He loved the pedestrian bridge because people could cross safely and it looked cool. He liked the buildings on the 2nd lid and said it would be cool to have a market.

IV. SUMMARY OF COMMENT SHEETS

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

1) Do you want a second cover in the location of the existing Steele Street/Vasquez Boulevard interchange and why?

- Yes (10)
- No (12)
 - Yes - Better facility for Elyria Swansea residents, more opportunity for development. Would love to see affordable housing.
 - Yes - I think the more we can connect north and south and mitigate the fact that the highway will leave an open pit, the better. Hiding/covering it the most possible will lead to an overall more walkable and pedestrian-friendly community.
 - No - Pointless and more \$.
 - Yes and No. It would be nice to have the additional cover (and green) but has a traffic study been conducted to evaluate the impact on commercial and residential traffic? Will it congest Brighton and/or Colorado Blvd excessively?
 - Yes - it's more park recreation.
 - Yes - I like that it moves truck traffic away from the neighborhood and toward the East. It really connects the entire neighborhood to the East. It builds better community.
 - No - Only because I want to see the money go into one great cover at Columbine and we all know that money is an issue. Why two? Not clear on that. (Honestly, I don't care.)
 - Makes no difference.
 - Yes - I think one less exit will create less congestion on I-70. There have been other ways built into the plan to allow access.
 - Yes - creates more neighborhood, greater opportunities for investment and less speeding traffic.
 - No - I want access to I-70.
 - No - Having more, easily available access to the freeway is better than having to travel a long way to either Colorado Blvd or Brighton Blvd.
 - A cover would be ok if the access to I-70 would be drafted around the N&S sides of I-70 and the cover.
 - No - I think we need a way to get off 46th/I-70 to get to Commerce City. There is no need for more offices on top of a cover.
 - No - Unless we have a rim commitment to eliminate the food desert we currently have to bring a grocery store in its place I believe that the closure would tax the

Cole and Clayton neighborhood eliminating the commute through Steele and York streets and further taxing an overused Colorado Blvd. exit.

- Yes - so the area will look better.
- No - Do not move the Steele/Vasquez interchange because we need the traffic from Commerce City to move through it.
- No – Why explain things well and the workers cannot answer the questions. They send you to another worker and it is the same, or they say they do not know the answer that he only works for Keep Denver Beautiful.
- No – Because 47th is going to end up attached to the road and it is there where the gangs like to control. If that is the case, get rid of 47th because how would you like to live like this.

2) Would you like to see more housing and businesses along Steele and Vasquez?

- Yes (16)
- No (3)
 - Yes - I would like to see affordable housing and resident/neighborhood-centric business (not industrial).
 - Yes - Grocery Store
 - Where would you put more houses - the area already has housing. Yes, maybe move business where the marijuana stores are.

3) Which Swansea highway cover/school configuration do you prefer and why?

- Combined cover and school (15)
- Street separating the school from the cover (6)
 - Combined cover and school. I think this will calm truck traffic, will be safer for kids and a more enjoyable place to be with only one frontage road. Need bike infrastructure.
 - Combined cover and school. It would make the lid more useable if it's connected to the school. The neighborhood is currently not pedestrian-friendly and connecting the lid to the school would greatly increase the walkability and prioritize residents over traffic. Disconnecting it would really decrease the value of the lid.
 - Street separating the school from the cover. Do not stop 46th Ave. It's been the main vein from the beginning.
 - Combined cover and school. Safety concerns outweigh having a street run between the school and the cover.
 - Combined cover and school. More green space, greater access to school & park, better living for the community. Less pollution and car traffic. Bike lane would be nice.

- Combined cover and school - It is the more functional plan, bringing more connection between communities and eliminating a street for the kids to cross to get to the park. More bike paths need to be added.
- Combined cover and school – instinct.
- Combined cover and school - Kids don't have to cross at street to go from school to park.
- Street separating school from the cover - I believe a separation leeway of twenty-five feet should be between school children and the park/highway traffic cover.
- The pollution will go right up to the school grounds whichever way you go. Will it be vented?
- Combined cover and school - It creates a more open space atmosphere for the entire public as long as it is not just for DPS. I would like to see other amenities like tennis courts included.
- Combined cover and school - It is safer for the children.
- Separate – All *the gangs are going to gather there*.

4) Would you use a large open field for playing sports and games?

