



PUBLIC HEARING MEETING SUMMARY

Date/Time: September 23, 2014, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Sable Elementary School, 2601 Sable Boulevard, Aurora, Colorado

Attendees: 28

1. INTRODUCTION

The I-70 East Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project team conducted public hearings on September 23, 24, and 25, 2014, as part of the ongoing community outreach process. Childcare and translators were available to all attendees. The primary purpose of the public hearings was to provide an update of recent EIS study developments, summarize the Supplemental Draft EIS document available for public review, and provide an opportunity for public comment.

The hearings included an open house and a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a formal public comment session. The PowerPoint presentation focused on the Supplemental Draft EIS alternatives, but most of the project information was included on the exhibits in the open house. There were three ways to provide comments at the hearings: (1) verbal comments could be made before the assembled audience and recorded by a court reporter, (2) private verbal comments could be made to a court reporter in a separate room, and (3) comment sheets also were provided for attendees in an effort to solicit written comments about the project. In addition, comments could be emailed or mailed via the postal system after the hearings through the end of the comment period on October 31, 2014. The project team will consider and respond to comments from the hearings as they begin the preparation of the Final EIS. These notes reflect the public hearing held on September 23, 2014.

2. PROJECT INFORMATION

The following subsections briefly describe the project.

a. Project Overview

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose improvements to I-70 between I-25 and Tower Road. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires projects that are federally funded and may have an impact on the environment to be analyzed through a rigorous process that allows the public to comment on the project.

b. Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to implement a transportation solution that improves safety, access, and mobility and addresses congestion on I-70. The need for the project results from several issues:

- Increased transportation demand
- Limited transportation capacity
- Safety concerns
- Transportation infrastructure deficiencies



I-70 East

c. Supplemental Draft EIS Alternatives Evaluated

The Supplemental Draft EIS evaluates the impacts to the project area of three alternatives: the No-Action Alternative, the Revised Viaduct Alternative, and the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative.

The No-Action Alternative includes existing, planned, and programmed roadway and transit improvements in the project area. It would rebuild the viaduct along the existing design without adding capacity, while expanding to the north or south.

In addition to the No-Action Alternative, two Build Alternatives with options are evaluated. The Build Alternatives are:

Revised Viaduct Alternative

- Expansion Options:
North or South
- Operational Options:
General-Purpose Lanes or Managed Lanes

Partial Cover Lowered Alternative

- Connectivity Options:
Basic or Modified
- Operational Options:
General-Purpose Lanes or Managed Lanes

The Revised Viaduct Alternative addresses safety issues with the aging viaduct by removing it and building a new structure that will add capacity, improve access, and increase safety.

The Partial Cover Lowered Alternative removes the existing I-70 viaduct between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard, lowering the highway below grade in this area. It adds capacity from I-25 to Tower Road by restriping and additional lanes. This alternative includes a cover over the highway between Clayton Street and Columbine Street to address environmental, social, and community issues.

Expansion Options refer to the North or South Options of the No-Action Alternative and the Revised Viaduct Alternative. These move the north edge of the highway north or the south edge of the highway south of the existing facility from Brighton Boulevard to Colorado Boulevard.

Connectivity Options for the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative—including a Basic Option and a Modified Option—provide different east-west and north-south street network and interchange configurations within the Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood to support a livable, connected, and sustainable city.

Two **Operational Options** for the Build Alternatives are designed to help handle the added capacity from I-25 to Tower Road. These options are General-Purpose Lanes and Managed Lanes.

d. Preliminarily Identified Preferred Alternative

The Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Managed Lanes Option has been preliminarily identified as the Preferred Alternative by CDOT and FHWA. This alternative would remove the deteriorating, 50-year-old viaduct between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard, rebuild I-70 below grade on the existing alignment, and place a nearly four-acre landscaped cover over the highway between Columbine Street and Clayton Street next to Swansea Elementary School. It also would add managed lanes in each direction of the highway from I-25 to Tower Road to improve mobility. The cover over the highway reconnects the neighborhoods with urban-landscaped areas that could include playgrounds, plazas, outdoor classrooms, and community gardens, all of which have received major public support during community meetings. Feedback provided during the Supplemental Draft EIS public comment period will be considered before formally selecting the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS.

