

Meeting Summary

Date: May 14, 2024, **Revised May 24, 2024**

29 Road Interchange at I-70, NEPA/1601 Project

Meeting Name: TAC #11 Meeting

Meeting Date: April 18, 2024

Attendees:

Invitee	Organization	Invitee	Organization
Kevin King	Mesa County	Melanie Bishop (virtual)	FHU
Daniel Larkin	Mesa County	Cady Dawson (virtual)	FHU
Laura Page	Mesa County	John Dibble (virtual)	FHU
Trent Prall	Grand Junction	Alex Pulley	FHU
David Thornton (virtual)	Grand Junction	Amanda Cushing	FHU
Eric Mocko	Grand Junction	Paul Brown	FHU
Dean Bressler	RTPO	Rachel Peterson	RTPO
Dana Brosig	RTPO	Andrew Gingrich (virtual)	RTPO
Dave Cesark	CDOT	Mark Bunnell	CDOT
Zane Znamenacek	CDOT	Rob Beck (virtual)	CDOT
Cohen Turner (virtual)	FHWA	Troy Halouska (virtual)	CDOT



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Note: Not all details that were included in the presentation are shown in this summary, but comments and discussion brought up during the presentation are included; discussion is denoted as [blue](#) text. Meeting materials can be found at the end of this meeting summary.

Meeting Goal:

Agreement on advancing Interchange to the Transportation Commission

Action Items Reviewed/Completed

- ▶ Welcome and Introductions
- ▶ Screening Process Flowchart
 - ▶▶ Level 1 and 2 screenings are complete, and we are currently advancing Level 3 screening, which will be documented in the 1601 SLS and eventually the IAR.
 - ▶▶ The current plan is to present the project to the Transportation Commission during the July 2024 workshop for an August 2024 vote.
- ▶ Review the need and benefit of a new interchange
 - ▶▶ The Project's Purpose and Need was reviewed.

Purpose:

- ▶ The purpose of the project is to enhance the eastern Grand Valley transportation network between I -70 Business Loop East Interchange and Horizon Drive Interchange to:
 - ▶▶ Improve local and regional connectivity, and
 - ▶▶ Provide enhanced access to planned land use surrounding I-70 in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Extend Functional Longevity

- ▶ Select link analysis information revealed that approximately 45 percent of neighborhood trips would use the 29 Road interchange (this information was also shared during TAC #1 meeting).



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- ▶ With the 29 Road interchange, there is a decrease in volume with multiple regional connections including Patterson Road (west), I-70 east, and I-70B. There is also an increase in volume along 29 Road, I-70 west, and Patterson Road (east) (this information was also shared during TAC #2 meeting).
- ▶ Shifting traffic to other regional connections will help extend the functional longevity of the roadways.

Improved Access

- ▶ Select Node analysis information revealed that the 29 Road interchange would be key for the future Matchett Park and the associated recreation center (this information was also shared during TAC #1 meeting).

Transportation Infrastructure

- ▶ The roundabout interchange type was the chosen interchange design and was confirmed by the public in June 2023.
- ▶ Improvements to 29 Road include an optimized cross-section (this information was also shared during TAC #9 meeting).

Conclusion

- ▶ Based on the above (with additional details included in the meeting presentation), the Preferred Alternative (i.e., the 29 Road Interchange) meets the Purpose and Need.

Question: Is the continuation of F½ Road to Cortland Road still planned?

Response: Yes, however, it is not part of this project. It is planned to be on the heels of this project.

Follow-up Response: The F 1/2 Road connection is shown on the design to go along with a change to the Independence Academy access along 29 Road.

I-70 Traffic Operations

- ▶ Through discussions with FHWA and CDOT, a range of metrics and other previously reviewed FHWA Interstate Access Requests (IARs) were reviewed. Additionally,



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widening I-70 to a six-lane facility through the Grand Valley was identified for a near-term study by CDOT.

- ▶ To get a very high-level understanding of a potential widened I-70, FHU modeled six lanes from Exit 26 (I-70B / 22 Road) to Exit 42 (Palisade).
- ▶ Several concepts will provide reasonable operations due to the 29 Road Interchange degradations including:
 - ▶▶ Project-specific mitigation of adding an auxiliary lane between Horizon Drive and 29 Road; and
 - ▶▶ I-70 widening.

Operational concerns can be addressed with either approach.

Question: Is the FHU high-level 6-lane I-70 analysis between Horizon and 29 Road only?

Response: No, it includes 6-lanes between Exit 26 (I-70B / 22 Road) to Exit 42 (Palisade).

Statement: There is a concern that the project will create a “high-speed weave” near the “I-70 Curve” that has been identified as a safety issue. CDOT has placed median cable barrier at this location to prevent crossover accidents with opposing traffic; however, it is not enough to address weave-related safety.

Response: Adding an interchange will increase conflict points and it will be designed to current standards. The comment regarding the “weave issue at the I-70 curve” will be addressed in the System Level Study.

Question: Has vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and vehicle hours of travel (VHT) in year 2045 with and without the interchange been reviewed?

