

July 2013



The interior of the eastbound I-70 tunnel bore after a recent blast that advanced excavation 13 feet from the east portal heading. To date, crews are 65 percent complete with the tunnel excavation.

Project News

CDOT has received some recent comments with questions regarding the number of blasts completed each week and the reason for lane closures through the tunnel detour and other locations along the project corridor.

Prior to the start of blasting, project representatives said there could be up to six to eight blasts per week, yet the public is noticing fewer traffic stops than this; leading some people to wonder if the project is behind schedule. By using multiple pieces of equipment to excavate the tunnel from the east and west ends simultaneously, blasting crews are often able to conduct two blasts in the time frame of one traffic stop. This helps minimize impacts to I-70 travelers without affecting the production schedule.

Please see the construction update below for more information on the progress of blasting operations.

In terms of single lane closures that are needed at various times of the day throughout the construction corridor, it is important to note that this project not only involves widening the eastbound tunnel bore but also the widening of I-70 on both sides of the tunnel. Construction activities that require lane closures on either side of the tunnel include removing, setting or pouring concrete barriers, forming and pouring retaining walls, grading operations to widen the highway and staging equipment to rebuild the I-70 bridge over Clear Creek. While every effort is made to maintain both lanes of the detour route around the tunnel, for the safety of the traveling public it is sometimes necessary to close a lane to enable trucks to get in and out of the tunnel portal area to remove rocks and debris after blasting.

Construction Update

In terms of the highway widening work, upcoming and ongoing construction activities include:

- Widening of I-70 continues east of Hidden Valley with paving and median guardrail work to continue through July.
- Placement of girders on the new I-70 bridge over Clear Creek is complete and crews will continue building the remainder of the bridge this summer.
- Retaining wall work continues with about 300 feet of walls being built each week.
- Work on the chain station on the west side of the tunnel is progressing with paving operations currently scheduled for early July. Once this area is paved, eastbound I-70 traffic will be shifted to the outside to run through this area, allowing crews to start working on the center median barrier.

Tunnel excavation progress includes:

- An average of six blasts are being done each week.
- Crews are excavating about 50 to 60 feet of the tunnel each week from the east side and 30 to 40 feet each week from the west.
- About 220 feet of material has been excavated from the tunnel which equates to 35 percent of the total excavation.

Design/CSS Process Update

Recent design activities on the project include the following:

- In May, project representatives including Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Army Corps of Engineers conducted a field inspection review (FIR) of the Construction Package 3 elements, signifying 30 percent completion of this design package. This is the final construction package and consists mainly of restoring CR 314 back to the frontage road conditions that existed before the project began, doing the final grading at the portals and trailhead, and enhancing Clear Creek.
- The final office review of the Construction Package 3, 90 percent plans is scheduled for late August.
- Grading details at the tunnel portals are nearing completion and the focus is turning to the project's landscaping.
- Project representatives continue working closely with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife to conduct hydraulic modeling and develop details for the stream enhancement.
- With an approved design aesthetic in hand, construction details of the stone veneer for the CR 314 retaining wall fascia are nearing completion.