CDOT

WB I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane

SOCIOECONOMIC TECHNICAL REPORT

October 26, 2018

Categorical Exclusion

SOCIOECONOMIC TECHNICAL REPORT

WESTBOUND I-70
PEAK PERIOD SHOULDER LANE

Prepared for:

Prepared by:

October 26, 2018

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

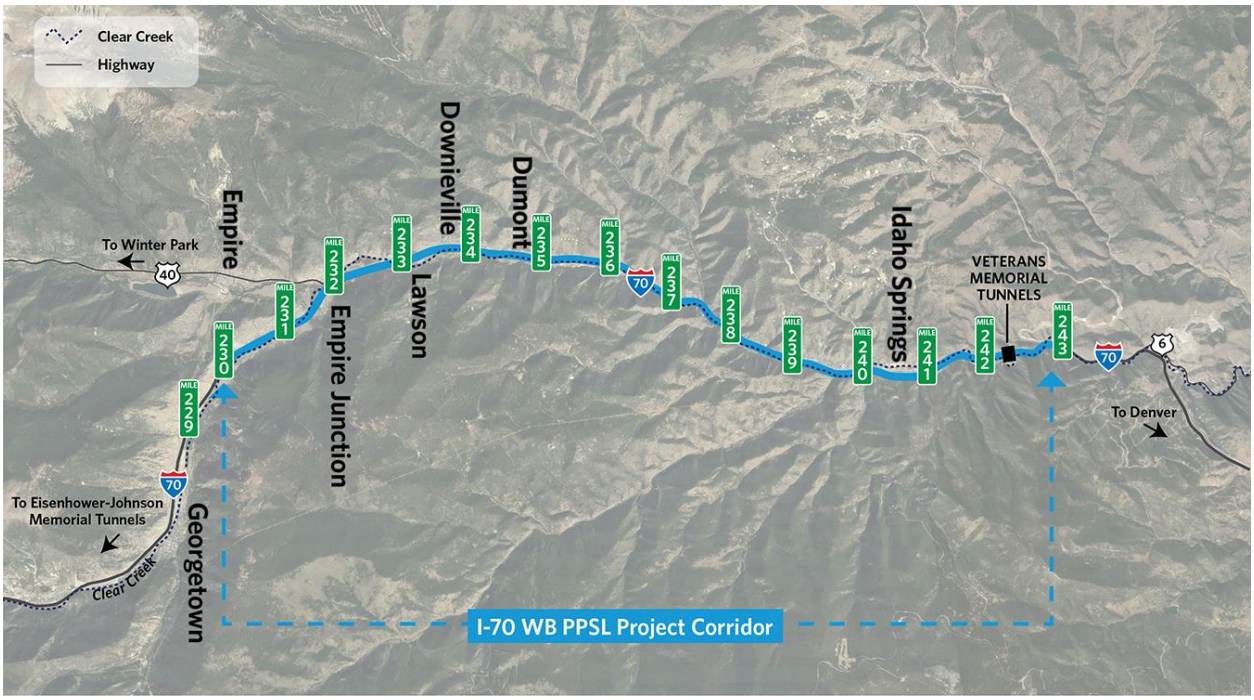
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CR	County Road
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions
EA	Environmental Assessment
EB	Eastbound
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
I-70	Interstate 70
MP	Milepost
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PPSL	Peak Period Shoulder Lane
PEIS	Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
ROD	Record of Decision
SH	State Highway
US 40	US Highway 40
WB	Westbound

Section 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), is preparing a Categorical Exclusion for proposed changes to the westbound (WB) lanes of Interstate 70 (I-70) between approximately milepost (MP) 230 and MP 243, in Clear Creek County, Colorado (Proposed Action; Figure 1). The Proposed Action includes the addition of a 12-mile tolled Peak Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) between east Idaho Springs and the U.S. Highway 40 (US 40)/I-70 interchange in the WB direction and improvements to the State Highway (SH) 103 interchange. The Proposed Action improves operations and travel time reliability in the WB direction of I-70 in the study area. Additionally, the improvements are consistent with the *I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (PEIS; CDOT 2011), PEIS Record of Decision (ROD; FHWA 2011), Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) on the I-70 Mountain Corridor (CDOT 2009) process, and other commitments of the PEIS and ROD. The Proposed Action fits within the definition of "expanded use of existing transportation infrastructure in and adjacent to the corridor" included in the "Non-Infrastructure Related Components" element within the Preferred Alternative's Minimum Program of Improvements.

Figure 1. Project Corridor



Source: HDR 2018.

This document discusses the regulatory setting, and describes the affected environment and the impacts of the Proposed Action on socioeconomics within the study area. This document also identifies mitigation measures, including applicable measures identified in the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS and ROD, which reduce impacts during construction and operation.

This document provides an assessment of the current baseline conditions of Clear Creek County and the communities of focus: city of Idaho Springs, Downieville-Lawson-Dumont, and the town of Empire. This document provides an assessment of existing conditions including demographics, population, education, healthcare and social services, public safety, and quality of life in the WB PPSL study area, as well as a discussion of the effects the Proposed Action have on these communities.

Section 2. Summary of Socioeconomics from Previous National Environmental Policy Act Analyses

2.1 How was Socioeconomics Treated in the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS and ROD (Tier 1)?

The FHWA, in cooperation with CDOT, prepared the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS and ROD (Tier 1; CDOT 2011). The socioeconomic analyses focused on employment and jobs in the counties along the entire I-70 Mountain Corridor at a regional level. The study examined jobs, tourism, and the impact of second homes on the local economy. The potential impact of project alternatives on the regional economy was analyzed using the Regional Economic Models Inc. model. However, the document acknowledged the limitation of the model in forecasting impacts at the more localized level.

The PEIS and ROD indicated that social and economic values would primarily be affected through indirect and construction impacts on the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Construction impacts would be greater on Clear Creek County communities and would primarily be borne by resident commuters and local travelers who would experience congestion and delay from construction activities. Retail businesses would also be affected by construction impacts because of restricted visitor access from I-70 during the construction period.

The PEIS and ROD indicated that lead agencies would conduct further analysis of local county economic impacts during future project-specific Tier 2 processes.

Mitigation strategies included:

- Considerations for peak seasonal traffic
- Accessibility to Idaho Springs businesses.
- Assisting the county with historic tourism marketing.
- Developing a site-specific Tier 2 interpretive signage plan.

2.2 How was Socioeconomics Treated in the Twin Tunnels Expansion Projects (Tier 2)?

The FHWA, in cooperation with CDOT, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for proposed changes (2012 Westbound I-70 Twin Tunnels Expansion project) to the eastbound (EB) section of the Twin Tunnels between MP 241 and MP 244 in Clear Creek County, Colorado (CDOT 2012a). The study area for social resources analysis included an area within a 0.5-mile radius of the proposed action project limits and all of Clear Creek County for the economic

analysis, with special consideration given to social and economic resources in larger communities such as the city of Idaho Springs.

CDOT prepared a Categorical Exclusion for the Twin Tunnels for the WB lanes of I-70 which is the same study area as the Twin Tunnels EA and FONSI (EB). Findings from this study were similar to the findings from Twin Tunnels EA and FONSI completed for the EB direction.

For both projects, impacts were not anticipated did not cause any permanent adverse social and economic impacts because construction would occur east of Idaho Springs. No businesses would be displaced, and there would be no proposed changes to parking or access to retail businesses in Idaho Springs.

During construction, businesses near the project area were anticipated to experience some temporary reduction in business due to travelers avoiding the area. However, the impact was anticipated to be minor given the very low diversion rate of traffic to other routes (4 percent), and because much of the diverted traffic would use the frontage road through the Idaho Springs business district. Construction was also anticipated to benefit businesses in Clear Creek County and Idaho Springs from the purchase of local goods and services as well as local spending by construction workers and those “waiting out” delays.

The EB Twin Tunnels project was anticipated to have noticeable benefits from the additional capacity of a third travel lane. Improvements in safety were anticipated to reduce the number of crashes on I-70 and improve travel time shortened the response times for emergency vehicles. Operation of the managed lane during highly congested periods, when many crashes occur, would create a more reliable travel time for emergency response that would not exist without a managed lane. Following construction, minor beneficial impacts occurred due to improved travel conditions from Clear Creek County to the Denver metropolitan area, which encouraged more recreational trips to the area for those concerned about long return times.

Moderate, short-term economic impacts were anticipated during construction for service retail in Idaho Springs. River rafting outfitters also experienced some reduction in sales because patrons avoided the project area during construction.

2.3 How was Socioeconomics Treated in the EB I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane Categorical Exclusion (Tier 2)?

The FHWA, in cooperation with CDOT, prepared a Categorical Exclusion for proposed changes to the EB lanes of I-70 between approximately MP 230 and MP 243, in Clear Creek County, Colorado (CDOT 2014). The WB PPSL study area is located within the study boundaries of the EB PPSL Categorical Exclusion (CDOT 2014).

