



## PUBLIC MEETING #2 COMMENT SUMMARY

The second public meeting for the I-70 at Airpark & Watkins Interchanges Study was held virtually on August 25, 2021. Community members could participate online or via phone. 30 members of the public joined the virtual meeting. Participants identified as living or working in Sky Ranch, Foxridge Farm, Watkins, Watkins Farm, and other areas south of I-70.

A presentation was available on screen to accompany the audio presentation for those who joined online, however, technical difficulties resulted in some images not being displayed. The presentation and a recording of the meeting were posted to the project web page ([www.arapahoegov.com/i-70Airpark-WatkinsInterchanges](http://www.arapahoegov.com/i-70Airpark-WatkinsInterchanges)) to accompany a two-week-long public comment period.

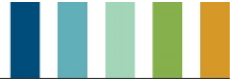
The presentation provided a study overview and review of existing and planned conditions, described the alternatives evaluation process, presented the recommended ultimate and phase 1 improvements for each interchange, and outlined next steps to implementation.

To advertise the meeting, a flyer was distributed at the Arapahoe County Fair, approximately 1,100 postcards were mailed to property owners in the area, a notice was sent via email to the electronic project mailing list and all Sky Ranch homeowners, a display ad appeared in the I-70 Scout and Eastern Colorado News, a news release was sent to local media outlets, and Arapahoe County distributed information to their email list serves and through social media. Also, two variable message boards were placed near the Watkins and Airpark interchanges for a week prior to the meeting.

Following is a summary of comments submitted via email following the virtual meeting. This summary includes comments received through September 14, 2021.

### EMAILED PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **Q:** In regards to Watkins Rd interchange, are there widening improvements to Highway 36/Colfax Ave? In March 2021, a blizzard occurred and closed I-70 to Limon and 36 to Agate. Many medical emergency vehicles were unable to transport people with life threatening conditions to hospitals in Aurora because of the lack of wide shoulders on this road. Highway 36 Colfax Ave has no shoulder and is dangerous on a good day with the traffic it carries.
  - **A:** CDOT has no plans to improve CO 36 east of the Airpark interchange. CDOT understands the need for improvements, but as of now there is no funding to improve the shoulders. It is anticipated that improvements will be constructed as development occurs east of Imboden Road in conjunction with the Port Colorado development. The County is not aware of any pending development activity west of Imboden Road to Airpark that would trigger developer funded improvements to CO 36. Arapahoe County understands the importance of maintaining a good connection from I-70 to CO 36 at the Airpark and Watkins interchanges, and has incorporated this into study recommendations.
- **C:** Would like to see timing and coordination of the interchange redevelopment with the redevelopment of 6th Ave. There is a significant risk to the community from an emergency safety perspective if something happens in a weather event with the interchange before 6th Ave is extended from Powhaton to Monaghan Rd. As it stands there is a little bit of risk in the winter that emergency services will not have backup access to the Sky Ranch area if the weather is bad enough. Maybe going so far as to coordinate representation from Aurora in the public meeting to address that inter-department coordination would be helpful.