e. Transportation Benefits

Improvements to I-70 have the potential to affect the surrounding transportation system, including other roadways, transit services, rail and motor freight, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. All Build Alternatives will:

- Provide increased capacity and reduce congestion
- Improve safety by widening shoulders and improving interchanges
- Replace aging infrastructure
- Reduce peak-period travel time for I-70 travelers

The No-Action Alternative would not adequately improve the transportation system to meet future needs of the corridor. Congestion would continue to worsen.

f. Resources Evaluated

Detailed studies were conducted to determine the effects of the project alternatives on the following built, natural, and social environmental resources:

- Social and economic conditions
- Environmental justice
- Land use
- Relocations and displacements
- Historic preservation
- Paleontological resources
- Visual resources and aesthetic qualities
- Parks and recreation
- Air quality
- Energy
- Noise
- Biological resources
- Floodplains and drainage/hydrology
- Wetlands and other waters of the U.S.
- Water quality
- Geology and soils
- Hazardous materials
- Utilities
- Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources
- Short-term use and long-term productivity

The project alternatives and design options benefit or impact each environmental resource differently. For example, while all the design options for the Build Alternatives improve transportation conditions,

individual design options impact more properties than others or benefit some resources more than others.

g. Next Steps

The project team will consider and respond to comments from the hearings as they begin the preparation of the Final EIS. During this process, the project team will select a preferred alternative by working closely with local jurisdictions, continuing to engage stakeholders and the public, and holding meetings with various project coordination groups. When the Final EIS is available, the formal comment period and public hearings will provide the community, stakeholders, and agencies an opportunity to comment on the Final EIS. After considering additional public input following the Final EIS, a Record of Decision will be issued by the FHWA that specifies the project that will be built.

3. SEPTEMBER 23 AURORA PUBLIC HEARING

Of the 28 attendees at the September 23 Aurora Hearing, three people provided written comments, six people provided public verbal comments, and two people provided private verbal comments. The following subsections briefly describe what was presented at the hearing.

a. Summary of Meeting Stations

The public hearing information session was divided into nine different stations manned by staff members and project technical experts to answer questions for attendees. The following stations were included:

- **Welcome—Overview:** This station started with the sign-in table, where attendees signed in and received the evening’s agenda and the Project Snapshot handout. Then they were directed through a series of boards that presented a project overview, information about the I-70 East environmental process, a history of what happened after the public review of the 2008 Draft EIS, and a look at public involvement throughout the 11 years of the I-70 East Project.
- **Project Alternatives Overview:** This station presented a description of the three alternatives evaluated in the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS—plus all of the potential options. A bird’s eye view of each alternative gave attendees a visual impression of what the alternatives would look like through the western side of the project area.
- **No Action Alternative:** This station presented a map of the No-Action Alternative from Brighton Boulevard to Colorado Boulevard, showing both the North Expansion Option and the South Expansion Option. It also showed Typical Sections—or transverse views—detailing the roadway configuration for both the North and South Options.
- **Revised Viaduct Alternative:** This station presented visuals of the Revised Viaduct Alternative from Brighton Boulevard to Dahlia Street, just past Colorado Boulevard. The Typical Section showed a view of the Managed Lanes Option.
- **Partial Cover Lowered Alternative:** This station presented a map from Brighton Boulevard to Dahlia Street showing the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Basic and Modified Options, with a Typical Section depicting the below-grade roadway.