The EB I-70 PPSL study area was analyzed for its social and economic impacts. The EB I-70 PPSL Categorical Exclusion study area included the area within 0.5-mile north and south of I-70, between MP 230 and MP 243.

Temporary effects from the EBPPSL project were anticipated to be to residents and those accessing businesses because of construction detours. Emergency response times were anticipated to be slower, and there would be an increase of roadway congestion in and around the study area. Large equipment would be temporarily staged near or around neighborhoods. Rafting businesses and recreationalists would be temporarily impacted by the construction in the vicinity of Clear Creek. Impacts would occur near the SH 103 bridge because the bridge was closed for a portion of the construction period.

Construction may cause temporary impacts to local businesses and residents, the Categorical Exclusion indicated that the Proposed Action for EB PPSL improved the overall economic conditions because it eases peak period congestion. Reduction of through-traffic on local roads adjacent to I-70 during peak periods and improved access for local residents, businesses, and emergency service providers is anticipated. Emergency response times would improve and improved economic conditions are anticipated due to improved access and mobility.

The EB PPSL Categorical Exclusion included the following mitigation measures:

- Provide a detour for residents and those accessing businesses and recreation opportunities.
- Phase construction so that SH 103 and the multi-use path to Water Wheel Park are not closed concurrently as the detour routes.
- Time impactful activities to occur before mid-June or after mid-August (outside of peak rafting season).
- Provide a detour adjacent to the construction site for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Implement a traffic management plan to alert recreationists to detour routes in the event of roadway closures. This will include alerting cycling groups so they can alert their members of access changes and road or lane closures.
- Rehabilitate the bin wall during low flow and outside the whitewater rafting peak season, which extends from mid-June to mid-August.
- Temporarily stop construction activities that present a safety risk to rafters until the rafters have passed through the construction area. CDOT will coordinate with rafting companies regarding protocols for on-river communication between spotters and rafters during construction.
- Stage construction so that only one exit is closed at a time to minimize out-of-direction travel.

Section 3. What Process was Followed to Analyze Socioeconomics?

3.1 Methodology

The study team prepared the socioeconomic analysis for CDOT and FHWA in accordance with CDOT's *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Manual*, Version 5 (CDOT 2017) to evaluate the following social and economic impact considerations:

- Community resources (schools, churches, parks, shopping, emergency services, etc.)
- Community composition (ethnic distribution of population, age distribution, median income of the study area, existing number of households, and average household size)
- Growth policies in the region and policies relating to the rate of population growth
- Housing
- Employment and tax base affected by the project

- Businesses affected by the project or construction (detours, bypasses, circulation)
- Infrastructure and public service
- Mitigation to social and economic resources, as applicable

The methodology for determining social and economic impacts used a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses consisting of primary and secondary research. Primary research consisted of direct interviews with City of Idaho Springs officials. Secondary research was conducted to gather data at the state, local, and regional level throughout the research process in order assess the effects of the proposed action. This research provides perspectives on the study area's trends, including growth, build-out assumptions, and tourism. InfoUSA database information was pulled to provide a baseline business list. Because this data is primarily used for private direct marketing purposes, it was mapped and reviewed to ensure that the business names, locations, and types were correct. Sales tax information from 2010-2015 was obtained from the Colorado State Department of Revenue and the City of Idaho Springs, and analyzed. Diane Breece, Idaho Springs City Clerk, Cassandra Patton of the Clear Creek County Tourism Bureau, and Phyllis Adams of the Idaho Springs Chamber of Commerce were also interviewed for their insights.

Because the area is experiencing steady highway construction, including the recent construction completed on Colorado Boulevard, the team analyzed sales tax data relative to the construction dates. And, because there has been ongoing construction, future steps include interviews with specific businesses to qualitatively assess the impacts of construction on businesses.

Once social and economic resources were fully identified during the analysis, public involvement methods and the need for specialized outreached was considered and utilized to ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. Public outreach conducted for the WB PPSL project is discussed in Section 3.4.

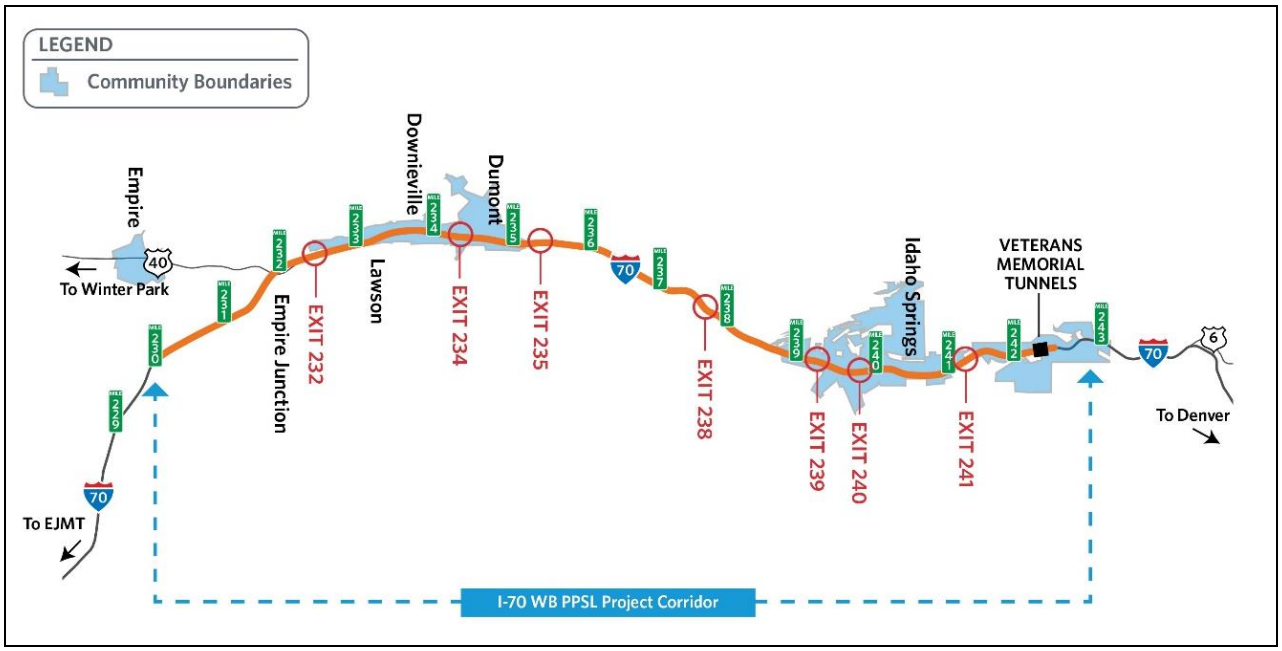
3.2 Study Area

The study area for the WB PPSL project encompasses CDOT right-of-way along I-70 in both directions from MP 243 to MP 230 and areas immediately adjacent to the right-of-way. This study area was used to evaluate the **direct** effects of the Proposed Action.

For transportation and socioeconomic impacts, the study area for **indirect** effects includes Clear Creek County and the communities of Idaho Springs, Downieville-Lawson-Dumont, and the town of Empire. This area is broadly defined and includes the communities and other areas that would be **indirectly** affected by the Proposed Action. The indirect effects study area includes the communities shown in Figure 2.

For the remaining resources, the study area for **indirect** effects generally includes a 0.25-mile buffer around the study area. This area encompasses the communities and other areas that would be indirectly affected by the Proposed Action.

Figure 2. Study Area Communities



3.3 Regulations

This section identifies the relevant federal, state, regional, and local regulations, guidelines, and/or laws that apply to socioeconomic analysis for NEPA documentation.

3.3.1 Federal

- **Section 1508.14 of Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (2005).** The regulation states that when an environmental document is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the documentation will discuss all these effects on the human environment.
- **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.** Instructs federal agencies to consider the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of transportation decisions.
- **Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998).** The regulation states that in the consultation process, the State of Colorado shall conduct ab assessment of impacts of a project, including environmental, aesthetic, economic, and historical impacts associated with the implementation of each of the methods examined under the study.
- **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005):** Instructs federal agencies to consider the economic, social, and environmental effects of a capital project that will substantially affect a community, or the public transportation service of a community.
- **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012):** States that transportation projects would consider economic, social, and environmental conditions that affect or are affected by the transportation networks.

- **Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015):** Requires agencies to consider overall social, economic, and environmental effects that as affected by the proposed transportation project.
- **Sections 109(h) and 128, Title 23 of the United States Code on Highways (2012).** Assures that community cohesion, availability of public facilities and services, and economic and social effects are assessed during highway developments.
- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.** Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.** Addresses the needs of people with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in public services and public accommodations.
- **FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8a Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents, 1987.** Guides entities taking part in the NEPA process to consider effects on social groups, including "the elderly, handicapped, non-drivers, transit-dependent, and minority and ethnic groups are of particular concern."
- **Major Transit Capital Investment Projects Final Rule, 49 Code of Federal Regulation Part 611, 2001.** Prescribes actions that must be taken to be eligible for certain federal grants. Among these actions are social considerations.

