

Valid Questions for CDOT

Question # 1a and 1b

The Transportation Commissioners recently approved the \$60 million Twin Tunnels project at a meeting in Breckenridge. This project calls for widening the eastbound Twin Tunnel bore and making some "curve safety" improvements on the eastbound lanes.

a) - According to CDOT accident reports, the two accidents which involved fatalities in the area in recent years BOTH occurred in the westbound lanes. So, why is CDOT not making any "curve safety" improvements on those westbound lanes?

b) - Since the Dowd Canyon area near the Minturn Exchange (west of Vail) has a much higher WHI (Weighted Hazard Index) than the area which will receive improvements with the Twin Tunnels project, why is CDOT not making "curve safety" improvements in that area?

Question # 2a, 2b and 2c

The section of I-70 between Chief Hosa and the Lookout Mountain Interchange was identified as a major problem area in the 2000 Draft PEIS for the mountain corridor, due to slow-moving vehicles negotiating the steep downhill grades and winding curves. In fact, the Draft document predicted that this area would actually FAIL to accommodate expected eastbound traffic as early as the year 2005 on summer Sunday afternoons. Maybe the only thing that has prevented that from already happening is that a substantial number of vehicles continue to be backed up in congestion behind the Twin Tunnels. If the eastbound Twin Tunnel bore is widened, and a significant flow of additional vehicles is now flowing into the area, simple common sense would indicate that this becomes a new problem area for congestion.

a) - Since the congestion in this area is caused by steep downhill grades and winding curves, what improvements will be needed to mitigate the problem? With the severe topography in that area, won't it require more than simply adding a new lane? How do you mitigate "steep" and "winding"?

b) - How much does CDOT anticipate those improvements will cost?

c) - With CDOT already facing serious budget constraints, when will they have the funds available to make the necessary improvements?

Questions # 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d

Background

According to Deb Lebow of the EPA, her agency rated the bus rapid transit (BRT) alternatives presented in the Draft PEIS for the I-70 mountain corridor at the top of their list of "capacity-adding" alternatives, second overall to the "Minimal Action Alternative", which is NOT considered to be a "capacity-adding" alternative.

According to Tim Carey of the Army Corps of Engineers, his agency rated the BRT alternatives presented in the Draft document at the very top of their list, above all other alternatives, bar none.

Although the BRT options presented in the Draft document called for a 55-mile long bus guideway between C-470 and Silverthorne, at least one person who's been actively involved with the mountain corridor issue has suggested that instead of building the whole thing all at once, we should build it "incrementally", in stages, addressing the biggest problem areas first, as was suggested by the I-70 Coalition.

Question 3a

While CDOT gave nominal consideration to building a bus guideway in stages between Silverthorne and the Eagle County Airport, they gave ZERO consideration to building it in stages between C-470 and Silverthorne, where some people might argue it makes the most sense. Why is that? Is it true that the \$20 billion "Preferred Alternative" prevents that from being considered, as one well-placed CDOT official has contended?

Question 3b

According to Tom Mauser at CDOT, Greyhound, a private bus company, runs a profitable operation offering a regular week-long schedule. Other companies run ski buses on weekends during the winter ski season. Since these bus companies could attract even more riders if they were able to offer their passengers substantial time savings by by-passing some of that God-awful weekend congestion, why hasn't CDOT given more consideration to the BRT alternatives, especially since bus transit is the ONLY "capacity-adding" alternative which will not absolutely require that a third bore be drilled through the Continental Divide, which one CDOT engineer estimated could be a \$1 billion expense?

Question 3c

Can you explain to the Committee why a bus transit alternative will not absolutely require that a third bore be drilled through the Continental Divide, while all of the other "capacity-adding" alternatives would? If a third bore is not absolutely required for BRT, why did CDOT include that as part of the BRT alternatives when they presented them in the Draft? Wouldn't that unnecessarily (and unfairly) increase the perceived cost of those alternatives?

Question 3d

Understanding that some Spell-Checks continually flag the word "guideway", do you find that some people are confused about what a bus "guideway" actually is, not realizing it's simply a "conduit" that buses can use which reduces the size of the "footprint" because it offers a self-steering mechanism?

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