Post Meeting Response:

- ▶ FHU reviewed vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and vehicle hours of travel (VHT) in year 2045 with and without the 29 Road Interchange.
 - ▶▶ While VHT and VMT increase on I-70 to the west of the proposed 29 Road interchange, both VHT and VMT decrease to the east of the interchange.
 - ▶▶ VMT and VHT both go down by at least 10% on I-70B between I-70 and F Road (Patterson).



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- ▶ VMT and VHT increase on 29 Road between I-70 and Patterson Road. However, VMT and VHT go down significantly (20% or more) along 27½ Road. Patterson Road varies with some increases and some decreases.

The TAC agreed to advance the 29 Road Interchange to the Transportation Commission.

Travel Demand Management (TDM) Requirements

- ▶ TDM strategy reviews are underway. Based on a forecasted opening day ramp volume of 7,660 total ADT and subtracting the estimated number of truck trips (305 trucks), it is assumed that a 3% daily trip reduction requirement is 221 trips.
- ▶ Potential TDM strategies include the following:
 - ▶▶ Mobility Hubs
 - ▶▶ Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 - ▶▶ Park-and-Ride Lots
 - ▶▶ School Pool Program
 - ▶▶ Regional Ridesharing Programs
 - ▶▶ Car-Sharing*
 - ▶▶ Electric Vehicle Charging Stalls*

*Used as a supporting strategy.

- ▶ Coordination meeting tomorrow (April 19, 2024) with project team and CDOT HQ Land Use Planner
- ▶ Determine methodology for calculating trip reductions for TDM strategies
- ▶ Review strategies and forecasted reductions with County/City and obtain commitment on strategies to advance to CDOT (Step 3 in the TDM process)

Open Discussion/Decisions Made

Question: What are the other changes to I-70 that were included in the I-70 Operational Analysis?

Response: The auxiliary lane scenario includes a two-lane westbound exit ramp to Horizon Drive. The 6-lane freeway scenario includes a two-lane westbound on ramp from 29 Road and the same 2-lane westbound off-ramp at Horizon Drive.

Statement: Keep long-range greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in mind.



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Question: This project will be considered as a Regionally Significant/Transportation Capacity (RS/TC) project, correct?

Response: It is the current understanding of the project team that a project specific GHG evaluation will not be required if the project is not CDOT-funded and is not included on the 10-year plan. This may be asked by the Transportation Commission.

Statement: November is a great opportunity to go to the voters and ask to bond it.

Question: Can the City/County accept paying for an aux lane?

Response: It is included in the cost estimate and will be included in the bond request to the public.

Question: Should widening I-70 through the Valley to a six-lane freeway go through the MPO approval process?

Response: Yes, widening of I-70 through the Grand Valley must go through the MPO's continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive ("3-C") planning process.

It was noted through the evaluation that the auxiliary lane in conjunction with the 29 Road Interchange would have similar operational impacts with widening to six lanes.

Question to the TAC: Can we move forward with the interchange and the aux lane?

Response to the TAC question: There are areas of degradation, is there anything that can be done at those locations? We need to answer that "we looked at it, we can do this and that to help fix it."

Response to the TAC question: The freeway LOS looks better with the aux lane than it did in the No Action Condition. We need to add the aux lane into the construction SOW. This will be required to get approval by FHWA.

Response to the TAC question: Operationally, there are not any issues.

Response: We will look at crash predictions. We have already completed the math as it is included in the SLS. Additionally, we will look at the weave at the curve.

Post Meeting Response: The project team has reviewed the predictive safety analyses. The addition of the interchange and auxiliary lane increases the number of conflict points and therefore is predicted to increase crashes along I-70.



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Question to the TAC: Is anyone not comfortable with moving forward with the interchange and aux lane going to the Transportation Commission?

Response to the TAC question: Be sure to show the impacts to the entire system during the next public meeting and also show how the project impacts maintenance dollars and other project money.

Response to the TAC question: Include language about how to enlist local businesses, GJEP, and Department of Energy to help promote TDM measure implementation; Especially the ones along Horizon Drive, to buy into the project.

Question to the TAC: What is a sufficient review timeframe for the SLS?

Response: CDOT will need four weeks to review and have all the HCS, etc. files. FHWA will need four weeks as well. The CDOT/FHWA reviews will be concurrent.

Statement SLS will be submitted on May 3.

Question: When will the NEPA class of action be determined?

Response: Not yet determined. There is precedent that an interchange can be cleared under a documented CatEx, especially following a Planning and Environmental Linkages study.

Response: Stephanie would like to get some of the Environmental clearances first.

Response: If the project will be an EA, a very specific process must be followed including the preparation/submittal of a letter and spreadsheet.

Next Steps

- ▶ Overall project:
 - ▶▶ Complete/Submit Draft System Level Study (May 3)
 - ▶▶ Public Meeting (June 4)
 - ▶▶ CDOT Transportation Commission Presentation (anticipated to be July/August 2024)
 - ▶▶ Complete NEPA Analysis/Design (RS/TC determination required for air quality and Environmental Justice) (Fall 2024)