- Yes (9)
- No (10)
 - No. I live right by Argo Park and will more likely use that by I think others would use sports fields.
 - Yes, if it's connected to the school.
 - Yes - Farmer's Market
 - No, too much danger for the children.
 - No, because no one wants to play sports next to a road that only pollutes.

5) What frontage road configuration and street elements do you prefer and why?

Frontage roads	On-street parking	Sidewalk
One-way street (11)	Yes (7)	Attached sidewalk (7)
Two-way street (11)	No (9)	Detached sidewalk (13)

- Two-way street, on-street parking, detached sidewalk, only one frontage road.
- One-way street if possible to make it safer for pedestrians and kids, on-street parking if possible, attached sidewalk to make it safer for pedestrians.
- Two-way street, on-street parking, attached sidewalk, widen lanes of highway, one cover.

- One-way street: Better traffic flow on north side. Two-way on south side to facilitate commercial traffic. No on-street parking unless set back from roadway. It could cause a safety hazard. Detached sidewalk - safer and visually more appealing.
- One-way street, no on-street parking, detached sidewalk. One-way auto traffic, designated bike lane and detached sidewalk.
- One-way street, no on-street parking, detached sidewalk. I really like the pedestrian bridge - great idea! Add bike paths! Less on street parking encourages more exercise and enjoying walking through the park plus not having to get in and out of spaces when small children may be walking around.
- Two-way streets and on-street parking and attached sidewalks increases the pedestrian realm while slowing traffic.
- One-way street (moves traffic better), on-street parking, attached sidewalk.
- Two-way street, no on-street parking, attached sidewalk. I believe a 2-way street on either side of I-70 or N would be used for walking if adequate sidewalks in place.
- If a one-way street, where would you cross to the south side if you were on the one-way and how many blocks between the cross over?
- Streets with parking, everyone using the train should park at the Rodeo.
- The Rodeo is *going to use the streets as parking lots.*

6) Would you walk along 47th Avenue to get to the highway cover and school? Would you feel safe?

- Yes (11)
- No (6)
 - Yes - signage, lighting and landscaping will help me feel comfortable.
 - I don't live in this neighborhood, but yes, I have walked it. We would have more pedestrian traffic if we provided a grade-separated crossing under the railroad.
 - Yes. Yes if traffic flow is mitigated and low speed limits enforced.
 - With barrier it would be nice.
 - Yes, I do now.
 - I feel safer crossing one-way streets than 2-way.
 - Need better lighting
 - I would walk/drive close to and walk park if the edge wall is high enough to deter falling over edge.
 - If walking is the only option, there must be wide sidewalks and a lot of light at night.

- If barriers are eliminated and proper lighting, I would feel safe.
- Yes, I would walk on 47th Avenue, but there is a danger with the people that drive drunk.
- No, because I live a block away from the highway.

7) Which overall network improvements are important to you and what areas are you most concerned about?

- Bike infrastructure is important. Maintenance & lighting is also important. Minimizing truck traffic is important. Development that benefits the residents/neighborhood is important.
- In general, maintaining the current connectivity. Part of the reason the community preferred the lowered option over the viaduct was to restore the neighborhood connections to the rest of the city.
- Just get it done.
- Being able to access the highway.
- Concerned about eliminating the Steele/Vasquez interchange and how the 46th Ave. frontage roads on the north & south sides of I-70 will be structured.
- Student safety.
- Pedestrian & bike traffic are important to me. I would also improve sidewalks and add bike paths between the cover and the ball fields and the cover to Dunham Park.
- Anything around the school because I live here.
- In and out of Swansea to Interstate
- I think the modified plan is the most functional, safest and friendliest use of all the spaces affected. I think sinking and covering I-70 will be safer and healthier all the way around. I really like all the tree lined roads and greenery.
- Sleek I-70 cap and cover. Bike lanes everywhere. I'm in favor of these two things. There is no need to widen Colorado. 8 lanes is no longer a street, it's an abomination.
- Truck traffic on 46th.
- The 46th Ave Access along I-70 South would work best for thru fair traffic. 40th Ave North would be a good use for neighborhood traffic.
- What about these ten foot walls? Do we need them? No, not if the highway is elevated.
- The connectivity into other neighborhoods.

- Build a pedestrian bridge on York because we have to wait too long for the train to pass, especially the children that are going to school.
- Install a traffic light on 48th Avenue and Vasquez.
- XX & St. Paul Ct. (Unable to determine if 42nd or 47th was written.)
- Lights in the neighborhood, *there are 2 lights in a block of the size of 2 1/2.*