3.3.2 State

CDOT's *National Environmental Policy Act Manual* (CDOT 2017) provides guidance on the analysis of social and economic resources, the determination of effects to businesses, residential areas, taxi authorities and community resources, mitigation strategies, and public involvement.

3.3.3 Local and Regional

No local or regional social and economic regulations or guidelines were identified. The laws, regulations, and guidelines described above are used for this socioeconomic analysis.

3.4 Public Involvement

A public involvement plan was developed to provide information about the project and ensure public participation. Individuals from local jurisdictions, communities, state and federal agencies, and special interest groups were a part of a 17-member Project Leadership Team and a 25-member Technical Team that is guiding the NEPA process.

CDOT also solicited comments during the NEPA process, including those specifically related to economic and social concerns. Previously, during the WB I-70 Concept Development Process, CDOT had solicited comments on that process. One comment specific to social and economic resources was received from the March 2017 WB I-70 Concept Development Process public meeting:

- Don't want Clear Creek County to become a pass through. Would like to see data on economics.

Comments related to socioeconomics were submitted to the WB PPSL Project website in June 2018 during the online public meeting, including:

- Only people who can afford the toll are the ones who can most easily enjoy the mountains

- Tolled lanes will leave most people in heavy traffic which will lead to reduced economic benefit for the mountain communities and Colorado as a whole as many people will choose to vacation in other places
- Do not want to pay someone a profit for providing a service I am already paying my government for through taxes

Project team conversations with the Clear Creek County Tourism Bureau and the Idaho Springs Chamber of Commerce in January and February 2018 indicate that businesses still have ongoing concerns about potential project impacts, particularly during construction. Unlike the EB PPSL project, contained blasting is anticipated to be needed for this project. Both organizations suggested that outreach to their members should occur in early 2019 when more construction details can be made available.

3.5 Agency Coordination Conducted

The project team coordinated with county and municipal staff to collect information and concerns regarding social and economic impacts to populations within or near the study area.

Technical team meetings were held regularly that included stakeholders, local agency representatives, elected officials, and City and County staffs who provided input on socioeconomic concerns.

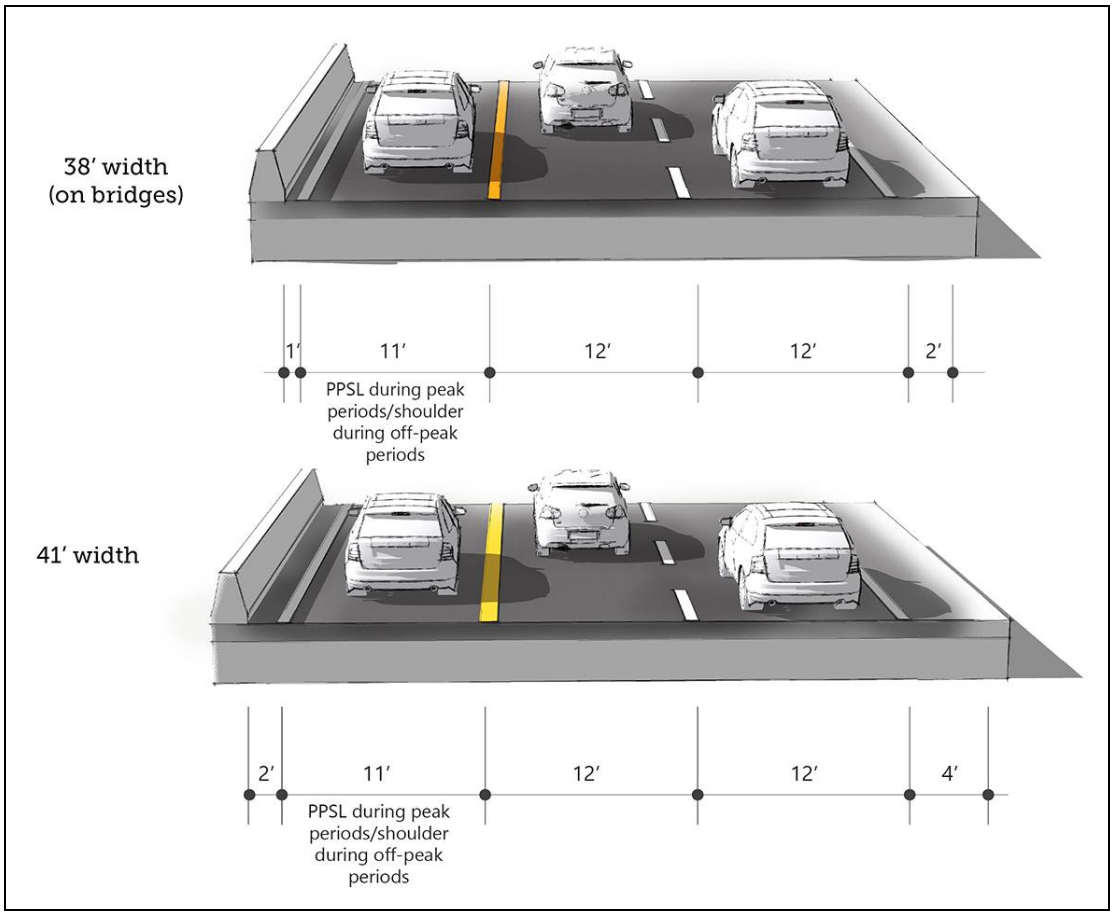
Section 4. Description of the Proposed Action

The WB PPSL project adds an approximate 12-mile tolled PPSL on WB I-70 between the Veterans Memorial Tunnels (just west of MP 243) and the US 40/I-70 interchange (MP 232). The lane entrance begins approximately 500 feet east of the Veterans Memorial Tunnels portal. The WB PPSL maximizes the use of the existing alignment and infrastructure in order to minimize any new impacts within the study area. The 11-foot lane is open for use only during peak periods, and otherwise serves as the shoulder of the interstate. Use of the WB PPSL is prohibited for trucks, buses, or any vehicle over 25 feet long. Overhead signs showing the lane status and toll rate are located throughout the corridor and at the entrance point.

An ingress/entrance point for traffic coming onto WB I-70 from Idaho Springs is provided approximately 2,500 feet west of Exit 239. An egress point for traffic exiting to Downieville is provided about 4,400 feet east of Exit 235, and an egress point for traffic exiting to US 40 is provided approximately 4,400 feet east of Exit 232.

The WB PPSL ends approximately 1/2 mile west of Exit 232. Figure 3 illustrates the typical cross sections of the Proposed Action.

Figure 3. WB PPSL Proposed Action Typical Cross Sections



Source: HDR 2018.

Improvements include:

I-70 Modifications. The general purpose lanes and shoulder of WB I-70 are resurfaced and widened in select locations on the existing alignment between approximately MP 241.5 and MP 232 to accommodate a lane on the shoulder during peak travel periods. Drainage enhancements include a storm system for minor and major storm events and water quality facilities. At SH 103, I-70 is slightly realigned to enhance safety and improve drainage.

SH 103 Interchange Improvements. Ramp improvements address sight distance problems. The pedestrian sidewalk is improved by adding lighting and a decorative paving buffer adjacent to the existing sidewalk on the SH 103 bridge over I-70. This sidewalk connects to a new sidewalk buffered from 13th Avenue between the interchange ramp and Idaho Street in Idaho Springs.

Safety Pull-Outs. A total of seven new safety pull-outs are built—five along WB I-70 and two along EB I-70. One existing safety pull-out on EB I-70 is improved. The intention of these is to provide a space for vehicles to use if they experience a break down and for law enforcement to use.

Rockfall Mitigation. Rockfall mitigation measures are added at five locations to reduce the chance of rocks or other debris from falling on travel lanes or shoulders and reduce the potential for crashes and

travel disruptions. Rockfall mitigation measures are included in the WB direction at MP 239, MP 238.4, MP 237.1, and MP 236.4, and in the EB direction at MP 240.3.

Active Traffic Management. Dynamic signage informs drivers so the WB PPSL is appropriately used to reduce congestion. This innovative design improves mobility.

Fiber Optic Upgrades. Fiber optics are designed to accommodate future emerging technologies for autonomous and connected vehicles, improving driver information and emergency response capabilities.

Dumont Port-of-Entry Interchange. Merge area improvements to the Dumont interchange acceleration lane includes restriping of I-70 to reduce merge conflicts between truck traffic and the general-purpose lane traffic.

Dynamic signage

Section 5. What are the Socioeconomic Resources in the Study Area?

