

## Town of Blue River/CDOT Meeting Notes: 05/05/21

### Attendees

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

### Notes

**Emily Wilfong:** Recapped our discussion from 4/14, including the design we want to explore

**Clark Roberts:** Pulled up typical section graphic. Idea is to shift center line by 6 feet to the east, have 12-foot NB and SB travel lanes, a 12-foot SB bypass lane in the same area we were originally looking at for the chain station, across from Whispering Pines, 3 feet of paved shoulder on each side and 3 feet of gravel shoulder. 2,000 feet long with tapers, 1,400 feet long not including tapers. It is a little shorter than what we originally proposed. If a vehicle traveling on SB CO 9 wants to turn left onto Whispering Pines, currently cars stack behind it and increases the potential for rear-end collisions. The bypass lane would allow motorists to pass the left-turning vehicle to keep traffic flowing. During the winter, the bypass lane can become a chain station, designated by flip down signs and lower speed limits through Variable Speed Limit Signs (VSLs) that would allow for the speed to drop by 10 mph during a chain law event. All of this is in the current CDOT right-of-way. The team is still looking at how we would sign and stripe it. The design team also proposes radar feedback signs that flash when a motorist is exceeding the posted speed, which typically increases speed limit compliance.

Showed two examples of bypass lanes, one in CDOT Region 1 area and one in Utah. Images attached to email.

**Mark Fossett:** Stepped out early due to work issue. Thinks the design is a better direction.

**Michelle Eddy:** Looking at Summit County GIS, it looks like the property on the west side goes directly to the road and doesn't show easements. Do we have a survey that shows CDOT has that space?

**Clark Roberts:** The information used by the design team was processed by the CDOT survey team. They did identify pins and caps in the grounds. They use CDOT ROW records and determine where the ROW lines are at the state highway. The total ROW width is 60 feet and has a 20-foot utility easement on both sides of CO 9. The easement to the west of CO 9 includes telephone and low-pressure gas lines. On the east side there are telephone, overhead electric, fiber, TV lines and gas lines coming down Whispering Pines, along with sanitary sewer.

**Michelle Eddy:** The signage sounds reasonable, but what about lighting. It's a big concern for surround homes.

**Clark Roberts:** We got the message that this is a major concern for stakeholders and at this time we aren't proposing any lighting. We believe we can evaluate if it functions safely without it.

**Jay Nelson:** Any thoughts on reducing the speed limit?

**Clark Roberts:** Not at this time in talking with CDOT Region 3. To encourage the slowing down of traffic, we would try to change roadway features, including adding radar feedback signs. People usually understand that if the highway changes, their behavior also has to change. The only time we would change the speed limit is during the chain law.

**Chief Susic:** The last time we talked we discussed an acceleration lane coming out of Whispering Pines.

**Clark Roberts:** At this point, we didn't dive into that option much because the type of funding we are using – freight funds – don't allow roadway improvements that aren't associated with a chain station. We believe the bypass lane is the best way to provide benefit to the Town and for chains in the winter. There are safety and operation benefits throughout the year when the chain law isn't in effect.

**Chief Susic:** Will you put permanent VMS boards in?

**Clark Roberts:** No, would use flip down signs and a sign that says Chain Station ½ Mile Ahead with flashing beacons further north.

**Chief Susic:** Are we only talking about a speed reduction in the chain up station area or could we extend it further north and south? The last couple storms with closures of I-70, there were a lot of issues at dead man's curve on CO 9 at MP 81.75. Had a couple stuck trucks and it put traffic to a standstill.

**Clark Roberts:** On I-70 it is a good half mile in each direction for speed reductions during chain law. We can discuss with Region 3 and hopefully extend it a bit. We will forward crash data using the same limits from Alma to Breckenridge. The spreadsheet will include the exact mile posts where crashes are happening.

**Chief Susic:** Speed reduction will be a huge factor to protect motorists and first responders. Everyone is interested in keeping traffic moving. We had to close the whole road for a crash recently.

**Clark Roberts:** Speed limit reduction will be tied to the chain law. We could likely justify moving the boundary further north and south on CO 9 to encompass a bigger area.

**Chief Susic:** Does CDOT have existing fiber for signs?

**Patti Henschen:** No, CDOT's fiber doesn't extend further south than Boreas Pass. It's part of CDOT's 20-year plan, so it will be a long time before fiber is placed in the area. Cameras are currently operating on cell phone modem and so would the VSL signs.

**Chief Susic:** Would it be voluntary compliance for the chain law?

**Clark Roberts:** CDOT won't enforce it. CSP does get called out and fines trucks when they aren't compliant, but they don't have the resources to man the station.

**Chief Susic:** It's a weekly occurrence that trucks block CO 9 by MP 81. FedEx, UPS, etc.

**Jay Nelson:** A local think tank is pushing for a third lane up and over Hoosier Pass if we have an evacuation so there is enough room to push people out of the county.

**Toby Babich:** Thank you for coming up with a solution that meets everyone's needs and is more in line with the aesthetic of the community. Our next step is to circle with Town Trustees and internal staff, then look into a communications plan to gain input from the community. We don't have a timeline on it right now.

**Emily Wilfong:** I can help with any public information you need: meetings, materials, online resources, etc.

**Clark Roberts:** This is a preliminary layout. There will be a NEPA process that is identified as Form 128. Mitigation will be required and Colorado Parks & Wildlife will also be closely involved.

**Patti Henschen:** The environmental process is very thorough on our end and a part of any CDOT project, checking to ensure we cover everything.

**Toby Babich:** This could be a benefit to the Town and not as shocking of a project as initially anticipated. Continuing meeting biweekly will be very helpful for us to voice concerns directly.

**Emily Wilfong:** I will redo the calendar invite to push all meetings out a week from May 5, 2021.