

I-70 Shift – Future Mitigation Workgroup

December 21st, 2011 meeting

Those Present:

Betty Cram
Christopher Smith
Jim Mercado
John Riecke
Karen Good

Kevin Schneider
Maxine Ichikawa
Rebecca White
Steve Charbonneau

This was the first meeting of the future mitigation workgroup. Our goal was to discuss issues and concerns from a big-picture perspective. Below is a brief summary of the conversation.

- I. Neighborhood Mitigation Plan
 - a. In several groups the idea is brought up of developing a “neighborhood mitigation plan”, which will set aside money and establish a process for identification, review, approval and implementation of neighborhood mitigation projects. The rationale is that we won’t necessarily know what the neighborhood needs early in the project, so rather than guessing, we’ll establish this mitigation plan with allocated money and a clear application process to utilize in the best way possible as we go forward.
 - b. We also discussed the importance of finding best practices and learning more. CDOT provided a link to the case studies page at FHWA on environmental justice mitigation. The project he referenced is the East-West Expressway in Durham, NC – http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/case_studies/
 - c. What are the components of an environmental justice study? Maybe what we need is a class in EJ-101. Is this something Kirk can do without seeming to be CDOT’s representative? Or is there another way to approach this need?
- II. The group agreed that there should be no net loss of single-family homes in the Elyria/Swansea neighborhoods. In fact, it possible in combination with multi-family development opportunities we should see a net gain.
- III. Mitigation ideas or concerns, issues which were mentioned, need to be paid attention to in the scheme to planning;
 - a. Hardscaping – how will we creatively manage the many hardscape areas which will be created as a result of this project?
 - b. The cleanup of the DPS site should be rolled into this project.
 - c. Railroad noise. Can we create quiet zones, grade separations, etc. so the impact of the RR is not so drastic?
 - d. Highway noise – study best practices for design and to minimize the noise impact
 - e. Small business development assistance and fund – this is an opportunity to focus on the development of small businesses with this neighborhood. Can we partner with OED and DURA to identify businesses which would best be located in this area? Then market, incentivize and bring them to the neighborhood.
 - f. Design should be consistent with neighborhood history and design
 - g. Signage issues
 - h. Lighting issues
 - i. Invigorate the Denver Coliseum

- j. Brighton Boulevard north of I-70 is a problem. The design of an I-70 northern shift must include resolving Brighton north.
 - k. Connections to the river can enhance the neighborhood and should be considered as part of any mitigation plan.
- IV. Utilize the space under the highway. Here are ideas which were mentioned, but not developed further;
 - a. Open it up to natural light and air
 - b. Auto, bike and pedestrian friendly
 - c. Address maintenance issues (bird, weeds, graffiti, upkeep, landscaping, etc.)
 - d. Narrow the pillars, should I-70 be elevated even higher to emit light and air?
 - e. Retail which begins under the highway and flows out into the buffer
 - f. Basketball courts, tennis courts, recreational space
- V. Also,
 - a. Will York and Josephine turn into 2-way roads?
 - b. Identify best practices for building a highway of this nature through neighborhoods. What are the best designs nationally? Internationally? Who can direct us in this research? We've got to be willing to think past the obvious.
- VI. Needed for next meeting
 - a. Proposed cross-section for I-70
 - b. Proposed cross-section of 46th under I-70
 - c. Identify best practices, both nationally and internationally for this type of highway design
 - d. Station Area Plan, which is often referenced
 - e. "Roll-out" of what the area below I-70 (including 46th) might look like, Brighton to Colorado
- VII. Next Meeting – The week of January 16th