

I-70-East Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team – East Area Work Group
Aurora Municipal Center – Mt. Elbert Room
August 30, 2011

MEETING SUMMARY

Objectives

- To review the I-70-East Corridor section of the project area and discuss updates
- To examine and discuss visuals showing potential managed lanes between I-225 and Colorado Boulevard

Meeting Overview

The Work Group reviewed the results of the previous work group meeting in January 2011, updated the participants on planning and projects in the corridor, and reviewed Colorado Department of Transportation's presentation of potential managed lanes on the I-70 corridor between I-225 and Colorado Boulevard.

Updates

PACT process

The facilitator and others involved in the post-PACT activities delivered updates to those attending the Work Group meeting. Denver is meeting with its neighborhood constituents to determine whether there is a possibility for achieving consensus on the north-south shift.

Peoria Street Crossing for Commuter Rail

Mac Callison updated the Work Group on developments on the construction of a separated grade crossing for Peoria Street over the commuter rail tracks at Smith Road. Funding sources of \$50 million are identified among the local governments and the Regional Transportation District. The NEPA process is beginning, consultants have been identified, and contracting is moving through the City-County of Denver.

Central Park Boulevard

Jess Ortiz reported that the Central Park Parkway at Stapleton is scheduled to open by Thanksgiving 2011. The separated grade crossing over I-70 is nearly completed, and the connections between 35th Avenue to Northfield will be finished in spring 2012.

Managed Lanes Presentation

Kirk Webb, CDOT, presented an updated managed lanes presentation that was delivered to the PACT at its June 9, 2011 meeting:

- By CDOT policy, every project that increases capacity has to study how managed lanes would be incorporated and how much they would cost. The FHWA is urging all state highway departments to use a new traffic modeling system called DynusT, which provides better traffic projections, better revenue projections and can be manipulated to analyze different types of configurations of managed lanes, travel times for every car, and the effect of pricing on traffic flow.
- Other attributes: The model is being used on U.S. 36, uses the same inputs from the DRCOG model, is easily manipulated, captures 80 to 90 trips in the corridor, and will be used region-wide by DRCOG by next year. The analysis could be completed by January, but that could be extended.
- It is estimated that tolling charges could cover the cost of construction of the managed lanes, which would help in securing bonding funds through the High Performance Transportation Enterprise,

possibly up to \$100 million. Additional right of way would be required with the inclusion of managed lanes, and was included in the cost calculations presented in the DEIS.

- Modeling shows that the managed lanes would operate at Level C, whereas the general purpose lanes would operate at Level F.

Pros and Cons Discussion

The facilitator invited a discussion among the group to expound on the positive and negative aspects of managed lanes.

Positive Aspects

- When the interstate is otherwise congested, people would be able to get through, in particular for access to the airport.
- Managed lanes benefit those who use buses that would travel on the managed lanes
- The additional lanes will reduce congestion overall
- Toll revenues would support some measure of operations and maintenance
- Managed lanes would not require additional impact on residential or business areas
- RTD lanes would be paid for by RTD
- Allows predictability of travel time over time for commuters

Negative Aspects

- General purpose lanes would become more congested, resulting in worse performance
- Managed lanes require payment to utilize, favoring those who can afford it
- Managed lanes are a waste of money because they are not utilized during certain times
- Complicated maneuvers already are required at I-225, Peña Blvd., and I-270

Neutral Aspects

- If DynusT is an improvement in modeling that can forecast behavior, it might allow more questions and scenarios that could be studied. Provide some sensitivity analysis.
- Truck-only lanes are not being considered for the project, due to the heavy industrial traffic along the segment requiring trucks to enter and exit at various points amid other trucks and cars.
- Truck traffic could increase, and the modeling could measure impact
- In that section of highway, there is no commuter peak flow in either direction; all of the lanes are in use all the time.
- The model will show how the managed lanes would affect some local roads.

Questions and Suggestions

- Could managed lanes be extended onto Peña Boulevard?
- Could managed lanes be considered for I-270 to U.S. 36 and I-25?
- The configuration will determine how the public responds to the managed lanes. It should factor in human behavior, pricing, time of day. Enough should be spent to get it as right as possible. We need to avoid managed lanes that aren't being utilized.
- What effects can be forecast for local roads if managed lanes are installed? There is concern about roads feeding toward the interstate. Could we make that traffic worse?

- What is the risk if there is a change in driving patterns in the future? Could the configuration be designed so that it could be flexible in case the system doesn't work later on?
- Economic changes and factors could change the thinking on this.
- Whatever is decided, construction should get under way so that people can get to work on the construction.
- Encourage ample opportunity for comment and review on the plan.

Attendees

Tom Acre, Assistant City Manager, Commerce City
Tony Brake, Aurora resident
Mac Callison, City of Aurora, Transportation Planner
Bill McCormick, Aurora Public Works
Jess Ortiz, Denver Public Works
Guillermo Serna, Commerce City resident
Tony Stewart, CDOT
Carrie Wallis, Atkins Global
Kirk Webb, CDOT
Kevin Wegener, Aurora City Engineer