

Town of Blue River/CDOT Meeting Notes: 03/31/21

Welcome/Introductions

- Michelle Eddy, Blue River Town Manager
- Toby Babich, Blue River Mayor
- Mark Fossett, Blue River Trustee
- Ahmet Susic, Blue River Police Chief
- Bob Widner, Blue River Town Attorney
- Jay Nelson, Red, White & Blue Fire District, Deputy Fire Chief
- John Hall, CDOT Region 2 Resident Engineer
- Patti Henschen, CDOT Region 2 Design Engineer
- Clark Roberts, Ulteig Design Engineer
- Laeken Carey, Ulteig Engineer
- Emily Wilfong, Collective Public Information

Emily Wilfong: Meeting goal is to press reset button and start at square one to discuss our collective goals in order to find a path forward that works for all. While we presented a tentative timeline at our meeting in February, we have flexibility with it - we aren't pressed by time constraints.

We have a goal to get truckers to chain up for trips over the pass in inclement weather. Let's start by just seeing what improvements you would like along Colorado Highway 9, what needs are there to be addressed from your perspective and see if any of us can think of ideas that might serve dual purposes.

Jay Nelson, RWB Fire District: Concerns over access to/from their fire station at Whispering Pines Circle. Concerned there will be increased call volume that may occur from truckers or an increase in HAZMAT calls, enforcement of HAZMAT.

All: Discussed concerns of rerouting by third parties like Google Maps, Waze, etc.

Toby Babich, Mayor: Completed community engagement on issues related to CO. Following issues identified from the engagement:

- Multimodal users (peds walking to and from bus stops, cyclists)
- Wildlife crossing roadway
- Very few, if any, shoulders; narrow, windy roadway that is generally not a good highway for travel, especially in winter
- Speed – feel 50 mph through a residential area is excessive
- Speed differentials between tourists (driving slow/way below speed limit) and locals (driving speed limit or above, familiar with roadway)
- A recreation plan is something the residents would like to see implemented

Would like to see data that informs why the chain up station project is necessary (number of accidents in past 24 months with heavy trucks involved along CO 9 between Breckenridge and Alma). This data would help them understand the problem, scope and size of the project. Feels footprint of the project is too big and would prefer a few smaller pullouts instead of one, larger one.

Clark Roberts, Ulteig Engineer: That information can be provided. Another item to consider is response time for crashes/incidents if the corridor isn't operating properly due to blocked lanes and traffic issues. Clarified that trucks could only use the chain up station during Chain Law events, not open in summertime. If trucks are blocking lanes because they are chaining up, that affects safety.

Mark Fossett, Blue River Trustee: Sat in on the development of the CO 9 South Summit Access Plan. As someone who travels the corridor day-to-day, all year long, not concerned with individual CMVs, but more that all traffic doesn't have the appropriate access to enter/exit the highway, when trying to make a left turn. The data won't capture the sheer number of near misses, particularly on "dead man's curve" on CO 9. Most semi's can't safely maneuver that curve even in good weather. Heaving flooding washed out a bridge and the Town was cut off – there are no connecting back roads. Every time I-70 closes, there is bumper-to-bumper traffic with CMVs and passenger vehicles. Smaller pullout lanes would provide much more benefit to the town than one big chain-up station. Speed limits are a concern, but understands that this project may not be able to tackle that.

Clark Roberts: Clarified if there is an advisory speed limit on the curve warning sign. Discussed traffic calming devices like radar feedback signs, [walk-HAWK](#) signals [for pedestrians](#), etc. to help bring down [traffic](#) speeds.

Mark Fossett: The concept we aren't addressing is where trucks can chain down. It is not reasonable to think that trucks will stay chained up until they reach I-70, and Breckenridge and Frisco will feel the same way. There is a huge pullout at the bottom of Hoosier Pass that could be used for chain down. Once trucks get to the flat area after the pass, they will pull over and chain down.

Michelle Eddy, Blue River Town Manager: There are three pullout stations that currently exist on CO 9 in Blue River that could work for the current volume of trucks. Coming over the pass, there is a huge pullout that should be encouraged as a chain down station (headlight house). Also, the bus stop that is currently used as a CDOT turnaround could be used.

There is a lighting ordinance passed in Blue River that encourages a dark night sky (Michelle emailed the ordinance to Emily Wilfong, Emily shared with project team). We need to keep in mind that this is a residential corridor.

Clark Roberts: Discussed the technology around lighting and ability to control its use solely during Chain Law events, ability to control ambient lighting, etc.

Ahmet Susic, Blue River Police Chief: Concerned about overall safety of motorists and peds (mentioned double fatality on CO 9). Yesterday, he saw a trucker chaining down on CO 9 at MP 82 going northbound. Concerns over no shoulder on CO 9, ability to safely enforce without a shoulder to pull off on, safely respond to an incident. Concerned there isn't a safe chain down station identified.

Jay Nelson: Putting in a chain station is putting the cart before the horse. The highway itself needs safety improvements, more important that the community is safe than the truck improvements.

Mark Fossett: No commercial zoning in Blue River. County areas to south of them also residential zoning. Chances are they will never see commercial development other than the lodge, which sits in unincorporated Summit County. The property is determining whether to annex into Blue River or stay in Summit County. They are talking about adding density to lodge. There is a four-way intersection at that property with a neighborhood on other side of highway, and that intersection doesn't line up properly. CDOT says they could realign the intersection, those improvements did include adding turn lanes

There is a long-term desire for a rec path, but the cost is in the \$100 millions. It is more realistic to focus on improvements to the highway. The current proposed location for the chain-up station is at the headwaters of Blue River, which supplies drinking water to the Town of Blue River and Breckenridge. It also supplies water to Dillon Reservoir, which is Denver drinking water. Water contamination is a concern. The location is a major wetlands area. They see moose and other wildlife crossing there regularly. The Colorado Department of Parks & Wildlife has a safe passages plan that calls for an overpass and fencing.

HOMEWORK

- CDOT pull data requested by Mayor Toby Babich
- Town of Blue River identify on a map the following:
 - Where Blue River would like to see shoulder widening and turn lanes?
 - Where are current locations where truckers have been observed chaining up or down?
 - Where are current or potential pull out locations that could be added to (no set size, just added to in any way even just 100') that might have minimal negative impacts from the town's perspective?