- **R:** Coordination occurred regularly with City of Aurora technical staff representatives during Technical Advisory Committee meetings and with City Leadership and Councilmembers during Policy Advisory Committee meetings. They are aware of the frequent comments received and the benefits of a 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue extension. This coordination will occur into the future.
- **C:** It was briefly mentioned during the call, but a more detailed plan for how to manage closure of I-70 and providing for expanded or adequate space at the chain station for vehicles to stop or turn around. Would like to see more of that in future studies and final planning / design.
  - **R:** The County understands this is important and has coordinated with CDOT regarding these comments.
- **C:** I think the initial project should avoid ROW acquisition costs as the final condition having Colfax dogleg down into Monaghan. It will take a major item out of the schedule that could hold up construction.
  - **R:** Every effort will be taken to avoid or minimize right-of-way acquisition.
- **C:** Schedule Clarity - Include forecasted dates from milestones (with caveats) to help understanding rough timeline. My interpretation is that the current project timeline pushes completion of the Phase 1 interchange into around '24-27 depending on your interpretation.
  - **R:** The timeline isn't more specific because timing completely depends on the availability of funding. The County is actively working to find funding with the hope that these improvements can be constructed by the time they are needed to maintain acceptable operations.
- **C:** I own the property at I-70 and Airpark directly west of the Pure Cycle property. I'm not a developer. My wife and I found out about your proposed project yesterday when we read about it in the I-70 Scout. Your project proposal indicates rerouting of Colfax Ave from its' existing path through our property. I would like to have some say with regard to the overall project and path that the new Colfax route takes. I like the Partial Cloverleaf with the Slip Ramp configuration. I do not like the Continuous Flow Interchange configuration.
  - **R:** The County will continue to coordinate with you and work to minimize impacts of the frontage road realignment. CDOT requires the frontage road intersection with Monaghan be a minimum of 550' away from the eastbound ramp intersection. Additional separation would be needed for the CFI alternative. Reverse curves along the proposed realigned frontage road are dictated by design criteria and are currently shown at 35 mph. The Phase 1 temporary frontage road realignment will also be discussed with you. The Arapahoe County Transportation Master Plan calls for a minor arterial connection extending from the underpass of E-470 south of I-70 east, incorporating the frontage road realignment required at the new Harvest (Aerotropolis Parkway) interchange, then east to Monaghan Road, and the current frontage road becoming a discontinuous road for local access.
- **C:** With regards to the two alternatives for the Airpark Interchange, I was wondering if it would be beneficial to evaluate recent traffic/accident statistics from the new Gun Club / Quincy Ave PCF Interchange. As far as I know, these designs are relatively new to this area and it might be worthwhile to evaluate their effectiveness and safety since there likely exists a bit of learning curve with most of the local highway users.
  - **R:** The FHWA national clearing house reports crash reduction factor statistics for PCIs that were a consideration in the selection of this design alternative at Gun Club/Quincy. Arapahoe County and the City of Aurora will be comparing data on crashes that occurred before and

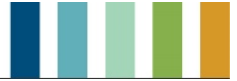


- after the Quincy/Gun Club PCFI intersection improvement construction, but an analysis now is too early with not enough data after this first six months since open to public. Driver familiarity is an initial factor. National available statistics show an initial increase in crashes upon implementation of many “newer” intersection design treatments (e.g., roundabouts, diverging diamonds, SPUIs) especially when they are first introduced to a region. Both Arapahoe and Aurora Traffic Operations will continue to monitor and collect data on safety and operations. Arapahoe County has noted that improvements in operations have resulted – increased capacity, reduction in vehicle delay and associated queuing -- since the improvements were completed.
- **C:** It is likely too early of a stage to incorporate these items, but as the study (and/or future design) progresses I would recommend keeping in mind possible future wet utility alignments through the intersection areas. Early incorporation of these items can help minimize disturbance and cost to the public when they are ultimately constructed.
    - **R:** Utilities will be considered during the design process. The County agrees it is beneficial to consider existing and future utilities as early in design as possible to minimize impacts.

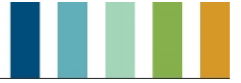
### VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

In addition to the following list of questions posed by participants and answers by project team members, virtual meeting participants were polled to determine which facility they would use more often if 6th Avenue is extended west from Powhaton to Monaghan and the Airpark interchange is improved. Approximately 60% of respondents said they would use 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and approximately 40% would use the improved Airpark interchange.

- **Q:** When will 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue be connected to Sky Ranch?
  - **A:** This stretch of road lies within the City of Aurora. As development occurs, the City plans to build this stretch. The timing depends on the development south of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. However, the Sky Ranch developer has done design work along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to provide a crossing of First Creek under 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, to allow that to be built quickly once funding allows.
- **Q:** What about Gun Club Road? It is an issue today with the heavy traffic and road wear. Are there any plans to address that Harmony and Sky Ranch use Gun Club today? They will use Gun Club more when 6<sup>th</sup> and Alameda open up as a through route.
  - **A:** Arapahoe County is in the process of studying Gun Club and Alameda to understand the improvements needed, working with the City of Aurora. Recommendations are expected by the first of next year. We understand this is an issue. This is a rural roadway in a transition to a more suburban area and improvements are obviously needed. These improvements are not funded but this study will identify a cost and we will start working on funding solutions.
- **Q:** How will Thunder Ranches be affected by construction? We are one way in and out of the community via the South Frontage Road.
  - **A:** The Partial Cloverleaf alternative illustrates how the South Frontage Road will be realigned as part of the Prosper development. The South Frontage Road will be shifted approximately ¼ mile south of the southern ramp intersection. That would extend east and the I-70 Frontage Road will intersect that and head back to the alignment south of I-70. The frontage road would be realigned before any interchange construction to minimize impacts.



