

MEETING SUMMARY

I-70 East Preferred Alternative Collaborative Team (PACT) National Western Stock Show December 9, 2010

OBJECTIVES

To review interests/suggestions and continue work on evaluation of the alternatives with regard to transportation topics: mobility, access and truck movements.

MEETING OVERVIEW

The PACT members were divided into three groups to evaluate and rank the alternatives relative to how well they addressed their interests, specific to transportation elements: access, mobility, truck movement and safe travel.

ACTION ITEMS

- Community and Business Workshops will be organized in the next couple of months
 - A public meeting will be scheduled before the end of the process
 - East Corridor Working Group is being organized in January to focus on issues east of Quebec
 - Denver PACT members will get together in January
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MEETING SUMMARY

I. Introductory Matters

City of Commerce City Deputy City Manager Tom Acre announced that Nanette Neelan had left her position at Commerce City, and that the city would fill its vacancy on the PACT with Brian McBroom.

II. Transportation Presentation

The PBSJ team presented a series of maps and drawings illustrating features that related to aspects of transportation interests expressed by the PACT members in the first meeting. The presentations covered the areas of:

- Mobility
- Access
- Trucking industry
- Safety Travel
- Proposed new alignments of existing roads

Presentation materials from the meeting:

http://i-70east.com/meetingminutes/PACT/PACTMeeting12-09-10_WorkshopPresentation.pdf

Q&A and Comments

- C. Realignment – It looks like the traffic volumes on Brighton Boulevard would be right in front of a park at 48th Avenue and Race Street. It would be an arterial next to a park.
- A. The traffic models show little traffic using Brighton - about 1,200 to 1,500 cars in all alternatives.
- Q. Can Brighton be straightened/extended from 47th Avenue north, to run alongside the re-alignment and not have to jog along 48th?
- A. That is a “could” on the suggestion list. It would create some challenges, a five point intersection, but it is possible

- C. Changes for the realignment will put more traffic on 40th Avenue; and will affect a lot of school children.

Trucking Industry Report

Art Ballah of Colorado Motor Carriers Association reported on meetings with trucking companies in response to elements of truck movements in the presentation. Points included:

- The two large truck stops on I-270 – Sapp Brothers and TA Travel Centers don’t see any significant change to operations, access would be about the same in either alignment.
 - The Pilot Travel Center truck stop would be taken in current alignment north shift; in the south shift option there would be an opportunity to improve access; and in realignment there would be longer distance for trucks to access the stop.
 - In realignment scenario, truckers accessing points within the corridor said they are likely to use the same routes as present, unless access points are closer to their destination. Through traffic is more likely to avoid the mousetrap by going up to I-76 and rejoin I-70 at Wadsworth.
 - Concern that the modeling didn’t address the potential increased truck traffic continuing north on 270 to 76 and reconnecting with I-70 at Wadsworth.
 - Currently, drivers avoid the narrow and substandard part of I-70 whenever they can.
 - Truckers communicated that they could work with either alignment. Some would prefer realignment due to possibility of increasing the likelihood of improving I-270 and the I-270/Colorado interchange.
- Q. Is there more interest among truckers in continuing on I-270 toward 76?
 A. Most triple combinations choose to go north on I-270 because they are not allowed west of I-25.
- Q. Is the industry now favoring the re-alignment over the current south shift?
 A. They favor whatever helps maintain a steady speed of travel. Trucks would go a longer distance to maintain a steady speed, saving time and fuel.
- Q. Was there modeling for types of vehicles – trucks vs. cars?
 A. None is available.
- Q. Improvements are needed at the Colorado/I-270 interchange, are there any plans for improvements?
 A. There are no improvements planned for that cloverleaf interchange, but Commerce City has requested it, and there have been discussions on it.
- Q. If re-alignment is chosen, will that make Colorado/I-270 improvements it more likely?
 A. Re-alignment would not guarantee that improvements would happen any sooner; not necessarily be more likely. Improvements have been included in the PACT “could” suggestions list.
- Q. How will the hazardous waste routes be chosen?
 A. Colorado State Patrol (CSP) is responsible for designating hazmat routes using their criteria, CDOT will consult with CSP later in the process. For now, the assumption is no change to the hazardous materials routes in either alignment. Local roadway restrictions are made by local authorities.

III. Evaluation of Alternatives: Transportation – Mobility/Access/Safety

The PACT conducted the second of three sessions to evaluate the two alternatives, relative to how well each satisfies the PACT members’ underlying interests regardless which alternative is chosen. An evaluation matrix was developed using the PACT’s interests developed in the first two meetings. The interests were grouped into Neighborhood Quality, Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental. The process was designed to start discussions about preferences and does not constitute the selection of an alternative.

Three breakout groups were asked to rank the elements of both alternatives, using a three-tiered bubble, according to how well the alternative satisfies the group’s stated interests:

- Performs WELL compared with other alignment to address interests - ●
- Performs FAIR compared with other alignment to address interests- ◐
- Performs POOR compared with other alignment to address interests - ○

Small Group Reports by Transportation Categories

Comments on alternatives are labeled with a (+) to identify reasons why the alternative performs better than the other alternative, and by a (-) to identify reasons why the alternative performs less well than the other alternative.