5.1 Social Environment Current Conditions

The I-70 corridor is Colorado's only east-west interstate and primary access route from Denver to the mountains and Colorado's Western Slope. The city of Idaho Springs is approximately 40 miles west of the Denver metropolitan area and in the eastern portion of the study area. The section of the interstate within the socioeconomic study area provides an important link between residents of Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County and Denver. The city of Idaho Springs and other surrounding mountain communities along I-70 rely on the mobility of travelers along the interstate highway to help propel the region's local economy. The following sections analyze the region's existing social and economic composition.

5.1.1 Community Cohesion

Colorado has been growing steadily in the last 15 years, and although communities that have faced the largest growth are concentrated around the Denver metropolitan area , Clear Creek County is seeing some of this growth spilling over into its region. During the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010 the population in the state of Colorado rose 17 percent, and the towns of Downieville-Lawson-Dumont collectively experienced a 63 percent rise in population (Table 1). During this same period, Clear Creek County, Empire, and Idaho Springs experienced a decline in population, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Population Change 2000 to 2010

Location	2000	2010	Percent Change
State of Colorado	4,301,261	5,029,196	+16.9%
Clear Creek County	9,322	9,088	-2.5%
Empire	355	282	-20.5%
Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	364	594	+63.2%
Idaho Springs	1,889	1,717	-9.1%

Source: 2000-2010 U.S. Census.

Annual estimates of the population between 2010 and 2016 show an increase in population in Idaho Springs and Empire (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimated Population Change 2010 to 2016

Location	2010	2016	Percent Change
State of Colorado	5,029,196	5,540,545	+9.0%
Clear Creek County	9,088	9,436	+3.8%
Empire	282	312	+10.6%
Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	594	474	-20.2%
Idaho Springs	1,717	1,996	+16.2%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census (USCB 2010); 2012-2016 American Community Survey (USCB 2016).

5.1.2 Ethnicity

Racial composition of residents in Clear Creek, Empire, Downieville-Lawson-Dumont, and Idaho Springs is similar in that the majority of the population (greater than 90 percent) is white and less than 10 percent of the population is Hispanic. The population in the state of Colorado is 70 percent white and has a Hispanic proportion of 21 percent (Table 3).

Table 3. Ethnicity and Race in Clear Creek County Communities, 2010

Ethnicity/Race	State of Colorado	Clear Creek County	Empire	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	Idaho Springs
White	70.00%	92.10%	92.90%	88.0%	91.40%
Black	3.80%	0.60%	1.80%	0.70%	0.40%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.60%	0.60%	0.40%	0.80%	0.40%
Asian	2.70%	0.60%	0.0%	0.0%	0.50%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0.10%	0.0%	0.0%	0.20%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	20.70%	4.70%	3.90%	9.10%	6.00%

Table 3. Ethnicity and Race in Clear Creek County Communities, 2010

Ethnicity/Race	State of Colorado	Clear Creek County	Empire	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	Idaho Springs
Some Other Race Alone	0.20%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Persons Reporting Two or More Races	2.00%	1.30%	1.10%	1.20%	1.30%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census (USCB 2010).

5.1.3 Age

In Clear Creek County, the median age was 46.6 years in 2010. The median age does not vary greatly in the county and between communities located in the study area, with Downieville-Lawson-Dumont having an average age of 39.8 years, and Empire having an average age of 49 years (Table 4).

Table 4. Clear Creek County Population Age Breakdown, 2010

Age	Clear Creek County	Clear Creek County %	Empire	Empire %	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont %	Idaho Springs	Idaho Springs %
Under 5 years	447	4.90%	8	2.80%	38	6.40%	97	5.60%
5 to 9 years	415	4.60%	7	2.50%	44	7.40%	66	3.80%
10 to 14 years	412	4.50%	12	4.30%	24	4.00%	76	4.40%
15 to 19 years	450	5.00%	13	4.60%	46	7.70%	97	5.60%
20 to 24 years	282	3.10%	14	5.00%	21	3.50%	79	4.60%
25 to 29 years	412	4.50%	9	3.20%	46	7.70%	79	4.60%
30 to 34 years	527	5.80%	19	6.70%	45	7.60%	113	6.60%
35 to 39 years	639	7.00%	24	8.50%	34	5.70%	122	7.10%
40 to 44 years	706	7.80%	11	3.90%	40	6.70%	134	7.80%
45 to 49 years	839	9.20%	28	9.90%	52	8.80%	144	8.40%
50 to 54 years	1,030	11.30%	38	13.50%	55	9.30%	157	9.10%
55 to 59 years	1,000	11.00%	40	14.20%	40	6.70%	170	9.90%
60 to 64 years	797	8.80%	28	9.90%	51	8.60%	141	8.20%
65 to 69 years	512	5.60%	17	6.00%	24	4.00%	85	5.00%
70 to 74 years	281	3.10%	5	1.80%	21	3.50%	53	3.10%

Table 4. Clear Creek County Population Age Breakdown, 2010

Age	Clear Creek County	Clear Creek County %	Empire	Empire %	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont	Downieville-Lawson-Dumont %	Idaho Springs	Idaho Springs %
75 to 79 years	180	2.00%	6	2.10%	9	1.50%	50	2.90%
80 to 84 years	86	0.90%	2	0.70%	1	0.20%	29	1.70%
85 years and over	73	0.80%	1	0.40%	3	0.50%	25	1.50%
Total population	**9,088**	**100.00%**	**282**	**100.00%**	**594**	**100.00%**	**1,717**	**100.00%**
Median age (years)	**46.6**		**49**		**39.8**		**44.8**	

5.1.4 Safety and Security

The Clear Creek County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for establishing and facilitating emergency management services. The Clear Creek County Sheriff's Office is located in Georgetown and responds to emergency calls throughout the county. Figure 4 illustrates emergency service providers located along the project corridor.

5.1.5 Income and Housing

Household Income Characteristics

Table 5 illustrates the annual household income breakdown within Clear Creek County using American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2012 to 2016). The average household income in Clear Creek County is $91,677 per year for 4,411 households. Household income estimates are inflation adjusted to 2016 dollars. This means that previous years included in the estimates are adjusted for the sample's inflation rate. 2016 household income data is an aggregate of data collected in the last five years, thus inflation is factored in the results to determine "real" household income.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also develops the Area Median Income limit categories for affordable housing unit eligibility. The median income for Clear Creek County is $83,900 in 2017 according to HUD (HUD 2017). HUD applies the income limit category (i.e., 50 percent) to the area median income to determine income limit category for different family sizes. A family of four considered with very low income limits (50 percent) earned $41,950 in 2017 as a household. The Fiscal Year 2017 income limits are adjusted to the average household size in the county (2.14 persons as determined by the U.S. Census). Of the five Census Tract Block Groups located in the study area, three of those exceed the threshold for the percent of low-income individuals located within the area. Additional information concerning low-income populations in the study area can be found in the *WB I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane Environmental Justice Technical Report* (CDOT 2018).

