

UniteNorthMetroDenver
The I-270/I-76 Reroute Alternative for I-70

CDOT is proposing substituting a below grade project in the present alignment to replace the elevated portion of I-70. This would involve widening the highway to ten express lanes and would include four frontage lanes. That would further isolate the Elyria, Swansea and Globeville neighborhoods from the rest of the city.

Another proposal is to close I-70 between Wadsworth Avenue and Central Park Boulevard, and to divert traffic north of the current alignment onto I-76 and I-270. It also proposes construction of a surface boulevard along what currently is Brighton Boulevard. That would funnel traffic from DIA, Green Valley Ranch and Montebello into downtown Denver along Brighton Boulevard and make this route the gateway into the city.

We believe that the current CDOT proposal has the following negative features:

1. This project will leave a 300 ft. canyon (the length of a football field), 28 feet deep, with 8 to 12 foot sound barrier walls dividing the neighborhoods from the rest of the city. This would only be mitigated by an 800 ft. cover over approximately 10% of the length of the below grade highway.
2. It would be extremely disruptive to the education of the students at the school during the construction project and potentially harmful to their health after completion.
3. CDOT is considering public-private funding for the project. This would turn the highway into a partial toll road between Brighton Boulevard and the airport, increasing traffic congestion for local trips.
4. The complex construction process would produce increased traffic congestion during the three to five year construction process.
5. Restriping the bridge over I-25 to create 3 lanes will create a traffic bottleneck for westbound traffic immediately west of the bridge over I-25.
6. There are unresolved issues surrounding contaminated groundwater from ASARCO that must be treated and disposed of into the Platte River during construction.
7. The project will cost approximately \$2 billion with no economic benefit to the city.

8. Widening the highway to 5 lanes east of I-25 and in the mountains will require future widening west of I-25.

We believe the reroute proposal has the following potential advantages:

1. It will reintegrate the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods into the city.
2. It would allow provision of needed retail and commercial establishments serving the communities.
3. When other cities have removed highways it has raised property values an average of between \$160,000 and \$180,000.
4. It would stimulate appropriate economic development along the I-270/I-76 corridor where almost no residential housing exists.
5. The construction of additional lanes along I-76 and I-270 prior to closing I-70 allows for less interruption of traffic during construction and a less complex construction process. According to the City of Denver this would reduce the construction time by a year or two years.
6. It provides Denver with an attractive entry from the airport for visitors to the city.
7. By providing easy access through surface level streets, it supports the development of the Stock Show Complex for year-round events and activities at the Denver Coliseum.
8. It provides land almost half the size of Stapleton along the I-70 corridor for an estimated \$1.5 billion in direct and indirect economic development.
9. It supports the development already taking place along Brighton Boulevard.
10. It enhances air quality for the communities and school children.
11. It improves traffic flow and reduces congestion on I-25.
12. It provides opportunities for public transit options along I-76, I-270 and the western part of the current I-70 corridor.
13. It removes the necessity for separately rebuilding I-270 in the future and adding lanes to I-76 to accommodate growing traffic.
14. Using data from the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Florida State Department of Transportation, it would cost between \$300 million and \$500 million less than the CDOT plan.

The I-70 reroute option offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to beneficially redesign the northern half of Denver for the next fifty years. It deserves a full examination and analysis.