



## PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

**Date/Time:** Monday, Aug. 17, 2015, 4-6 p.m.

**Location:** Commerce City Civic Center, 7887 E. 60th Ave., Commerce City, CO 80022

**Attendees:** 14

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The I-70 East Project team and the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) conducted public meetings Aug. 17-20, 2015, to provide important updates on the plans to reconstruct I-70 between Brighton Boulevard and I-225, as well as the next steps in the process to select a private partner to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the highway in northeast Denver.

The series of meetings included a telephone town hall (8/18) focusing on how a public-private partnership (P3) is being explored for this project and the developer selection process. Also, public meetings were held in Commerce City (8/17), Aurora (8/19) and Denver (8/20) to discuss the proposed improvements to the interstate, mitigation strategies and a possible P3 to bring these improvements to Colorado. At the meetings, the public had the opportunity to provide input on this P3 process.

The telephone town hall focused primarily on the procurement and P3 process, and featured brief comments from Project Director Tony DeVito, HPTE Executive Director Mike Cheroutes, HPTE Board member and CDOT Transportation Commissioner Shannon Gifford, and North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative Executive Director Kelly Leid. The telephone town hall hosted 3,302 inbound callers, and 19 questions were answered live. An additional six voicemails were received with questions or comments following the live call

The in-person public meetings included an open house, a PowerPoint presentation followed by a facilitated question and answer session, and returned to the open house format for the final 30 minutes. The PowerPoint presentation focused on what has changed since the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released (specifically, aesthetics and mitigations), what Phase 1 of the project includes, the *de minimis* finding, what is a Request for Proposal (RFP), and the next steps in the process, including the selection of the Developer. The PowerPoint was very high-level, and most of the details were included on the exhibits in the open house. There were three ways the public could ask questions and provide comment at the meetings: one, make a verbal comment before the assembled audience (all verbal comments and questions were tracked on the script pad); two, ask questions to the project team members during the open house; and three, complete comment sheets that were provided to attendees to solicit written comments about the project.

Childcare and translators were available to all attendees.

### 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 I-225. 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, including the aesthetics and the *de minimis*. Additionally, the HPTe follows a transparency policy that includes pre-Request for Proposal outreach to gather input on the procurement process and inform the public about the delivery method chosen – in the case of the I-70 East Project, a public-private partnership.

**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

**c. Identified Preferred Alternative**

The Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Managed Lanes Option has been 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 4-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.

**d. 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

**e. Resources Presented**

The following resources and topics were presented at the public meeting:

- Project Overview
- I-70 Environmental Process
- Public Involvement
- PCL Alternative
- Build Alternatives Maps
- Project Alternatives Overview
- Environmental Justice and Mitigation Measures
- Air Quality
- Noise Walls
- North-South Connectivity
- *De minimis*
- Project Phasing
- Aesthetics
- What is a P3?
- HPTE Overview
- P3 Structure
- Upcoming Schedule

**f. Next Steps**

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 FHWA that specifies the project that will be built.

Concurrently, HPTE will be selecting a Developer for the project. The four shortlisted teams will receive a Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) in September – at the same time it is released to the public. The RFP will go through several drafts, and a final one will be released in early summer 2016. Prior to the final release, HPTE will host another round of public meetings.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2017.

**3. AUG. 17, COMMERCE CITY PUBLIC MEETING**

Of the 14 attendees at the Aug. 17 Commerce City Public Meeting, two people provided written comments, and no verbal comments were made.

**a. Summary of Meeting Stations**

The open house session was divided into seven different stations manned by staff members and project technical experts to answer questions for attendees. The following stations were included:

1. **Welcome—Overview:** This station started with the sign-in table, where attendees signed in and received the evening's agenda and welcome packet. Then they were directed through a series of boards that presented a project overview, information about the I-70 East environmental process, the mitigations that changed after the Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS), aesthetics, HPTE and next steps.
2. **Project Alternatives:** This station presented a description of the Preferred Alternative and the Build Alternatives east of the cover. A bird's eye view of each alternative gave attendees a visual impression of what the alternatives would look like through the project area.
3. **Mitigations:** This station presented the issues and mitigations that changed since the SDEIS including air quality, connectivity, environmental justice and locations of the noise walls. Additionally, the mitigations station included information on the *de minimis* finding that required public input.
4. **Phase 1:** A map of the Phase 1 project was displayed to show exactly what was happening at each section of the corridor, and also provided information on why phasing is needed for the I-70 East Project.