Figure 4. Emergency Service Providers in the Study Area

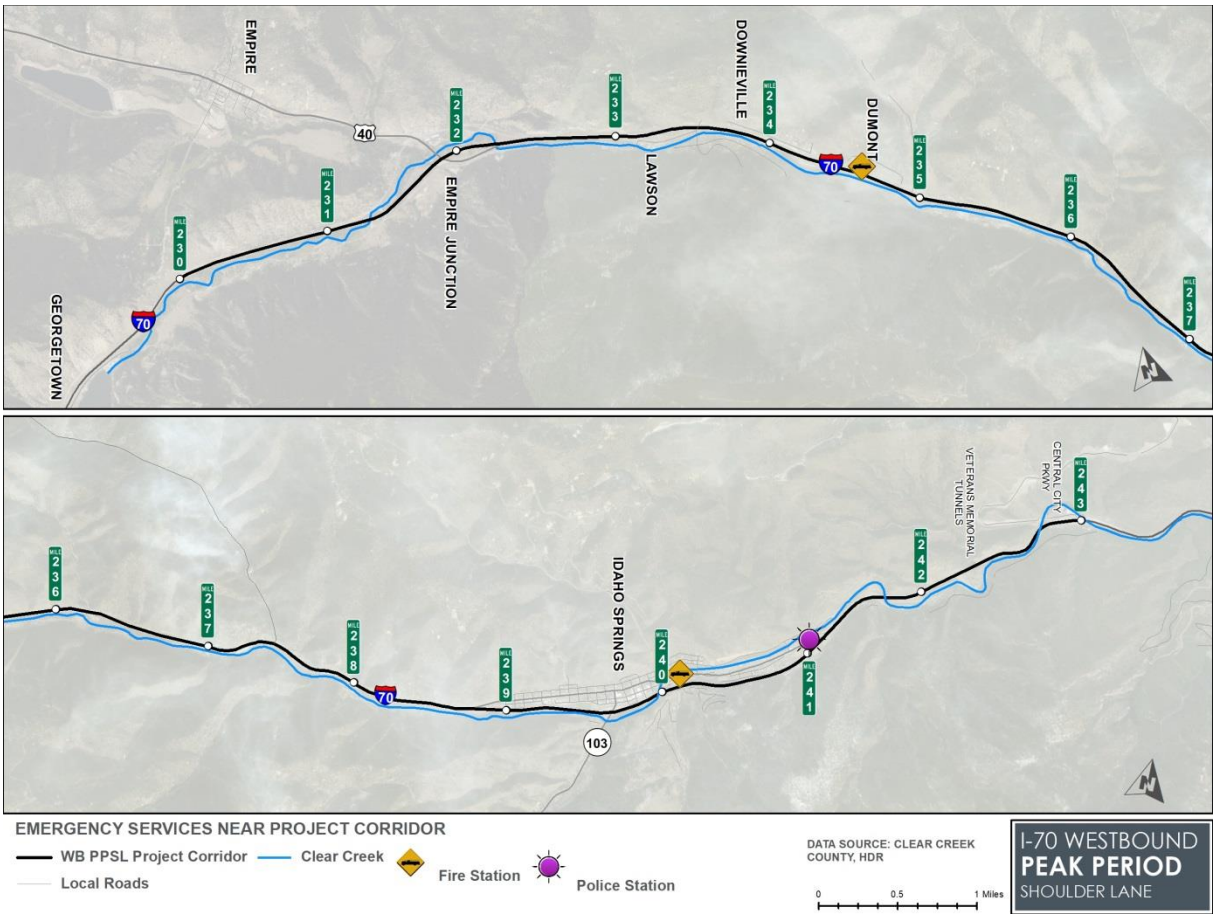


Table 5. Household Income in 2016 in Inflation Adjusted Dollars

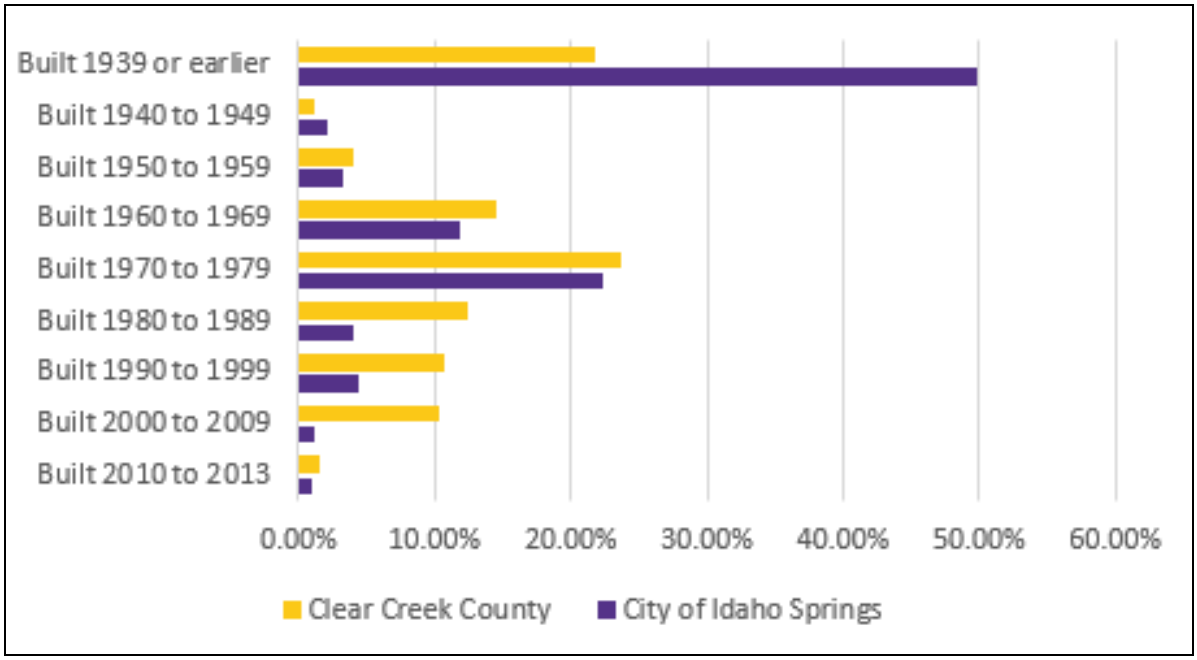
Household Income Clear Creek County	Estimate	Percent
Total	**4,411.00**	**100.0**
Less than $10,000	176.44	4.0
$10,000 to $14,999	176.44	4.0
$15,000 to $24,999	282.30	6.4
$25,000 to $34,999	392.58	8.9
$35,000 to $49,999	542.55	12.3
$50,000 to $74,999	882.20	20.0
$75,000 to $99,999	591.07	13.4
$100,000 to $149,999	891.02	20.2
$150,000 to $199,999	255.84	5.8
$200,000 or more	220.55	5.0
Mean income (dollars)	**91,677.00**	

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016; U.S. Census Bureau 2016).

Housing Units/Housing Types

There are 5,580 housing units located within Clear Creek County. A “household” is the U.S. Census term for referring to people who are living in a housing structure while a “housing unit” is used to describe the characteristics of the structure in which residents live. The majority of these housing units consist of single-family detached homes. The majority of housing units in Clear Creek County were built before 1980 (Figure 5). In the city of Idaho Springs, 50 percent of all homes were built prior to 1939. Most new housing units that have been built in Clear Creek County are located in the unincorporated areas of the county (Clear Creek County 2012). Most homes in the county are considered owner-occupied housing units, with a quarter of that proportion primarily considered as renter-occupied homes.

Figure 5. Years Housing Structures Built

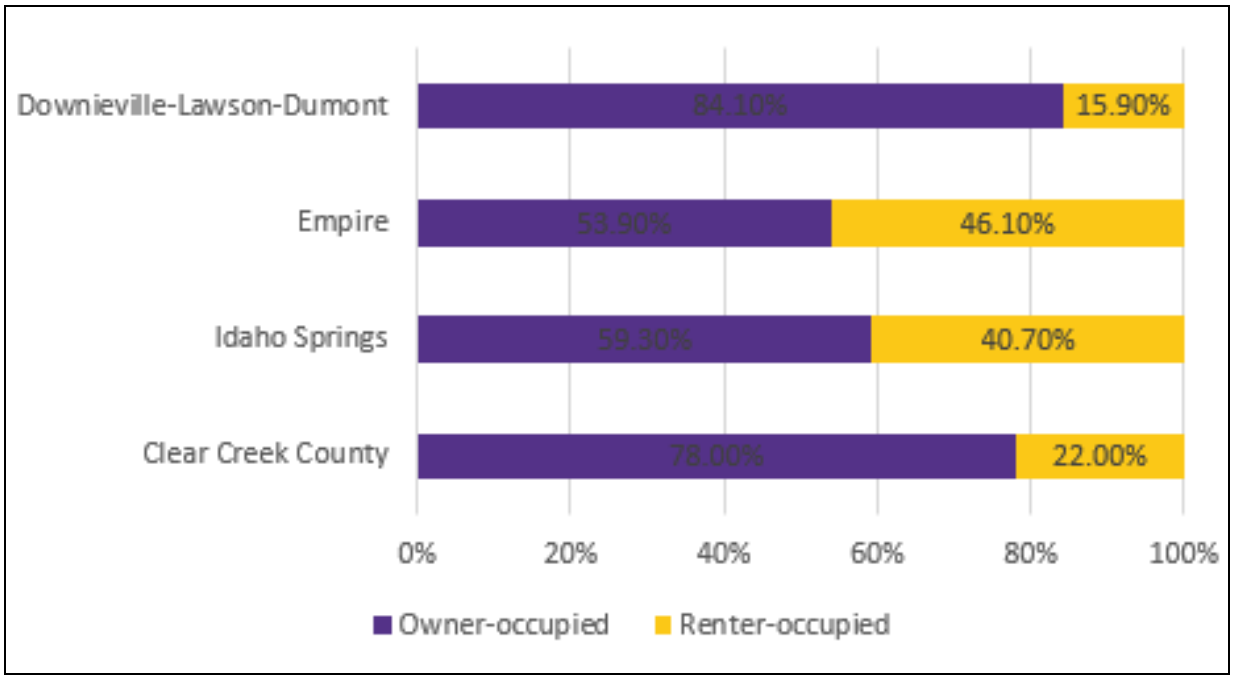


Source: Clear Creek County 2012.

Owner-Occupied vs. Renter-Occupied

Nearly 80 percent of homes in Clear Creek County are owner-occupied (Figure 6). However, the city of Idaho Springs and the town of Empire have a larger proportion of the population renting homes (40.7 percent and 46.1 percent, respectively).

Figure 6. Owner- Versus Renter-Occupied Homes in Clear Creek County Communities



Source: Clear Creek County 2012.

