



## **CDOT/Blue River Chain Up Station PLT Meeting #2: Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.**

### **Notes**

---

#### **PLT Meeting Attendees:**

1. Mark Fossett, Town of Blue River Trustee/Mayor Pro Tem
2. Michelle Eddy, Blue River Town Manager
3. Ahmet Susic, Blue River Police Chief
4. Brent Spahn, Summit County Public Works Director
5. Robert Jacobs, Summit County Engineer
6. Tracy Sakaguchi, Colorado Motor Carriers Association
7. John Hall, CDOT Region 2 Resident Engineer
8. Patti Henschen, CDOT Region 2 Project Manager
9. Clark Roberts, Ulteig/Design Consultant
10. Laeken Carey, Ulteig/Design Consultant
11. Kory Kleinknecht, Ulteig/Design Consultant
12. Emily Wilfong, Collective/Public Information

#### **Action Items:**

1. Create an article about the PLT for the Town of Blue River newsletter – Emily
2. Set up technical meeting with CDOT and Summit County maintenance to review new design concept and get feedback – Emily, Clark, Patti, Laeken
3. Discuss interim chain station locations to increase chain law compliance – Emily, Clark, Patti, Laeken
4. Look into CDOT-funded additional enforcement - Clark

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

**Clark/Emily:** Reiterated the purpose of the PLT group, which ultimately endorses the project

**Michelle:** Last update to Blue River residents/local stakeholders on July 20, 2021 to the Town of Blue River Board of Trustees. Michelle takes regular phone calls from local stakeholders and refers them to website. Discussed the project with Spruce Valley Ranch HOA.

**All:** Discussed a letter the Town of Blue River received from a local stakeholder regarding concerns about the project and an incident with an unchained truck on Hoosier Pass.

Michelle: We understand the purpose, but we're concerned about enforcement. Our town doesn't have the police resources – it's taking time away from our town. If a Blue River police officer writes a ticket, the fine goes to the state. Feels that trucks aren't using the pullouts that are already there. Trucks getting stuck is a daily occurrence.



**Emily:** Is there a way for the project to support increased enforcement? Potentially after the project is delivered to help increase compliance?

**Clark:** In the past there has been a method for paying local law enforcement for chain station enforcement. Don't know if it is still used currently but it has been done. Based on I-70 experience, if there is space to chain up, the voluntary compliance does go up. The picture Emily will show, the truck needed space to chain up. This is a near accident and possible fatality situation.

**Michelle:** The pull outs that do exist have been cleared (kudos to maintenance). If there is guard rail in the picture (there is), that means he started making his way up the pass.

**Tracy:** Trucks need a designated, safe space to park to comply with the chain law. There is no designated place to do it currently. This picture likely of an over road trucker due to his use of a sleeper. This is likely a path he has never taken. In that case, he was waiting for something to tell him where it is safe to chain up and chain down. This driver was likely waiting for this notification and it never came.

**Clark:** Without a designated area, that driver will never know when the climb starts. We know some trucks are coming through this route due to I-70 closures. Drivers start looking for alternate routes. Communication between I-70 and CO 9 would be a benefit. There is also not additional signing on the road connecting US 6 to Loveland Pass and CO 9. These are issues that could be addressed to solve the bigger picture and help with the enforcement piece. It largely starts with making sure you have the facilities and signing plan to let them know when to chain up. With signing from the chain station, the truckers know it is unlawful to proceed without chains. That sign allows the local enforcement to stop trucks prior to going up the pass and they could have the opportunity to issue tickets before starting on the pass.

**John:** Does this understanding sound right? The truckers and motorists get out of their tickets if there is no facility. Hopeful that it will create a situation where CSP is more willing to enforce.

**Clark:** Voluntary compliance generally goes up when you provide a safe facility.

**Tracy:** The over the road guys that aren't familiar face the biggest challenge. Having a signed chain up station, we see a lot of compliance and see them backed up trying to find a safe space. The drivers just want to make sure they are as safe as possible. This guy (picture) definitely was nervous and not sure where he was. Chain up station areas we have found to lead to greater compliance. Also, tickets go right to the driver. Their companies don't cover it.

**Robert:** One thing to share is that we have Summit County guys that plow south to Blue River. The guy that is plowing right now has been there 30+ years. He has seen all the changes (traffic, CDOT maintenance practices, and trucker and traffic behavior). He made a comment that it is obvious there is no place for trucks to chain up right now and it is leading to truckers getting stuck on the pass and non-compliance. CDOT isn't fully plowing those wide spots and points to the need for a designated chain up station in the area.

**Emily:** Could we add signage for the current spots since we have two winters before construction begins. They could read something like "Temporary Chain Station"



**Tracy:** That would be a great idea to add signage until the chain up station is complete, and make sure the wide areas are really plowed out. This might help increase compliance in the meantime.

**Michelle:** CDOT plows the wide spots regularly.

**Clark:** I know plowing the wide area is on CDOT maintenance's radar. But, there is a priority level and those areas might not get cleared until after the chain law is in effect. That might be a coordination discussion in the future.