Mobility				
	Current Alignment		Re-Alignment	
	N	S	W	E
A	☹+		☹--	
B	☹+		☹	
C	☹		☹+	
Evaluation Notes	(+) Provides better bike and truck and mobility <i>Suggestion to improve alternative:</i> Columbine and Clayton should both go through		(-) Leads to more truck traffic on 46 th Ave. (-) Makes more impacts to Denver neighborhood <i>Suggestion to improve alternative:</i> Increases potential for improvements to the I-270 / Colorado Blvd. interchange	

Access				
	Current Alignment		Re-Alignment	
	N	S	W	E
A	☹+		☹-	
B	☹-	☹+	☹-	
C	☹-		☹+	
Evaluation Notes	(+) Improves access to schools (+) Maintains the proposed location of the transit/NWSS station (-) (North shift) Results in loss of Pilot Travel Center		(-) Less access to neighborhoods (+) Better connectivity around the neighborhoods	

	(+) Is better for neighborhood and trucks	
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Safety				
	Current Alignment		Re-Alignment	
	N	S	W	E
A	●		◡-	
B	◡+		◡-	
C	◡		◡	
Evaluation Notes	(+) More access possibilities, and a second emergency access/hwy (-) Emergency times hampered by one-ways. (+) Safer due to no curves		(-) Lack of access ramp between Brighton and Colorado Blvd, results in longer emergency travel time. (-) Need for more technical discussion on the realignment that the PACT hasn't yet had (+) Possible improvement in emergency response times (-) Less safe due to curves	

Plenary Discussion

More information needed on related effects of the re-alignment alternative:

- Is a more heavily used 46th Avenue good or bad for connectivity?
- Traffic analysis and impact is needed for NOT improving I-270 west of the re-aligned I-70.
- How do all the roads work together (e.g., a major road -Brighton- shown running along a park.)
- No new suggestions for improving the alternatives were made during the meeting.

IV. Public Comment Session

Reed Weimer, Elyria resident

I was watching the evaluation process and way people interacting - all of the evaluations look the same. It is unclear what the decisions are. Someone will have to make a decision for one place or another. It will affect people. When it was originally built there was a lot of misery but I don't see how sharing the misery on a new alignment makes sense. Under your sink it's called a trap, this could be a trap and things will get stuck there.

Betty Cram, Elyria resident

Save Elyria – here are six reasons for the current alignment: 1. Cutting off (re-alignment) at Brighton and 46th Ave. would destroy several residences and businesses that are finally able to plan a future after new zoning takes effect. 2. All of the affected area is in historic part of Elyria. I remember many historic

properties that were destroyed in LoDo. Let's not destroy our history. 3. Think of the pollution in realignment from Asarco, I-25, and a new highway all settling in the low area in Swansea/Elyria, as well as thousands of cars a day and many trucks in the eight blocks on 46th Ave. Crossing 46th street would be a challenge, plus the overload of pollution. 4. The RTD light-rail north line would eliminate some traffic on I-25, but realignment would destroy the north light rail plan. 5. The National Western Stock Show (NWSS) is a showplace of the whole area. There is a tentative plan to enlarge the area to accommodate all their needs, and we appreciate them. They keep a clean area, unlike the weeds near the highway. Realignment would cut off the front door or NWSS or new businesses. 6. I don't know why we need 5 lanes, but we do need shoulders. This area could have a beautiful future with the Transit Oriented Development and it is great to see the potential of growth, with condominiums, stores, offices, shops and a bridge for a river walk. Let's have the north frontier of Denver be a showplace.

Fred McPeck, Elyria business owner

Environmental justice is why we are all here. It is what gave realignment legs. The realignment has a worse environmental effect. The same environmental justice is what caused EPA to spend millions for the Asarco study, and they did a partial remediation (removing a foot of soil at the property). The pollution from that area comes from the same place as the pollution from realignment would, blowing into the neighborhood. I read in the paper this summer that the National Air Quality Control Commission met in Denver, "trying to come up with ideas for how to get people to drive less". The Chairman of the Denver regional air quality council was assigned the task to consider a wide range of cost effective measures to manage the air quality methods including reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and yet with realignment we are adding VMT, it seems bogus. In another article, emergency response agencies are asking to remove curves in roads to improve response times, yet there are five curves in the realignment options. When curves are straightened out, car accident calls drop. It doesn't make sense to add curves when in other places they have worked to remove them; seems impracticable. Public utility commission is meeting to decide how to decrease pollution, yet you are looking to spend billions to create more pollution.

V. Next Steps

- Next PACT meeting, January 13, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Swansea Recreation Center
- January meeting will focus on evaluation of environmental issues and economic issues.

APPENDIX A

Attendance

Reza Akhavan, Colorado Department of Transportation
Art Ballah, Colorado Motor Carriers Association
Doug Bennett, Federal Highway Administration
Jimmy Burds, Commerce City Business and Professional Association
Larry Burgess, Denver - Elyria/Swansea/Globeville Business Association
Shaun Cutting, Federal Highway Administration - Program Delivery Manager
Jim Dileo, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Drew Dutcher, Denver / Elyria resident
Paul Garcia, Denver / Swansea resident
Russ George, Colorado Department of Transportation
Scott Jaquith, Commerce City resident
Guillermo Serna, Commerce City resident
Anthony Thomas, Denver resident
Lesley Thomas, City of Denver
Jeanne Shreve, Adams County
Pat Grant, National Western Stock Show
Tom Acre, City of Commerce City
Tricia Allen, Adams County Economic Development (replacing Bill Becker)
Tony Brake, Aurora resident
Mac Callison, City of Aurora
Norma Frank, Adams County resident
John Lucero, Denver Office of Economic Development (replacing Jess Ortiz)
Kate Kramer, Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership
Bill Van Meter, Regional Transportation District FasTracks

Members not attending

Brian McBroom, City of Commerce City (replacing Nanette Neelan who no longer works for CC)
Amy Pallante, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office