



A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

September 12, 2013

Mr. Don Hunt, Executive Director
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 East Arkansas Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80222

Dear Mr. Hunt:

The AIA Denver Board of Directors, following the recommendations of its member Urban Design Committee, would like to comment on the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) "Preferred Alternative" in its I-70 East EIS process nearing conclusion. As architects, the protection of the safety, health and welfare of our citizens is our first responsibility. Those in government share that responsibility.

AIA Denver commends the visionary leaders who, over the last 25 years, have accomplished enormous changes in the Denver metro area. The entire nature of the city has been transformed through such efforts as Blueprint Denver, the rewrite of city's zoning code, the redevelopment of the of Stapleton and Lowry AFB brownfield sites, DIA, FasTracks, Anschutz medical campus, and the redevelopment of Denver's historic train yards and Union Station. In doing so, these leaders have brought the city of Denver to the threshold of becoming a "world-class" city.

As architects, planners and leaders we see the need to repair the east-west Interstate Highway corridor as another such transformative opportunity for our city, as an enhancement to these recent endeavors. We believe the "preferred alternative," to depress the highway in its current location, overlooks the critical issues of social justice that are contained in the recent directive from FHWA, because it fails to consider the opportunities inherent in an option previously discarded: that of re-routing the east-west through traffic up the existing I-270/I-76 corridor, removal of the elevated viaducts, and reconnecting the socially and economically isolated neighborhoods of Elyria, Swansea and Globeville to the traditional city street grid.

The highway has detrimentally impacted the health of those living in its proximity, and disproportionately affected the property values and economic opportunity of the area's predominantly low income and disadvantaged citizens. It has, further, rendered the social cohesion of those neighborhoods split by the highway. Widening the highway stands to exacerbate these issues.

For these reasons, and, in keeping with the City of Denver's aspiration to become a "world-class" city, we request that CDOT implement a Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement process to restudy the entire east-west Interstate Highway corridor (I-70, I-76 and 270). As architects, planners and community leaders we believe the future of the city demands it. After 40 years of living in the demeaning shadow of the highway, the citizens of Denver's Elyria, Swansea and Globeville neighborhoods need to be released from that oppressive environment.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Carl Hole in black ink.

Carl Hole, AIA LEED AP
President AIA Denver

Handwritten signature of Dean Foreman in black ink.

Dean Foreman, AIA LEED AP
Chairman AIA Denver Urban Design Committee

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