**Patti:** There might be issues with temp signs.

**Emily:** This points to the need to brief maintenance folks about the update design and get feedback.

**Chief Susic:** Two safety emergency closures. Commercial vehicles aren't as much to blame as general motorists (MM 86 SB HWY9). Voluntary compliance will not work until we have some presence on the pass.

**Clark:** I would agree. But, there is a lot of space in this chain-up station and it is a location that makes it effective for Hoosier Pass. Voluntary compliance won't happen overnight because it is a culture change. This is the first step in getting them a safe location to chain up that includes an appropriate signing plan to clearly inform drivers where the chain-up station is and where they are supposed to pull out to mount traction devices. In CDOT's experience, it is always best to make the chain up location as close to the needed area as possible. Message to drivers will get out through Tracy and other avenues and will make it more effective in getting the compliance we need.

**Emily:** Did you say that if a Town of Blue River police officer a ticket for chain law non-compliance, the money goes back to the state?

**Michele:** Correct.

**Mark:** There is still a really strong desire not to see increased truck traffic through the CO 9 corridor, but we concede to seeing a need for a chain up and chain down station. It's why I'm pushing to see a chain down option. Hoosier is not a mountain pass that some of these trucks should be using any time of year. Messaging needs to continue that diverting off I-70 over Hoosier is not okay. If they have to wait for I-70 to open, that is what needs to happen.

**Emily:** We do have issues with Google Maps and Waze rerouting traffic onto inappropriate and unsafe routes. Tracy, what is your perspective?

**Tracy:** We ask and message to truckers not to use those mapping platforms and instead use a truck specific mapping platform because it will give them places where they can safely travel. I agree that they shouldn't be using Hoosier Pass as an alternate route. It is tough for truck drivers who have 14 hours of service and then are shut down for 10 hours. They generally keep moving to avoid getting stuck for their 10 hours down in a place with no services.

**Chief:** I agree with Tracy because we should see the whole problem and not just a problem within Blue River. They are looking for a way to get moving because if you are not moving, you aren't making money. When truckers get stuck, trying to get emergency services to them is a nightmare.



**Emily: What does are some successful outcomes you'd like to see come out of the PLT?**

**Clark:** The idea is that the team will help us find the right compromises to maintain the proper context for the CO 9 corridor and address the project's need to provide a safe location for not just trucks but all vehicles to mount traction devices. We are seeing that CDOT is using Code 15 of the Chain Law which requires chains for all vehicles unless they are 4-wheel drive with proper tires. The PLT allows us to move through design, giving an order of priority, while keeping the project moving. It will allow the involved members to support the project and what outcomes need to be addressed to make this project successful.

**Mark:** The concept of having these meetings and putting this group together is what needs to keep happening first and foremost. Just like we have been doing, going through various comments and concerns has been very helpful. Compared to where we started, we appreciate that the design has been scaled back to something that fits within the existing highway footprint and it isn't tearing up wetland areas. Continuing the conversations about the chain down station, even if funding is an issue. Continue to discuss the future of CO 9. To Tracy's facilities issue, there is nowhere for a truck to actually turn around. An issue that still exist are traffic speeds, particularly at Deadman's curve. It is good to take a broader view rather than just the few hundred yards that are going to change. Enforcement discussion is a huge piece here. Would like to think that correct facilities could lead to CPS being more involved, but it isn't ensured. It is something that needs to happen. Staffing was an issue before COVID and will probably continue after this is built.

**Chief Susic:** Agree with Mark about speed reduction and looking at the bigger picture. Getting emergency vehicles to an incident is a huge deal.

**Michelle:** Nothing additional to Mark.

**Tracy:** Safe, adequate chain stations and location to enhance operations for everyone.

**Clark:** Approach has been to build a multiuse area that benefits operation and safety in the corridor all year.

**Robert:** Recognize that while there are broader issues, this is a PLT for a specific project. In this context, it would be good to focus on the project at hand and ensuring it will be a success. It is important that we coordinate with the access control plan and making sure that there aren't conflicts with this project and the plan. Again, the context that the project is respectful to the community and the needs of the trucking community, that would be a success.

**John:** Appreciate everyone's comments and that we can keep a narrow focus on the success of the project. I do believe that chain down stations discussion can happen now.

**Patti:** Providing a facility that will be used without being an eyesore. That it will benefit everyone while recognizing we will all have to make compromises.

**Clark:** Getting guidance from this team allows us to move forward with appropriate context for the corridor. We will definitely be looking at a chain down area. The thing that I will say is that chain up stations are hard to manage as multiple stations. Chain down is a little different because truck drivers want their chains off as soon as possible. We could allow for multiple chain-down locations. Depending



**COLORADO**  
Department of Transportation



on funding, this project could look at it while addressing it into the future. The guidance that this team provides is going to be extremely valuable. Currently meet bi-monthly but once we get design going, we may make them more frequent to get feedback in a timelier manner.