



TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

DATE: OCTOBER 2023

Vince Rogalski, Chairman **Gunnison Valley TPR** **vrogal@montrose.net**

US 50 Little Blue Creek Canyon Improvements

Project Overview

The Federal Highway Administration and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will begin a 4-mile improvement project of US Highway 50. This project is also supported by the Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Park Service.

The project is located between mileposts 123 and 127, approximately 30 miles east of Montrose, Colorado, and about 33 miles from Gunnison, Colorado. The route provides access to various federal lands, including The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreational Area, BLM land, and USFS land. The project is divided into two segments, 3 and 4, respectively. The critical roadway project plans improvements within Segment 3 to include realignment, widening the highway to two 12-foot travel lanes with two 4-foot wide paved shoulders, guardrail replacement, additional rockfall catchment area, new signage, and striping. Proposed improvements within Segment 4 include realignment, widening the highway to two 12-foot travel lanes with two 8-foot wide paved shoulders, new signage, and striping.

TRAFFIC AND RECREATION IMPACTS

Travel impacts for motorists will be consistent throughout the project. For much of the roadwork, motorists should plan for single-lane closures, and full roadway closures reduced speed limits and narrowed roads. Significant delays are anticipated.

Current update October 11, 2023

At the current update the estimate for completion this year will be about Mid June 2024.

Items to be completed are this year 2023:

1. Seeding
2. All culverts
3. Sub excavation East of bridge
4. GRS Wall #3 Construction
5. 85% of asphalt paving

Construction is estimated to be halted mid-December to mid-march, depending on the weather.

Items for completion 2024 (March to mid June)

1. Finish up asphalt
2. Finish up guardrails / concrete barriers Placement
3. Stripping
4. Signing
5. Fencing
6. Mumble Strips

Legislative Report – Emily Haddaway and Jamie Grim CDOT Office of Policy and Government Relations (OPGR)

- Update on State Legislature ○ The Transportation Legislation Review Committee (TLRC) reviewed drafts of 10 bills and 5 got picked to be carried on next year, including:
 1. Vulnerable road user protection enterprise,
 2. Child Passenger Safety Education,
 3. Railroad safety requirements regarding train length and increased firefighter training,
 4. Accountability requirements added in towing carrier regulations, and
 5. Methods to Increase the use of transit with transit tax credits, universal passes, etc.
- Update on Federal Legislation
 - Congress was able to pass a last minute spending bill that will last through until Nov 17th to put together an Appropriation bill to keep the government funded right before Thanksgiving.

- For the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the nomination hearing for Michael Whitaker in the House and he was asked a lot of questions on housing shortages.
- UAW (United Auto Workers Union) strike continues and will have ripple effects across transportation
- NHTSA (Nat'l Highway Traffic Safety Admin) in first half of year- there have been 19,505 motor vehicle crash fatalities

HB1101 TPR Boundary Review Study Update – Herman Stockinger, CDOT Deputy Director

- Several TPRs that are under consideration for boundary changes requested they be left as is.
- SETPR in particular voiced opposition to the concept of Southeast and South Central TPRs merging. It was explained that the merging may require legislative action if all recommendations create less than 10 rural TPRs. Also the TC has the final say on the decisions regarding TPR Boundary Changes.
- Many staff recommendations pertained to administrative practices of TPRs and the STAC. One example is STAC term limits for Chair and Vice Chair, and a list of guiding documents TPRs need to develop and maintain.
- A recommendation to split the Intermountain TPR into two planning regions is under consideration, but the exact boundaries recommended are not yet determined.
- In addition, CDOT staff suggested having eastern El Paso County merge into the Pikes Peak Region. El Paso County staff have thus far expressed opposition to this concept. More discussions with PPACG and El Paso County, along with Central Front Range TPR are scheduled to occur.
- TPR members with concerns regarding the TPR Study recommendations were advised to reach out to their TC representatives to express their concerns.

STAC Work Plan – Darius Pakbaz, CDOT Division of Transportation Development Director

- **The STAC was provided the opportunity to bring up any topics they would like to cover in 2024.**
- **STAC agreed to not hold a meeting in December this year.**
- **Staff suggested the work plan include a general planning refresher in early 2024 for the benefit of new and existing STAC members after the November elections.**

- CDOT staff is planning to have a 10-Year Plan lessons learned overview and discussion in March 2024, then in April discuss what the next 10-Year Plan will include before finalization in May 2024.
- The Freight Plan update can be brought to the STAC for discussion in January 2024.
- STAC discussed the concept of moving the location of meetings throughout the state. This will be discussed further, in addition to the number or frequency of in-person meetings to hold.
- The next STAC Chair/Vice Chair election is scheduled for October 2024.

Transportation TPR Meeting

NEXT MEETING NOTICE TPR meeting November 9, 2023

1:30pm – 3:30pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kdUqCH8cUT>

Video Conference Only