- **Build Alternatives:** The Build Alternatives station showed maps and Typical Sections of the remainder of the project area from Colorado Boulevard east to Tower Road.
- **Preliminarily Identified Preferred Alternative:** This station identified the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Managed Lanes Option as the Preferred Alternative. Boards at this station presented the reasons why this alternative has been preliminarily identified. Boards also covered other potential design variations to intersections, frontage roads, the highway cover, and north-south connectivity. They also showed an artist’s drawings of cover uses and neighborhood enhancements.
- **Resources:** The Resources station presented study results of impacts to various environmental resources, including transportation/traffic, environmental justice, relocations and displacements, historic preservation, air quality, visual simulations, noise, drainage, and hazardous materials.
- **What’s Next?:** The last station presented project costs, explained how the High Performance Transportation Enterprise is pursuing innovative financing options, described the Final EIS process, and showed attendees how to stay involved.

4. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

a. Written Comments

There were three written comments provided on the night of the Aurora Public Hearing.

#	Comment
1	Extremely excited for the expansion and improvement to the state of Colorado. This project will not only improve our complications and difficulties today but also years to come. For the growth of Denver for 75+ years. Wow!
2	The City of Aurora has already gone on record supporting the preferred alternative and providing specific technical comments.
3	It is something we need to deal with as I-70 is always so backed up. I need to learn how you plan to do more about it.

b. Verbal Comments

There were six public verbal comments provided on the night of the Aurora Public Hearing.

#	Comment
1	<p>Okay. I live in one of what I would deem to be 12 I-70 adjacent neighborhoods in Denver between Stapleton Center Boulevard and Harlan. And I'm happy I have the opportunity to be here. I do a lot of volunteer work in various parts of I-70 adjacent neighborhoods, including Globeville and Swansea. I have a perspective that's a little bit different. First, I think that the CDOT people have been repeatedly very gracious, thoughtful, and wonderful in these public meetings. There've been many public meetings. The attempt at community outreach has been very very good. However, it's not reaching all the people that it needs to reach. So I think that we continue to see many of the same people over and over and over in some of these meetings, and that's a problem.</p> <p>We have some meetings that I think should be open to the public meetings, which have been closed meetings. I was thrown out of one of those meetings. That was the meeting with Councilwoman</p>

#	Comment
	<p>Judy Montero earlier this year. We have situations where there's a disconnect between what people who are doing the door-to-door outreach are saying is inconsistent with what the CDOT people are saying. That, I think, is a problem.</p> <p>We have recently in the last four or five months had a bunch of volunteers out knocking on doors asking, What's happening? What are you aware of as it relates to this project? This project which, including the service roads, makes the freeway 3.2 times wider in Elyria and Swansea. That, I think, is going to have devastating impacts to this community. And of the 91 people surveyed, three percent—no, I'm sorry—a total of three said that they know a lot about this project, 27 percent said, Very little, 28 total said that they know nothing about it, zero said they don't care. Of those asked if they have been involved, 81 of the 91 said no. Of those who we asked, Do you think that an option of a full I-76 and I-270 reroute should be studied, 85 of the 91 said yes. I am in favor of CDOT looking at all the alternatives before we make a decision. Do we know if an I-270 and I-76 reroute is going to work? No, we don't. But I think that there's a fairly good likelihood that it will not devastate 12 I-70 adjacent community neighborhoods. I think that it has great potential to solve the traffic congestion issues on I-70 on both sides of I-25, because it's not going to solve one with a bottleneck at Brighton Boulevard on both sides of I-25. And there's very very good rationale to suggest that it could cost significantly less, and cause—cost significantly less, and solve the problems on both sides, and do very good things for the community.</p> <p>I want to end by just showing this illustration that Ian Lockwood, an incredibly well-respected urban planner, not from Denver, he drew, and he references the thing. The thing is the machine that's gobbling up an elevated section of I-70 and out the back end comes a sense of place, a sense of community, and an area that really works, a place where the urban fabric has been woven back together since it has been very very badly torn apart in 1961, '62, '63, and '64 when this freeway so painfully carved through 12 Denver neighborhoods.</p>
2	<p>First of all, everybody knows road construction sucks. We have to live with it. I'm in favor of a lowered highway. Two other comments. I personally don't like roundabouts. I'm old school. I don't like them in different places in different states, but everybody would get used to them. I'm just not crazy about them. And managed lanes, I just hope they don't turn into a toll road to where I have to go. Thank you.</p>
3	<p>I live in Park Hill. I have been interested in this construction or reconstruction for a number of years. It started with me when my grandchildren were somewhat younger, and I would take them swimming at the Swansea and Globeville swimming pools. I would sit on the north side looking south, and I would see the highway. One day the kids said to me, Let's take a look at that. Can we get downtown? And I couldn't get downtown from Swansea and Globeville because the maze of roads that were there blocked by this highway. So I asked my friends, What do you think? They're going to reconstruct that. Maybe we ought to consider an alternative. And I got a good bit of people, good number of people saying, That may be a possibility. Why don't you look into it? So the snowball started, and the snowball is continuing on. And I continue to say, Why don't you take a look at alternatives besides just building and rebuilding I-70 through the neighborhoods that are there. I have continued to receive notices to say, We have looked at it, and it's either too expensive or it's not a good idea. And I said, Show me. And I haven't been able to get the information in which they said, We have done this, we have done due diligence. And I think spending a couple of billion dollars on something deserves the opportunity to evaluate all options to make certain that the spending of that money is done best for the citizens of the city and county of Denver as well as the state of Colorado. I think that if you only limit your options to two-thirds or three-quarters of the possible opportunities or possible options that you're not doing due diligence. So my recommendations to you is, slow down. We don't have to build this tomorrow. Slow down, take a</p>



