



## MEMORANDUM

P.O. Box 4100 ♦ FRISCO, COLORADO 80443

**TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FROM: CHRIS MCGINNIS, TOWN ENGINEER**  
**RE: CDOT EXIT 203 PROJECT UPDATE**  
**DATE: MARCH 12, 2024**

**Summary and Background:** In 2019, CDOT studied I-70 exit 203 and an eastbound auxiliary lane, modeling traffic until 2045. By 2045, the infrastructure would rate poorly (level F). CDOT explored five interchange designs for the exit and Lusher/Dam Road intersection, presenting their findings to Frisco Town Council in May 2020. In 2020, CDOT secured funding for the eastbound I-70 auxiliary lane, with construction being completed in fall 2023. Following the completion of the auxiliary lanes, CDOT secured funding for the entirety of the Exit 203 interchange improvements. Design is scheduled to be complete in fall of 2025 and construction is tentatively scheduled to be constructed as one phase, beginning in spring of 2026 with completion scheduled for fall of 2028 (three construction seasons). Xcel Energy plans to begin utility relocation work for the project in summer 2024.

CDOT last met with Council on May 23, 2023, to provide project updates. Since the last meeting, a public open house and business open house were held, and additional Project Leadership Team (PLT) and Technical Team (TT) meetings have been held to further refine the design.

The current design proposes the following major changes:

- Modify the WB offramp to add an additional lane and traffic signals to increase exiting traffic capacity and reduce the queue length (eliminate queuing onto the interstate)
- Widen the interstate overpass to provide an additional lane and sidewalk
- Modify Lusher/Dillon Dam Road to be a right in/right out intersection with a continuous median on Summit Blvd
- Add an underpass structure and new frontage road between 10 Mile Drive and Lusher Court
- Add two new single-lane roundabouts on Dillon Dam Road and Lusher Court
- Add new sidewalks and pedestrian connections

The project would create the following benefits for the Town of Frisco:

- Interchange improvements would increase the Level of Service and traffic capacity of the interchange. In particular, the WB offramp would be significantly improved by eliminating the queue onto the interstate and improving safety and wait times.
- The new roundabouts and frontage road would improve traffic capacity, safety, and provide alternate routes. The new traffic configuration would decrease wait times by eliminating the need for left turn movements. This configuration would decrease travel times for Summit Stage and other transit services.
- The addition of the underpass, roundabouts, and new sidewalks provide safer pedestrian crossings and routes. The at-grade crossing of Summit Boulevard will be eliminated, and a safer, grade-separated option will be provided. A new sidewalk would be added on the I-70 overpass. This sidewalk will add trail connectivity and provides another section in the eventual goal to provide a continuous sidewalk on the west side of Summit Boulevard.
- The new roundabouts and median provide new opportunities for improved landscaping, signage, and art.

For the next steps, the Town and CDOT are working on an IGA, which will be approved through Council at a subsequent meeting, to define ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the new infrastructure. CDOT is also working on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance and Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition from AC Marriott, Alpine Inn, Summit County, as well as easements from several other property owners.



Conceptual rendering of the Exit 203 Improvements

**Analysis:** CDOT has presented the Exit 203 project through a Public Open House and Business Open House. The Open House was well attended and feedback received from Frisco residents was generally positive.

Traffic modeling shows that with no action, the Exit 203 interchange, as well as the Dillon Dam/Lusher/Summit Blvd intersection, will fall below acceptable service levels and result in additional traffic and safety issues in the coming years. The proposed project will improve vehicle and pedestrian traffic in Frisco.

CDOT and Town Staff are currently working on several design items through PLT meetings. The following items are being detailed and Staff asks for Council input regarding concerns or comments on these items.

### *Wayfinding*

The current wayfinding signs shown in the images below will need to be removed during construction due to the proposed changes. Instead of reinstalling the existing signs, Staff proposes to review wayfinding signage Town-wide, develop a new Town wayfinding plan, and design/fabricate new signs for the project area. The signs would be updated to both reflect revised traffic routes, new destinations as needed, and updated aesthetics.



### *Retaining Walls*

New retaining walls will be constructed adjacent to the frontage road underpass. The details and aesthetics of these walls are currently being determined. Colored and patterned concrete walls, similar to other existing walls along Highway 9 (see examples below), are being proposed.