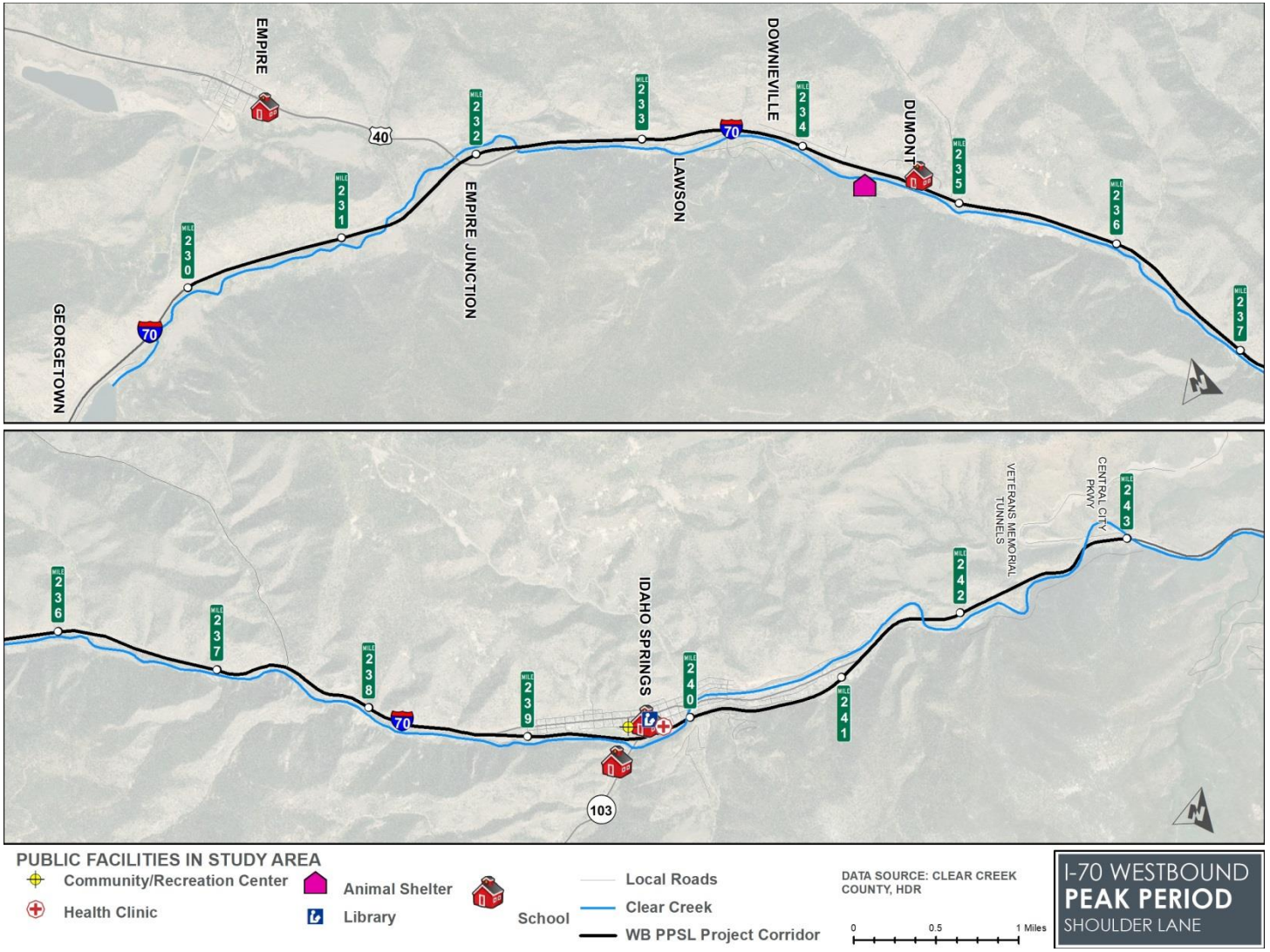
5.1.6 Facilities and Services

Public Facilities

Figure 7 shows public facilities that are located along the project corridor including the Idaho Springs Public Library and Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation Center in the City of Idaho Springs. The public library is a community gathering place for residents of the city of Idaho Springs, providing many services ranging from job search support to book club events. The Clear Creek Recreation Center is the primary recreational, leisure, and fitness provider to Clear Creek County residents. The Clear Creek County Animal Shelter is located in Downieville-Lawson-Dumont.

The Clear Creek School District is located in the city of Idaho Springs and is the governing institution that oversees public schools within Clear Creek County. Carlson Elementary School is located in downtown Idaho Springs and Clear Creek Middle School is located on SH 103 south of Idaho Springs across the I-70 corridor (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Public Facilities in the Study Area



5.2 Economic Environment Current Conditions

5.2.1 Commercial and Industry

Local Business Environment

There are approximately 181 businesses operating within the socioeconomic study area, which from west to east includes the unincorporated communities of Empire Junction, Downieville-Lawson-Dumont, as well as the city of Idaho Springs, as shown in Figure 2. The area is situated between numerous ski resorts and mountain recreational destinations to the west and the Denver metropolitan area to the east. In addition, local recreational opportunities also exist, such as river rafting and hiking. As a result, the study area's economy is heavily reliant on tourism and through-travel stops.

The socioeconomic study area encompasses Empire Junction, which is located outside of the Empire business district. At the interchange area, there is a transportation maintenance facility and campgrounds (Table 6).

Table 6. Empire Junction Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
713	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1
488	Support Activities for Transportation	1

Sources: ArLand Land Use Economics 2017; InfoUSA 2017.

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System

Lawson is primarily a residential area within the Downieville-Lawson-Dumont census-designated place. There are outdoor recreation businesses throughout the study area, one of which has a Lawson address (Table 7).

Table 7. Lawson Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
713	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1

Sources: ArLand Land Use Economics 2017; InfoUSA 2017.

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System

Downieville businesses are almost exclusively reliant on interstate travelers spending on food, coffee, and gasoline (Table 8). Given its easy access to the interstate, it is also home to marijuana dispensaries, guided recreation, and recreation equipment rentals for those traveling to nearby resort areas.

Table 8. Downieville Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
446	Health and Personal Care Stores (Dispensaries)	2
447	Gasoline Stations	2
451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Music and Book Stores	2
713	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation	1
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	3
	TOTAL	**10**

Sources: ArLand Land Use Economics 2017; InfoUSA 2017.

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System

Although many businesses in Dumont are tied to tourism and interstate travelers, Dumont's economic activity includes additional industries such as warehousing and storage, manufacturing, professional services, and government activity (Table 9).

Table 9. Dumont Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
321	Wood Product Manufacturing	1
493	Warehousing and Storage	2
491	Postal Service	1
446	Health and Personal Care Stores (Dispensaries)	1
451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Music & Book Stores	2
713	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation	2
541	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3
921	General Government	3
	TOTAL	**15**

Sources: ArLand Land Use Economics 2017; InfoUSA 2017.

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System

Idaho Springs is the economic engine of this section of Clear Creek County, with a larger and more diverse business base than nearby Empire Junction and Downieville-Lawson-Dumont. Its economic activities include construction, mining, and utilities, as well as service-related businesses. There are a number of government offices and activities, although it is not the county seat.

The economy is largely reliant on tourism and recreation spending (Table 10). Retail businesses account for about 20 percent of all Idaho Springs businesses, with boutique-retail establishments being particularly prominent. The accommodation and food and drinking establishments account for another 20 percent of all businesses. When these industries are combined with other tourism and recreation-oriented businesses, they comprise about 47 percent of all businesses in Idaho Springs.

Table 10. Idaho Springs Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
212	Mining	3
221	Utilities	4
236-238	Construction	9
311-323	Manufacturing Industries	2
441	Retail-Motor Vehicles	1
444	Retail-Building Materials	1
445	Retail-Food/Beverage	3
446	Retail-Health and Personal Care	2
447	Retail-Gasoline	6
448	Retail-Clothing and Accessories	1
451	Retail-Sporting Goods, Hobby	2
453	Retail-Miscellaneous Store Retailers	15
487	Scenic, Sightseeing Transportation	4
488	Transportation Support Activities	2
511	Publishing	1
515	Broadcasting	3
519	Other Information Services	1
522	Banks	4
531	Real Estate	4
532	Rental and Leasing Services	2
541	Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	10
561	Administrative and Support Services	2
562	Waste Management and Remediation	2
611	Educational Services	7
621	Ambulatory and Health Care Services	3
623	Residential Care Facilities	1
624	Social Assistance	2
711	Performing Arts and Related	3
712	Museums and Historical Sites	3
713	Amusement, Recreational Industries	4
721	Accommodation	10
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	20
811	Repair and Maintenance	2
812	Personal Services	3
813	Religious, Civic, Professional Organizations	6
921	Governmental Support	2

Table 10. Idaho Springs Businesses by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Estimated Number of Businesses
922	Justice, Public Order, and Safety	3
	TOTAL	**153**

Sources: ArLand Land Use Economics 2017; InfoUSA 2017.

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System

5.2.2 Regional Earnings

Sales Tax Revenue

Sales tax revenues are an important indicator of the economic health of a community. The State of Colorado sales tax rate is 2.9 percent, Clear Creek County is 1 percent, and Idaho Springs is 4 percent.