#	Comment
	<p>look at these other options, and make certain that the decision that you make is the best decision for all of us. At the present time I don't think you can do that because I don't think you have looked at all of the options.</p> <p>I've seen stuff in the literature recently. And I've looked at this project snapshot. I think that this diagram really is disingenuous. When we take a look at the building of this highway between Colorado Boulevard and Brighton Boulevard, some 1,800 to 2,000 feet long, you're talking about building a cover that is 800 feet long. Now, that's only 10 percent of the whole project. And yet when I look at this document, it looks like this cover takes up three-quarters of the cover of the highway. I don't think that that's really a good way for you to be telling us, we're doing due diligence to this project, and we're doing the best thing that we can for the citizens of Denver. I also saw the picture that was on one, two, the third option here in which the roads that are on the north and south side of the highway don't completely go through north—pardon me, east and west, but there's a stoppage between in front of the school allowing people who were traveling east and/or west on the north side to have to make right turns across the highway, and right turns along the highway, and then right turns across the highway and then right turns back on it. And I recommend that you take a look at the California Department of Transportation. They had a problem with a road that was going up to Yosemite National Park in which there was a big rock slide, and so they had to do something about it. What they did was temporarily build bridges across a river to accommodate the traffic. And lo and behold, they put these bridges at right angles to the highway. And after building it, they discovered that people couldn't make these right turns. Maybe the little cars that I see around here now that are about 10 feet long are able to make a right turn, but I wonder whether the big trucks are going to be able to make a right turn. I think that those are lovely pictures, but I don't think you're doing a good job. And my recommendation is let's go back. You don't have to do anything right now. Let's go back and make sure that the decisions you're making are the best for all of us.</p>
4	<p>I don't care. 'Cause it doesn't make any difference. That's my point. They're being paid here. If you look around you'll see how many people are being paid to be here. And the few of you who aren't, I'll tell you, they really don't care about your comments after three years. You're being used. They're in negotiations with the City of Denver. They care what the City of Denver says. They got a letter from Adams County that says they rejected options. They care what the Adams County officials say. They're using you to (inaudible) the project out, to say, We reached out to public comment. Nothing will change because of what you say. They're using you as a tool. You need to understand that about this project. This is the pet project of the CDOT Director Don Hunt. They met in 2008. This alternative was rejected as unworkable. He came in and said, I love it. And so now they're going to destroy communities, they're going to build a contaminated project, they're going to increase air pollution in a community that has 30 percent more asthma, 40 percent more respiratory disease than the rest of the city, and they're going to do it 'cause Don Hunt wants to do it. In city—traffic engineers are going to plan your city. It's okay; you're not going to do anything about it. Sit back, relax. It's going to happen. As they said, construction's going to start in 2016. They already know that. What's the purpose of public comment if they already know the answer? Thank you.</p>
5	<p>I'm an urban design architect. I'm also an architect. I've been in the city of Denver for 30 years. I worked with the City and County of Denver as an urban design architect for two and a half years. I worked on the T-REX project, which was I-25 through the narrows through Alameda and out to Sixth Avenue. I'm here to voice my viewpoint. My viewpoint is also very, very similar to that of the American Institute of Architects, Colorado chapter's viewpoint because I'm a member of the Urban Design Committee for the AIJ Colorado. We have voiced our perspective a number of times and it's fallen on deaf ears. We support the 270-76 loop around because it's better for the city of Denver, it's better for Adams County, it's better for the drivers passing through Denver from Kansas to our</p>