- **Q:** The main power source for Sky Ranch is on the curve where Airpark Road and Monaghan meet. How will construction of the interchange in this area affect Sky Ranch residents in regards to power outages.
  - **A:** Utility impacts are investigated as part of final design. Improvements would be planned and phased so no power outages would be experienced. Relocations of utilities are accounted for and coordination occurs with utility companies to allow relocation to be completed first, followed by a transfer of the existing power to the new relocated services. This work is typically done prior to interchange construction.
- **Q:** Will the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue extension come before the I-70/Airpark interchange? Is the bridge going to be realigned with Monaghan Road?
  - **A:** 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Sky Ranch to Powhaton Road is in the City of Aurora. As the Harmony development moves forward, 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue improvements will be coordinated by the City of Aurora. Sky Ranch has been in discussions with the City and the adjacent developer. There is not a specific timeline for this. The new Airpark interchange is recommended to move approximately 400-500 feet to the east of the current location, on the section line alignment. That will be planned so it can head north over the railroad to connect with Monaghan north of I-70, which is also planned to connect to Denver International Airport.
- **Q:** How do these designs address the issue when I-70 is closed at Airpark due to weather? That closure makes it difficult or impossible to access Sky Ranch and creates a large amount of traffic, especially if there is no schedule to complete 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
  - **A:** The design will consider that CDOT closes I-70 at this location. A new widened bridge will provide more storage for vehicles. Arapahoe County will coordinate with CDOT regarding the location of the gates and turnarounds. Down the road, when Monaghan continues to the north and south, we would hope there will be less queuing and stacking of vehicles. It is possible that the closure could move further east to Watkins Road.
- **Q:** What is the status of the Bennett interchange?
  - **A:** The improvements at the SH 79/Converse interchange and ramps have been funded. CDOT is currently designing this, with funding participation by Arapahoe County, Adams County, and Bennett. The construction schedule is unknown at this time.
- **Q:** How will the I-70 at Airpark and Watkins interchanges project affect Quincy Avenue?
  - **A:** The modeling that has been done to identify travel demands at Airpark and Watkins have taken into account traffic headed for Quincy Avenue. The modeling shows the 2040 volumes and improvements needed. A design for Quincy improvements from the existing Gun Club intersection east to Watkins Road has been completed. Improvements will be phased. The first phase between Gun Club and Powhaton would hopefully occur in the next five years, but no funding has been identified. Improvements will extend to Watkins Road by the 2040 timeframe, pending funding. East beyond Watkins Road, Quincy will be a two-lane facility.
- **Q:** How long until Prosper and Sky Ranch are fully built-out?
  - **A:** The development trends change over the years, so timing is uncertain. Sky Ranch has been selling a lot of homes and commercial developers are interested in the development. Sky Ranch could be built out by 2040, using current estimates. Prosper has not broken ground, although they are planning for utilities and development. The Prosper development is much larger so it may not be built out until well beyond 2040.



- **Q:** Immediate installation of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Powhatan and Monaghan Roads would provide significant relief for Sky Ranch, especially when I-70 experiences closures and the Airpark interchange is jammed with stranded motorists. Is there a way to do this part sooner?
  - **A:** Arapahoe County has an impact fee in this area that could potentially provide a funding opportunity for a portion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue connection. Discussions with developers west of Sky Ranch would be needed to reach agreement for their reimbursement of the funding agency(ies) if the money is fronted before they are ready to construct that improvement. Arapahoe County will be discussing this with the City of Aurora and will consider the cost-benefit to see where the biggest bang for the buck is found.