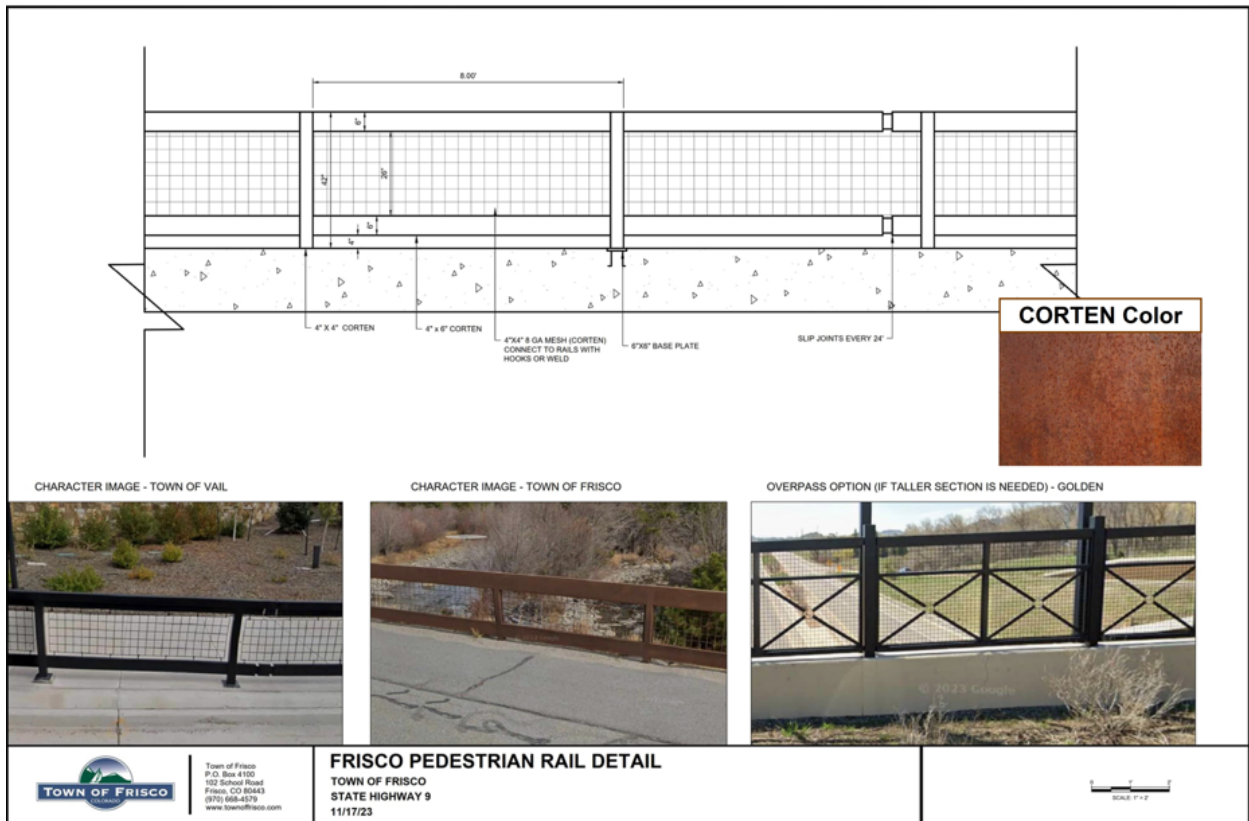


### *Overpass and Railing*

The interstate overpass structure is being expanded, rather than removed and replaced, and therefore, the aesthetics of the structure will remain relatively unchanged. However, new walls and railing will be required for the west side of the interstate overpass and the frontage road underpass. Below are character images for the safety railing at these structures. Corten metal



(rusted aesthetic) with wire mesh is being proposed for consistency with other railings along Summit Blvd.



## Landscaping

CDOT plans to leave landscaped areas in the median and roundabouts unpaved for the Town to hire a contractor and complete landscaping at the end of the project (similar to the GAP project to the south). Staff is currently designating the areas to remain unpaved (see attached landscaping exhibit) and then will complete the final landscaping design for these areas. As shown in the exhibit, an area of the Summit Blvd median located near Lusher/Dillon Dam Road is shown as a landscaping area, as well as the center islands of the roundabouts. Other medians and areas between roadways and detached sidewalks are being proposed as colored, stamped concrete due to maintenance concerns in these areas. In the Summit Blvd median near Lusher/Dillon Dam Road, a raised mulch bed with native trees, lights, and an entrance sign is being proposed. The new roundabouts will be smaller than the existing roundabouts on Summit Blvd, so a simplified version of those landscaping plans could be implemented with native trees, shrubs, and walls. Additionally, the elk sculpture will need to be removed from the existing north roundabout, and the sculpture could be relocated into one of these new roundabouts.

**Financial Impact:** The project will have both Capital and maintenance financial impacts. The Town will need to budget Capital expenses for wayfinding and landscaping in 2028. The budgets have not yet been determined for these costs. As previously mentioned, Town and CDOT are currently negotiating an IGA for ownership and maintenance of the new improvements. Once this IGA is completed, the exact financial impacts of maintenance costs can be determined. The Town will likely own and maintain additional roadway, roundabouts, landscaping, sidewalks, signage, lighting, and other improvements.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:** This project aligns with both the Core Services and Thriving Economy items of the Strategic Plan. The Town will own and maintain expanded infrastructure which will provide improved vehicular, pedestrian, and transit services. The project will also increase capacity of the Exit 203 interchange and adjacent intersections, which will support a thriving economy into the future.

**Staff Recommendation:** CDOT has been partnering with the Town of Frisco and working closely with Staff to solicit input and incorporate changes to meet the needs of Frisco. Staff recommends that Council provide any comments or input on the current design, particularly regarding the wayfinding, retaining walls, railing, and landscaping items. Following the discussion and any comments received, Staff recommends that we continue working with CDOT closely to ensure the project is a success for both the state highway system and the Town of Frisco.

**Reviews and Approvals:** This report has been reviewed and approved by:

Tom Fisher, Town Manager  
Diane McBride, Assistant Town Manager  
Leslie Edwards, Finance Director

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Exit 203 Drawing  
Attachment 2 – Exit 203 Landscaping Plan