#	Comment
	<p>wonderful ski areas and campgrounds. It's better for everyone because the acquisition of private property is industrial property or salvage yard property, and not high density residential neighborhoods that have already suffered because of a mistake that was made 50 years ago. One of the great things about architecture is we fix our mistakes. We plant vines if it's an ugly house. Well, guess what. We got us an ugly highway. And we can plant vines in the form of real parks. Let's touch on my T-REX experience. T-REX was promising beautiful, 800-foot-long covered parkways to connect Platte Park with Washington Park. We got nothing. We got a little bit of a widened area at the Louisiana light rail station—that was it. We got nothing what they were promising. They were promising a lot of pedestrian safety amenities. I'm sure that the I-70 has lots of pedestrian safety. Guess what. They didn't build any of them. They took out auto—they took out pedestrian barricades to protect people from the cars for pedestrian traffic. That got cut. So if you think you're going to see a tunnel, if you think you're going to see a buried highway, if you think you're going to see a depressed highway, it's not going to happen. They promised a depressed highway in Phoenix at a similar project. Now they have the great wall of Phoenix, concrete isolation walls. So instead of a viaduct you're going to have the great wall of Denver if you let your voice not be heard. By coming here tonight you're saying that you want to be a voice. Be a voice. Call the TV stations. Call radio stations. Get what you are here for. What's your stand going to be for these wonderful neighborhoods that have a promise if we do take the highway traffic up and around instead of barreling a ten-lane traffic monster through these residential areas. I got to think that the right of ways for 270 and 76 are abundant compared to the I-70 right of way today, so there's land we don't have to buy and there's underutilized, underdeveloped land along I-76 and 270. We're highly congested in density, neighborhoods. We have a huge opportunity to create a wonderful long redevelopment of I-70. You know, when they built I-70 they had to fill in part of a lake and cut Willis Case Golf Course up. I just wonder if we take out I-70 all the way from this large loop, we've got huge opportunities beyond the city of Denver into Lakewood, and we have abundant opportunities to help the connectivity of Adams County and northern metropolitan areas if we go around this bottleneck. And I have no more time. Thank you very much. I'd love to talk with each and every one of you.</p>
6	<p>Can you hear me? Good try, CDOT. They put forth a nice effort. But all I can see is the status quo design, which I'm very much surprised. You can build 30 lanes going and coming, but first of all you have to solve the funneling like DIA found out when you get to the end of the road, you know, when the lanes decrease. And so I really, I see a status quo design. I'm very disappointed.</p>

c. Private Verbal Comments

There were two verbal comments made privately and recorded by a court reporter.