Annual sales tax revenue for the state of Colorado and the city of Idaho Springs increased every year from 2010 to 2015 (Table 11). Idaho Springs saw a high of $2.8 million in 2013, followed by a dip to $2.6 million in the following year. Although revenues appear to be recovering, jurisdictions outside of Idaho Springs (Georgetown, Silver Plume, and Empire) in Clear Creek County have experienced decreases in sales tax revenues between 2013 and 2015.

On average, Idaho Springs comprises 55 percent to 65 percent of Clear Creek County sales tax revenues. Of these jurisdictions, Idaho Springs experienced the largest average annual growth rate over the 5 years (12.2 percent), followed by Clear Creek County (7.4 percent) and the state (6.3 percent). The very high annual growth rate in Idaho Springs is because of a 32 percent growth in sales tax revenue from 2014 to 2015 (the annual sales tax growth rate in Idaho Springs from 2010 to 2014 was 7.8 percent). Idaho Springs sales tax revenue continues to climb, increasing to approximately $2.3 million (an additional 13 percent) from 2015 to 2016.

Table 11. Annual Sales Tax Revenue by Jurisdiction ($000s)

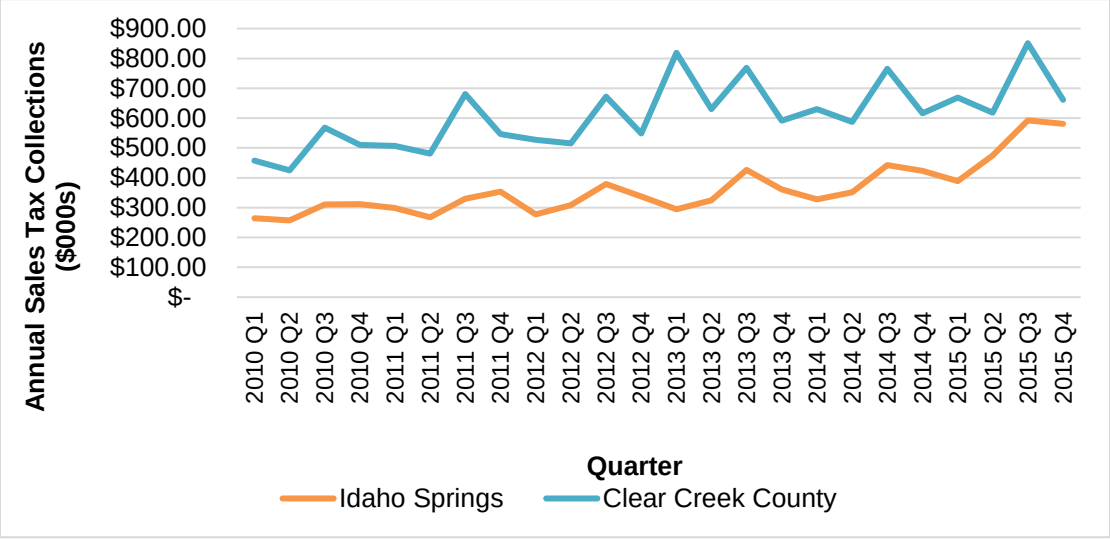
Year	Idaho Springs	Clear Creek County	State of CO
2010	$1,145	$1,960	$1,889,185
2011	$1,250	$2,216	$2,009,938
2012	$1,303	$2,263	$2,113,418
2013	$1,406	$2,809	$2,255,612
2014	$1,546	$2,598	$2,453,636
2015	$2,037	$2,799	$2,563,437
2016	$2,303	NA	NA

Sources: Personal communication with Idaho Springs City Clerk Diane Breece; Clear Creek County; Colorado Department of Revenue 2017a and 2017b; ArLand Land Use Economics 2017.

Although both Clear Creek County and Idaho Springs have experienced growth in annual sales tax revenue, collections have fluctuated throughout the year. Figure 8 shows that there has been a steadily consistent upward trend in sales tax collections both at the city and county levels, despite seasonal fluctuations.

From 2010 to 2015 sales tax revenue in Idaho Springs was highest in the third and fourth quarters. In 2010 and 2011 the fourth quarter had the highest quarterly collections of the year, but from 2012 to 2015 the third quarter had the highest quarterly collections in each year. At the county level, quarterly collections were highest in the third quarter of each year from 2010 to 2015, with the exception of 2013 when the first quarter was the highest of the year, followed by the third quarter (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Annual Sales Tax Collections by Quarter (2010-2015) in Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County

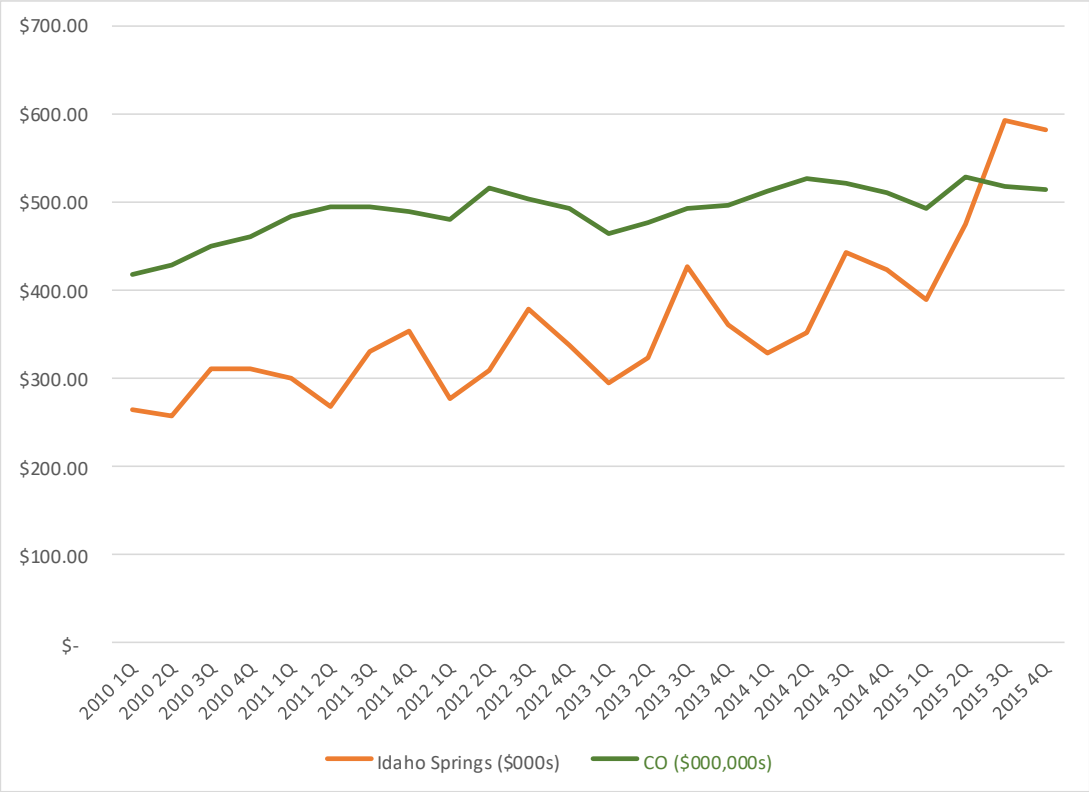


Sources: Personal Communication with Idaho Springs City Clerk Diane Breece; Clear Creek County; Colorado Department of Revenue 2017a and 2017b; ArLand Land Use Economics 2017.

Figure 9 compares Idaho Springs sales tax revenues with the state of Colorado (at different scales). The Idaho Springs revenue is presented in the thousands of dollars while the state of Colorado information is presented in the millions of dollars. This compares relative trends rather than actual dollars. While seasonality is depicted in Idaho Springs, sale tax revenues statewide tend to remain more constant through the years. The state also shows a steady increase, although the rate of increase in Idaho Springs is greater than the rate of increase at the statewide level.

Sales tax revenue also increased in Idaho Springs during construction of the EB PPSL project (June 2014 to December 2017) and the Idaho Springs Colorado Boulevard project (Phase 2 was completed in July 2017 and Phase 3 was completed in the summer of 2018). As shown in Table 12, quarterly sales tax collections in Idaho Springs since the third quarter of 2013 have consistently grown, and the same cyclical nature of sales before construction began continue during construction. For example, third quarter collections increased from just under $427,000 in 2013 to almost $677,000 by 2016. This same pattern holds for all quarters and all years since construction began.

Figure 9. Annual Sales Tax Collections by Quarter (2010-2015) in Idaho Springs and State of Colorado



Sources: Personal Communication with Idaho Springs City Clerk Diane Breece; Colorado Department of Revenue 2017a and 2017b; ArLand Land Use Economics 2017.

