

Changes in store for I-70 chokepoints

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DENVER - If you ever wanted proof that congested traffic doesn't play favorites, just listen to Gov. Bill Ritter (D-Colorado) describe his past on Interstate 70.

"I've had a couple experiences coming back to town where you know, we had four-five hours of wait time," he said. "That's part of the routine on I-70."

It's a routine Ritter says needs to be changed, and actually shows some signs of changing. Later this year, the Colorado Department of (CDOT) is expected to finalize its decade-long environmental impact statement on the corridor, and that could lead to evidence-based solutions for the highway's future. What's not changing, according to transportation experts though, is the fact any possible fix costs more money than the state currently has.

"Finally, we have consensus on what should be done," CDOT's Stacey Stegman said. "All of the stakeholders, the towns, everybody now has agreed on the solution. Any of these solutions (though) are well over \$10 billion and the money is not there."

The solutions include focusing on the chokepoints along the corridor first and widening areas like that between Floyd Hill and the Twin Tunnels. The long-term vision includes some sort of rail into the mountains.

"(Let's) look at those chokepoints and fix those chokepoints," said Ritter. "You don't have to do the entire corridor in one fell swoop. Fix those chokepoints and that will make a difference."

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