#	Comment
1	<p>I've been a Montbello resident for close to 50 years, and I've never experienced good service from the Denver representatives. Right now my biggest concern is that they're turning 56 into an overflow for I-70. People are traveling up and down at speeds of 70 miles an hour. There's a heavy load, and there are no streetlights. This encourages people to speed. They become hostile. If you're slowing down to turn into your neighborhood, you can't get out. You have to go all the way from—I live right at 56. I have to go all the way back into the neighborhood to get out at a light closer to the interstate, and then I have to travel all the way back to get to 56 to go west. It seems like a very dangerous situation, and I have tried to contact Denver councilmen, and I'm just getting no results. We know it's going to go in, but we would like to be considered important enough for Denver to put in streetlights that would say that they value us as residents and want to protect us. And it would also slow down the speeding and the road rage because if they had to stop at stoplights, it wouldn't be a person they were targeting. So I'm requesting for the umpteenth time as many streetlights as</p>



#	Comment
	<p>possible along 56 that are along the borderlines of the Montebello neighborhood. That's it. I just want streetlights.</p>
2	<p>I've been a commercial driver on I-70 for the last 40 years driving a truck and also people movers, delivering wholesale food to restaurants and then transporting people from downtown Denver to the airport and then—and then other places around Denver and Aurora to the airport and then to the mountains. I took my first person—or family to the mountains using I-70 in 1979. And it's changed a lot. And I live in this neighborhood, which is the Aurora-Altura neighborhood, and we have limited access to I-70. We have to use 225, which is very congested from Colfax going to the Anschutz campus and then coming up 225 and then like Chambers Road, which gets heavy truck traffic from the commercial south of—south of I-70 to Smith Road. And so it's really a burden to get onto I-70 from this section of Aurora. I'm also the head area coordinator for the—this—this area. It includes the section of I-70 from I-225 to Airport Boulevard. So the main things I hear is, you know, it's so hard to get on 70, we take the service roads. And it would be nice for people to be able to get on the highway and be able to get to where they're going easier.</p> <p>I think this plan is good because in the—in the early '70s I took seniors to a meal site in Globeville, so I would pick them up in Swansea and Globeville. They're gone now. But the—it wasn't that hard to get around using the service roads. And then also our—where I picked up my vehicle every day was just south of I-70 and Globeville. So I lived in Montebello, 12—and the—it was hard then to get—get to work on time because of the—a lot of it because of the —the runway going over I-70, and people would slow down and then cause accidents, or they'd slow down, and then there would be a ripple effect. And I was there one day that a police officer got put in the back of a car by being hit by a semi truck that didn't see her with her flashing lights, and that was dramatic. And I've seen a lot of near accidents. And this—the—there needs to be more education and maybe not more lanes.</p> <p>People need to know that they can't go across five lanes—five lanes of traffic within a block and that it's not safe. And the—also, coming from the airport, there needs to be more signage in different languages because people get off the plane from Mexico or France, Germany, Japan and get in a car to go to the mountains, and they could—they're very tired, and they've waited for their bags and waited to get off the airplane, and they may get in a car that may be five or six years older than their vehicle, and they're learning how to drive it on I-70. And so the signage needs to be in different languages, I think. And the—and then the limit—limited access to all lanes at different intersections or different on-ramps, I've seen it very successful like in Chicago and different cities, but the—but the—like, I-270 getting onto eastbound I-70, it slows down because of that reason. People change from one to four lanes all in a matter of seconds, and some are really speeding. And I've had so many near misses. And I've never had an accident on I-70 except in Vail, and this teenage girl, she was 16, and she clipped my—she—there was a hole in the road or a pothole, and she went in my lane to get away from the pothole and clipped my bumper. And that's the only accident I've had on I-70 in 40 years. And then she started crying because her father was a state trooper, and it was her second accident, and she was only 16, and she said he was going to take her car away. But the—I think it's going to—I hate a lot of money being spent in Denver since I'm an Aurora resident. We need a lot—we can have—we needed the help on I-70 in Aurora, but it's good that they—that we can get to have people, patients, doctors, and employees at Anschutz have a better way to get to that—the energy—or the magnet that that caused. And also if they get Tower Road through to Sixth, it will relieve some of the streets that Buckley affects. But I think the two main things is signage and then noise level.</p> <p>So I thank you very much, and have a good night.</p>

