



PUBLIC HEARING MEETING SUMMARY

Date/Time: December 11, 2008/5:00 P.M.

Location: Bruce Randolph Middle School

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 11th. At the December 11th meeting, 70 members of the public attended, of which 3 provided written comments and 17 provided verbal comments. The primary purpose of the public hearings was to provide an update of recent study developments, summarize the draft EIS (D EIS), 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 14th, 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).

- Regarding the realignment alternative, I would like the alignment to be moved south of the Purina plant.
- I have been coming to these meetings for 6 years. I have seen all the maps, heard about all the different ways the project would or could go and in reality it's getting kind of crazy. I would like to hear about somebody putting a shovel into the ground and getting this project started. No more B.S. I prefer #6 or #4.
- I would like to see I-70 below grade similar to I-25 in the narrows area between Broadway and University. The preservation and re-strengthening of the impacted neighborhoods is paramount, and I believe a below-grade (not a tunnel) solution does this best. My question would be what are the cost estimates for each alternative below grade? Is this even a possibility? Pedestrian and bike trail access is also a very important consideration.

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.

- The north options are desirable for Denver Public Schools. It is understood that Swansea Elementary could possibly be moved. It would cost approximately \$25 million to move the school and another \$3 million to transport students to other schools.
- The Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea neighborhoods are the poorest due to lack of development.
- Keep the road where it is.
- Swansea has been badly impacted by I-70 already; a bypass around the Riverside Cemetery would negatively impact the area. It is a historic area and we need to preserve it.
- This area needs light rail and a bypass would take that away.
- What about tunnel options?
- No matter what alternative is chosen, I hope the neighborhood is involved in construction, for example, hiring people from the neighborhood for construction.
- The tunnel option proposed five years ago was never looked at.
- Support the tunnel alternative for better air and safety
- Why talk about potential mitigation when the area is currently polluted. There are numerous health related impacts already. The area is poor. What will you do for the area now?
- There are major air quality issues such as ozone and diesel particulate matter. Concerned the tunnel alternative was never considered; it leaves the study vulnerable to legal action
- This EIS is not worth the paper it's on.

- Request the comment period to be extended to 6 months. Also request technical resources to interpret all the technical speak so that everyone can understand it.
- There should be a study of the entire I-70 and the affects to all neighborhoods surrounding it.
- There was an environmental assessment conducted for the interstate extension of I-25 to Brighton back in the 1980s; didn't adhere to the environmental assessment then, what assurances are there that you will keep promises this time?
- Where did the money go that was appropriated from the pre-split project?
- The area of zip code 80216 is the highest polluted area in Colorado
- If there is a tunnel, what would happen if it filled with water? It is too costly to keep the carbon monoxide out of the tunnel.
- CDOT must weigh the environment of this neighborhood.