

VandenBerghe, Alissa (Consultant)

From: Paananen, Ron
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 11:53 AM
To: Meredith, Julie; Dye, Dave
Subject: FW: Article: Breakthrough on I-70 Plan

[Maybe we'll have a happy ending like CDOT.](#)

From: Kullman, Jeff [mailto:Jeff.Kullman@dot.state.co.us]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 9:48 AM
To: Paananen, Ron
Subject: FW: Article: Breakthrough on I-70 Plan

Ron,

Good news - Keystone Center appears to have done the job for CDOT! We reached agreement (still a few devils to deal with) on the Interstate 70 issue that has been under a lengthy Tier I EIS for 8 years now. I do believe the Keystone Center was critical to this agreement.

Hopefully they can do the same thing for you at Lake Washington.

Hope all is well for you!

Keep in touch.

Jeff

From: Halstead, Michelle
Sent: Friday, April 25, 2008 7:42 AM
To: *HQ-Office of Govt Relations; Stegman, Stacey; Wilson, Bob J; Hutton, Pamela; Catlin, Peggy; George, Russell; Finch, Jennifer; Copp, Heather; Kullman, Jeff; Li, Michelle; Pinkerton, Brian L; Cutting, Shaun; Pavlik, Monica; Scheuerman, William; Allen, Weldon; Kozinski, Peter; Smith, Tammy
Subject: Article: Breakthrough on I-70 Plan

See below from this morning's Rocky Mountain News. The story fairly summarizes the efforts of yesterday's Collaborative Effort (CE) meeting. During the next few weeks, CDOT Region 1/FHWA and a small group of stakeholders will be working to draft the language of the collaborative effort's recommended alternative to approve at the May 29 meeting. Great work team!

M

<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/apr/24/breakthrough-reached-i-70-plan/>

Breakthrough on I-70 plan

By Kevin Flynn
Thursday, April 24, 2008

KEYSTONE — Longtime adversaries came to terms Thursday on a package of short-term projects and future strategies to untangle mountain gridlock on Interstate 70.

The agreement includes widening selected portions of I-70 to six lanes but not through the sensitive areas of Idaho Springs and Georgetown. Any consideration of six-laning through those narrow towns would be put off until a transit system is first in place, or by 2025 at the latest.

It locks in CDOT support for pursuing a mass transit system between Denver and Vail. Any future widening through Idaho Springs or Georgetown would only be considered if mass transit doesn't alleviate the need.

"We still have to figure out how to address that through a consensus because there are still differences of opinion," said Clear Creek County Commissioner Kevin O'Malley.

A collaborative group consisting of representatives of the Colorado Department of Transportation, communities along I-70 from Golden to Glenwood Springs, the trucking and ski industries, and transit and highway advocates hammered out the historic agreement.

The agreement addresses some of I-70's worst bottlenecks and locks in CDOT support for mass transit along the corridor to Vail in broad strategies and policies contained in an environmental impact study.

Any specific projects in the 100-mile corridor from C-470 to Vail, including transit, still must go through a more detailed environmental impact study. There is no guarantee that any of it will be built.

The agreement grants community support for widening I-70 to six lanes west from Floyd Hill through the Idaho Springs twin tunnels. That is one of the corridor's biggest choke points.

CDOT would either widen the two tunnel bores to allow three lanes through each or cut a third bore through the hillside.

The agreement also gives support for six-laning from west of Silver Plume to the Eisenhower Tunnel and all through Summit County, improvements to Vail Pass and interchange improvements at Empire Junction, Dowd Junction, Eagle County and Glenwood Springs.

CDOT estimates it can fund and build those limited projects by 2020, if not sooner. Meanwhile, study and work will continue on an unspecified mass transit system desired by many in the mountain communities.

A key to the consensus was agreeing not to rule out some day widening the highway through the portions of Clear Creek County where it is not provided for now. The agreement is that further widening would be considered only after the other projects are completed and mass transit has been tried.

What form mass transit will take is not specified in the agreement. It could be anything from a traditional train, to dedicated bus lanes to a monorail. If transit cannot be built or financed, further highway widening could be considered after 2025.

"For our carriers that run up to U.S. 40, there is an extreme concern for an additional lane from Floyd Hill to Empire," said Art Ballah of the Colorado Motor Carriers Association. "Our support for this is contingent on finding a way to keep that under consideration."

It was a clear breakthrough for the highway and transit advocates, who have been warring with one another

over the I-70 study for a decade. Last spring, CDOT's new director Russ George stopped the study in its tracks in order to include transit and mountain community interests who'd threatened to sue over the lack of transit in the emerging plan.

"This has been a long time coming," George said. "And it's honest forward progress. It is a significant first step to a true analysis of the opportunity for transit in this corridor."

Idaho Springs and other towns fear widening the highway would irreparably damage their quality of life. They advocated mass transit first so it could be determined whether widening could be avoided.

The agreement will be drafted in the form of a decision document for the study and, after the group concurs with its language, passed on to the Federal Highway Administration for review.