

**I-70 East – Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team Community Workshop
July 16, 2010
Meeting Summary**

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Workshop was to bring together invited community leaders from Adams County, Aurora, Commerce City and Denver neighborhoods and communities to:

- Learn about the I-70 East project and alternatives described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS),
- Suggest improvements to all the alternatives that the Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team (PACT) must address during their deliberations, and
- Select six community representatives for the PACT that represents the balance of geography and interests.

Attendees

Norma Frank – Adams County
Tony Brake - Aurora
Nadine Caldwell - Aurora
Debra Bullock – Commerce City
Guillermo Serna – Commerce City
Scott Jaquith – Commerce City
Danny Thomas – Commerce City

Drew Dutcher – Denver/Elyria
Betty Wonder – Denver/Elyria
Paul Garcia – Denver/Swansea
Dennis Lovato – Denver/Globeville
Anthony Thomas – Denver/Clayton
Ricard Melano – Denver/GrnVlyRanch
Larry McSorley – Denver/Stapleton

Members of the public and staff from the project team, Colorado Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Commerce City, Adams County and the City and County of Denver observed the proceedings.

DEIS Alternatives and Improvements

Colorado Department of Transportation Region 6 Central Program Engineer Jim Bemelen presented an overview of the I-70 East Environmental Impact Statement process.

PBSJ project consultants Carrie Wallis and David Sprague presented details of the alternative alignments using large maps that indicated the interchanges, lanes, right-of-way areas required and other aspects of each alternative.

Concerns and Improvements

From these presentations and the subsequent questions and answers, participants suggested improvements and identified concerns that will need to be addressed during the PACT process. The purpose of discussing improvements was to begin to create alternatives that would be acceptable to all, regardless which alternative may be chosen. The PACT will take the suggestions from the business workshop and the community workshop and continue to improve all the alternatives to make them acceptable to all. Following the improvements the PACT will select one alternative to continue to refine.

Current Alignment – Suggested improvements and concerns they address:

- Incorporate design elements that provide maximum protection for residents and businesses near the roadway, with either alignment, with special consideration for elements that would mitigate health problems.

- Incorporate design elements that improve community connectivity, in order to maximize the community cohesiveness, access to schools and parks, including movement of people and local traffic around the highway, railroad tracks, and industrial areas.
- Ensure that there is sufficient access for community members to use mass transit – bus and train service – to make up for the inconvenience of the highway.
- Provide additional funding for acquisition of properties for low-income residents so that they are able to obtain comparable housing.
- Allow for additional buffer area for residents, at least 200 feet, to avoid the current situation where people live very close to the highway, and are regularly affected by falling debris, road chemicals, objects thrown by inconsiderate drivers, and the threat of vehicles falling off the viaduct.
- Recognize that the highway in both alignments will hurt residents and businesses, but no highway will alleviate the suffering of the families who have lived in the shadow of the highway for many years, with the resulting in health problems.
- Figure out how to give truck access to Nestlé Purina despite the closure of the York Street exit.
- Require/encourage through traffic to use beltway (E-470) toll lanes so that congestion can be avoided for local traffic.
- Include funds in property acquisition to replace Swansea Elementary School elsewhere within the neighborhood.
- Plan for more lanes in the eastern section of the project area to accommodate expected traffic beyond that forecast in the current traffic models, due to prospective race track and faster-than-expected growth at Denver International Airport.
- Plan for more lanes beyond the eastern end of the project area, as growth is expected beyond E-470 to Watkins, Bennett and Strasburg.
- Improve merging traffic for east bound I-70 traffic exiting at Chambers and Buckley and traffic entering I-70 from I-225.

Current Alignment concerns the PACT needs to address:

- The bottleneck that already exists at the Mousetrap for westbound traffic, squeezing into one-lane exits for I-25. This will be a problem in future years.
- Aspects of the alternatives have cost implications.
- Need more precise vehicle counts and need to differentiate among commuter, through, daily, tourist, local and other variables.

Realignment – Suggested improvements and the concerns they address:

- Avoid residential impacts; most of the realignment corridor is industrial but there are residential areas along the corridor.
- Provide opportunities for business development around the interchanges involving I-70/I-270/Vasquez Blvd.
- Ensure that the elevated portions of the realigned I-70 are designed and built to last longer than the existing viaduct.
- Provide additional access to/from I-70.
- Improve local roads to take advantage of economic growth.
- Consider innovative designs (e.g. Glenwood Canyon) that accommodate crossings, ice and impacts on neighborhoods and important facilities such as Suncor.
- Add additional lanes on I-70 east of I-70/I-270, because I-270 is already heavily congested and merging capacities will make the east section worse. I-70 should be wider between I-270 and I-255 and east of I-225 to manage all the extra I-270 traffic.

- Consider an additional access point for people to access a light rail station.

Realignment Concerns the PACT needs to address:

- The impacts on communities and businesses with the current alignment also apply to the realignment alternative.
- There may be impacts to Commerce City schools with the expansion of I-270.
- Commerce City has already given up land for Denver International Airport.
- 46th Avenue will become a truck route and locals will also use 46th, resulting in more traffic in neighborhoods.
- There are spinoff effects of the realignment, including more truck traffic getting off I-270 to Vasquez to access locations south of I-70.
- Provide modeling data for the new additional traffic on 46th Avenue once I-70 is removed – local, delivery, other purposes – and identify potential impacts on residents.
- Curves will slow traffic and would increase travel time.
- Increased traffic on 56th Avenue near Rose Hill Elementary School in Commerce City.
- Consider the relative construction times between the two alternatives.

Process Concern

- Recognize that minorities are disproportionately affected, and need sufficient representation on the PACT.

Selection of PACT Members

The community workshop participants identified the following community representatives who will serve on the PACT, including expanding the number of community seats by one to best represent the range of community interests. Participants caucused by seat jurisdiction and selected an individual to be the representative. The community delegation comprises:

1. Adams County – Norma Frank
2. Aurora – Tony Brake
3. Commerce City – Scott Jaquith
4. Commerce City – Guillermo Serna
5. Denver/Elyria/Globeville – Drew Dutcher
6. Denver/Swansea – Paul Garcia
7. Denver – Anthony Thomas

Summary Approved by Participants: July 27, 2010