

I-70 Congestion is Holding Colorado Back



Interstate 70 is a critical transportation corridor connecting Colorado's Front Range and the Western Slope. This interstate is the only major east-west highway to move tourists and residents, as well as goods and services. Severe congestion in the corridor infuriates travelers, harms local communities and small businesses, impacts our tourism economy, creates safety risks, wastes fuel and hampers intrastate and interstate commerce.

Resort and mountain destinations accessed via the I-70 mountain corridor are significant economic drivers for the state of Colorado, contributing more than \$88 Million to Colorado's annual tax receipts and accounting for approximately 25% of Colorado's tourism revenue.

A 2007 study put the financial impact of I-70 congestion on Colorado at \$839 million per year.* Given that Colorado is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, the need to address these problems is becoming increasingly urgent.

Access to the great outdoors, and the Rocky Mountains in particular, is a key component of Colorado's unique quality of life. We all benefit when residents and visitors alike can travel to the mountains and experience all the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities they offer.

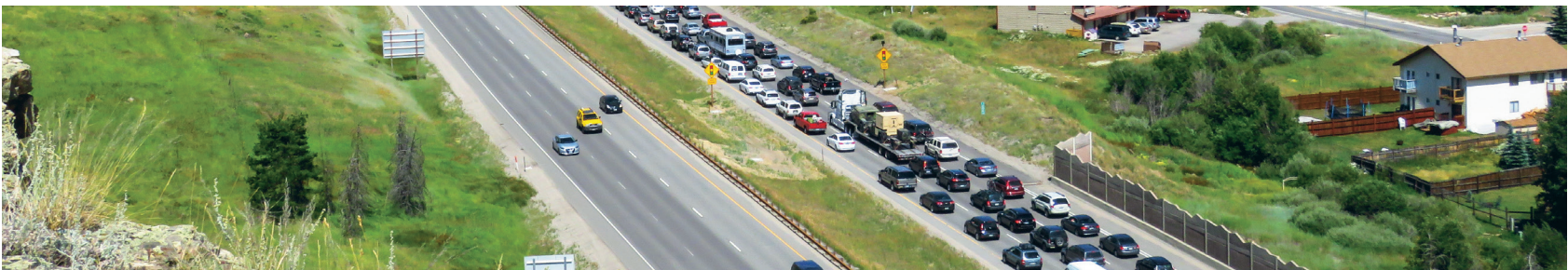
I-70 Improvements Can Move Colorado Forward

A broad coalition of stakeholders has developed a thoughtful, comprehensive long-range plan to fix Interstate 70, outlined in the "I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement." The plan represents a consensus recommendation from a broad cross section of local governments, state and federal agencies, environmental groups and private-sector interests, as well as the state and federal transportation departments, and is intended to meet the needs of this critical corridor through the year 2050. However, the funding sources needed to fully implement the plan remain to be identified.

*Development Research Partners. (2007, April). *The Impact of I-70 Congestion on Colorado*.

Recent I-70 Improvements

- Widening of eastbound and westbound Veterans Memorial Tunnels
- Addition of eastbound I-70 Mountain Express Lane U.S. 40 to Floyd Hill
- Various interchange improvements
- Increased investment in operations & maintenance
- New and improved traveler information resources





In order to meet the needs of the I-70 corridor through the year 2050, studies show the solution needs to be multimodal and include highway improvements, an advanced guideway system (high speed transit) and non-infrastructure components.

1 Identified Future Highway Improvements

- New westbound lane from Floyd Hill through the Veterans Memorial Tunnels
- Various additional auxiliary lanes
- Various interchange improvements
- Truck operation improvements (pull-outs, parking, chain stations)
- Various curve straightening
- Additional eastbound and westbound lane from the Veterans Memorial Tunnels to the Eisenhower Johnson Memorial Tunnel (EJMT)
- Third bore at EJMT

2 Continue Non-Infrastructure Improvements

- New westbound Express Lane between Idaho Springs and U.S. 40
- Improve traveler information & information technology systems
- Shift passenger and freight travel demand to “off peak” times
- Improve truck movements
- Increase traffic enforcement
- Increase transit and ridesharing

3 Advanced Guideway System

- Determined to be technologically feasible for the I-70 mountain corridor
- Funding to build the system has not been identified
- To determine financial feasibility, an investment-grade ridership and revenue study is necessary

The plan calls for a phased approach to improvements. Certain areas of I-70 are congestion pinch points. Improvements to relieve congestion at those pinch points will be made, and the impacts of those improvements will be evaluated before moving on to the next phase of solutions. Colorado needs to stay on track in its implementation of the plan to fix I-70. And identifying new, sustainable funding sources is essential to our continued progress. Given the corridor’s critical importance to our residents, visitors and businesses, an investment in I-70 is an investment in Colorado’s future.

Stay Connected

Colorado is making great strides on the I-70 mountain corridor, and we need to keep the momentum going. Visit I70solutions.org/i70support to learn more and find out how you can get involved. Follow @i70solutions on Twitter; like “i70solutions” on Facebook.

The I-70 Coalition is a nonprofit coalition of counties, towns and businesses advocating for enhanced mobility and accessibility on the I-70 mountain corridor. Learn more at I70solutions.org.