Table 12. Idaho Springs Sales Tax Collections by Quarter During Construction ($000s)

Quarter	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Q1	N/A	$328.05	$389.11	$458.94	$549.07
Q2	N/A	$351.36	$474.47	$504.32	$543.78
Q3	$426.78	$442.61	$592.34	$676.76	N/A
Q4	$361.06	$423.52	$580.94	$662.96	N/A

Sources: Personal Communication with Idaho Springs City Clerk Diane Breece; Colorado Department of Revenue 2017a and 2017b; ArLand Land Use Economics 2017.

From a city-wide perspective, Idaho Springs businesses have fared relatively well despite all of the past construction. At the same time, there have undoubtedly been localized, temporary construction impacts that do not show up in these data because the data have been reported on a city-wide or broader basis.

Section 6. What are the Environmental Consequences?

6.1 How Does the Proposed Action Affect Socioeconomic Resources?

6.1.1 What Direct Effects are Anticipated?

The Proposed Action results in overall improved economic conditions by easing peak period congestion. Upgrades to the SH 103 interchange make businesses directly adjacent to the interchange easier to access from I-70, as well as increase safety for residents, businesses, and emergency service providers. The Proposed Action also reduces congestion-related traffic on I-70 during peak periods and improves emergency response times. Emergency service providers can use the WB PPSL during off-peak periods. The lane is less congested during peak hours, allowing emergency services to respond faster. What Indirect Effects Are Anticipated?

The Proposed Action reduces congestion along I-70 during peak periods. The Idaho Springs comprehensive plan *Envision Idaho Springs 2017* notes that Idaho Springs is a “short-term stop” and a “convenience location” rather than a destination. Easing of congestion during peak periods encourages more recreation- and tourism-oriented trips to Clear Creek County and other counties to the west. This indirect effect benefits local businesses, such as restaurants and retailers, from an increase in visitation to the area, is positive for economic conditions, and is of particular interest to Clear Creek County which is actively encouraging a shift in the economic base to businesses that are more tourist-oriented.

It also encourages increased visitation from local Denver metropolitan area residents. Anecdotally, Idaho Springs and other nearby communities such as Georgetown are seeing increased visitation from West Denver metro residents who are dining more at mountain restaurants rather than dealing with traffic and parking when dining in downtown Denver.

6.1.2 What Construction Effects Are Anticipated?

During construction, temporary effects to residents and those accessing area businesses and recreation destinations such as Clear Creek. The use of a temporary construction easement for the relocation of a section of Chicago Creek Sanitation District sewer line causes a loss of several parking spaces in the City of Idaho Springs parking lot for about 4 to 5 months.

Indirect effects include detours, potentially slower emergency response times, an increase in roadway congestion in and around the area, the presence of large equipment, temporary signage, and lighting, staging materials, dust from construction, and general temporary disruption to the surrounding area. Traffic may be closed on I-70 for approximately 30-minute intervals for safety during contained blasting to mitigate for unstable rock slopes near MP 237.1 or other construction operations, causing substantial short-term inconvenience for both WB and EB travelers who forgo trips during these closures or attempt to travel on alternative routes.

Impacts are concentrated on the SH 103 interchange. Depending on direction of travel on I-70, motorists seeking to exit onto SH 103 may be directed to either an earlier or a later exit on I-70 where detour signage directs them to the appropriate access points. Out-of-direction travel is anticipated to be approximately 4.5 miles. Businesses and other buildings most affected by the SH 103 interchange improvements are those located near the interchange. Impacts are most noticeable near the SH 103 bridge because of ramp closures for a portion of the construction period, which reroutes traffic for creek

recreationists, local businesses, and residents located on the south side of the bridge. This includes two community service organizations (the food bank Loaves and Fishes and the Clear Creek Rock House for Kids), a fire station, the Clear Creek Ranger Station, and AVA Rafting and Zipline, which are all located south of I-70 along SH 103. Potentially affected businesses include the Rocky Mountain Whitewater Rafting business, a ski and ride rental business, and two gas stations north of I-70. Bicyclists and pedestrians can use the existing path along the Clear Creek Greenway between SH 103 and Charlie Tayler Water Wheel Park. Out-of-direction travel would be approximately 0.5 mile, resulting in minor disruption to all these user groups.

The economic effects of these temporary disruptions are difficult to estimate. However, there may be increases in economic activity at one interchange while construction effects are more negative at another interchange. Negative impacts are offset by positive effects because of construction workers who purchase goods and services in the study area during construction.

6.1.3 Would there be Cumulative Effects?

When combined with other reasonably foreseeable future projects—such as the Floyd Hill project, the completion of the Clear Creek Greenway, the redevelopment of the Argo Mine and Mill, the parking garage/transit center in Idaho Springs, and with continued population growth in the Denver metropolitan area, additional traffic to the mountains on I-70 to access recreational areas is expected. This increased traffic improves socioeconomic conditions overall but may put an additional strain on city and county resources. The contribution of the Proposed Action to this additional traffic is minimal because the project is interim and only improves travel time during peak periods.

Recreational travel and recreational activities and facilities in the study area are dominant drivers of the local and regional economy. A tendency toward increased recreational visitation occurs because of improved mobility. When combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the Proposed Action contributes to beneficial effects on the local tourist economy in Clear Creek County.

Section 7. What Mitigation Is Needed?

7.1 Mitigation

Socioeconomic mitigation measures for operations and construction are listed and described in Table 13.

Table 13. Mitigation Tracking

Mitigation Category	Impact from NEPA Document	Commitment From Mitigation Table In Source Document (Use Exact Wording from Table in Source Document)	Responsible Branch	Timing/Phase of Construction Mitigation to be Constructed
Social and Economic	Delays and detours during construction as well as temporary closures of Clear Creek.	Include coordination with rafting companies and emergency medical service providers as part of the construction Public Information Plan.	CDOT Engineering , CDOT Public Involvement, and Contractor	Pre-construction and During Construction
Social and Economic	Visual impacts during construction from construction vehicles, temporary signage and lighting and material stockpiled during construction	Remove visually obtrusive erosion control devices. Stockpile areas will be in containers or neatly organized, cleaned and located in less visibly sensitive areas and, whenever possible, not visible from recreational areas. Lighting, including “down-lighting,” will be directed toward the interior of the construction staging and work areas, and shielded so that it does not spill over into adjacent areas.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	During Construction
Social and Economic	Access impacts to residences and businesses. Delays and detours during construction.	Provide well-placed and highly visible signage to direct patrons to businesses	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	Pre-construction and During Construction
Social and Economic	Access to impact residences, businesses, and travelers. Delays and detours during construction.	Stage construction to minimize impacts to area businesses, residents, and I-70 travelers.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	During Construction
Social and Economic	Temporary closures or access impacts to Clear Creek. Delays and detours during construction.	Temporary signage will be placed along Clear Creek to warn recreationalists of rock blasting activities and provide sources of information on the project and potential river closures.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	During Construction

Table 13. Mitigation Tracking

Mitigation Category	Impact from NEPA Document	Commitment From Mitigation Table In Source Document (Use Exact Wording from Table in Source Document)	Responsible Branch	Timing/Phase of Construction Mitigation to be Constructed
Social and Economic	Temporary closures or access impacts to Clear Creek. Delays and detours during construction.	Construction areas near the banks of the creek will be fenced off to prevent access by rafters, anglers, or other pedestrians.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	During Construction
Social and Economic	Temporary closures or access impacts to Clear Creek.	Coordinate with rafting companies prior to construction to develop communication protocols in the event of unanticipated river closures during rafting season. If river closures are necessary during rafting season, CDOT will communicate with rafting companies in accordance with previously agreed-upon protocols.	CDOT Engineering, CDOT Public Involvement, and Contractor	Pre-construction and During Construction
Social and Economic	Temporary road closures and detours during construction.	All construction activity will follow CDOT Region 1's Lane Closure Strategy for I-70 Mountain Corridor lane closure schedules.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	During Construction
Social and Economic	Delays and detours during construction.	Provide frequent and timely updates about construction activities.	CDOT Engineering, CDOT Public Involvement, and Contractor	During Construction
Social and Economic	Emergency access delays during construction.	Maintain access for emergency vehicles through the project area at all times by providing a shoulder of adequate width for emergency access.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	Before/During Construction
Social and Economic	Delays and detours during construction.	Implement public information strategies such as media advisories, variable message signs, advance signs, a telephone hotline, real-time web cameras, and alternate route advisories to alert travelers to construction activities.	CDOT Engineering, CDOT Public Involvement, and Contractor	Pre-construction and During Construction

Table 13. Mitigation Tracking

Mitigation Category	Impact from NEPA Document	Commitment From Mitigation Table In Source Document (Use Exact Wording from Table in Source Document)	Responsible Branch	Timing/Phase of Construction Mitigation to be Constructed
Social and Economic	Loss of parking spaces in the Idaho Springs parking lot during construction.	Replace parking spaces as soon as possible.	CDOT Engineering and Contractor	Pre-construction and During Construction

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