5. **Aesthetics:** This station presented visuals of the aesthetics for both east-west and north-south directions and also explained why aesthetic guidelines are necessary.
6. **Right-of-Way (ROW):** Representatives from CDOT’s ROW department were on site to answer specific questions about the ROW impacts and policies.
7. **What’s Next/Comment Station:** This station outlined the HPTE procurement process and explained what the P3 structure is and why it’s necessary. A schedule was provided that showed both the EIS and procurement next steps that lead to the construction beginning in 2017. A comment station was the last thing that attendees saw before exiting, complete with a board that documented how people could stay involved in the project.

**4. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**a. Written Comments**

On the comment sheets we asked seven questions:

1. Do you have any comments or suggestions concerning the Identified Preferred Alternative, the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative with Managed Lanes Option, that you would like the project team to consider?
2. Do you have any questions or comments on Phase 1?
3. Do you have suggestions that should be considered as we continue to develop the Aesthetic Guidelines for the project?
4. Do you have any comments on how the project will affect the South Platte River Trail (Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding)?
5. CDOT and HPTE are pursuing a public-private partnership with a developer on the I-70 East Project. The Developer will design, build, finance, maintain and operate the highway for approximately 30 years in return for a series of payments. What criteria should be considered during the RFP process in selecting a developer for the I-70 East Project?
6. CDOT will always remain the owner of the highway. In the public-private partnership, HPTE will continue oversight of the developer during all phases from design to construction to maintenance. What topics are important to you and how should the developer be required to handle these areas: communication, maintenance, environmental, workforce utilization?
7. Any additional comments or questions?

There were two written comment sheets provided on the night of the Commerce City meeting:

#	Comment/Question
1	<p>1. I agree that the partial cover sounds best. But, as most impact will be on the north side of I-70, this must be minimized. The neighborhood there has already been beat up through I-70 projects since the viaduct was built. Community must be priority one!</p> <p>2. Phase 1 looks good and the way Tony DeVito explained it was great! He used the language “re-connecting the community” through the preferred offering. He was the first person that I heard use this language. This is the more important as my family has a 100 yr. history in the community of Elyria/Swansea and Globeville.</p> <p>3. Focus on community! The Aesthetics must agree with the core community relative to folks passing through. Some depiction of the rich history shoulder be apparent!</p>

	<p>4. Not only the trail must be considered, but also important on the river itself. Access to the path in some essence must be considered. Community first, project second! Disruption must be minimal.</p> <p>5. A track record of community mindedness and value. There must be an appropriate balance of functionality, aesthetic and proper maintenance, as well as caring for the people in the immediate community. Nothing makes people feel worse in these types of projects than being ill considered.</p> <p>6. Open communication is paramount – transparency is vital – community outreach must be wide, local and effective. Communication with HPTE by the developer must be open and honest as well. The developer must be environmentally responsible – with a proven record. The developer must meet all maintenance needs in a timely manner and be efficient in workforce development. Local economy <u>must</u> be considered.</p> <p>7. I enjoyed the open house format very much! Most of the staff was pleasant but, I had to initiate most conversation. Tony DeVito was one of the few who openly approached. A number of staff were initially standing around with less than pleasant looks on their faces. At the door, there was staff but I was <u>not</u> greeted by any of them. I got the feeling that some were assessing my personal value. This is not what I mean about considering community and paramount and not secondary.</p>
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I am opposed to foreign ownership of any infrastructure.</li><li>2. Why is there no Interstate Bus service to Globeville?</li><li>3. Make it as green as possible</li><li>4. No</li><li>5. Raise the state gas tax instead of foreign ownership.</li><li>6. Environmental projects.</li><li>7. Good luck</li></ol>

**b. Verbal Comments**

There were no public verbal comments provided on the night of the Commerce City Public Meeting.

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