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Jeffco may add voice to I-70 alternatives

A 31-member coalition seeks solutions to the congestion impacting west-corridor cities.

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Golden - Jefferson County officials are leaning toward joining a coalition that seeks alternative transportation plans for the congested Interstate 70 west corridor.

A decision about membership could be reached by week's end after the county legal staff reviews the coalition's position documents.

"I think we're favorable," Jefferson County Commissioner Kevin McCasky said Tuesday to I-70 Coalition representatives.

The I-70 Coalition was formed in 2004 to provide what coalition officers call a "collective voice" in addressing transportation growth on the corridor from the Front Range to Glenwood Springs.

The group includes 31 counties, cities and towns that are adjacent to or are impacted by the interstate. Some private interests, such as Vail Resorts, also are members.

A key point, said coalition chairman Bill Wallace, a Summit County commissioner, is that solutions "don't just call for fixing the highway and then do the transit. We need to do it concurrently."

The Colorado Department of Transportation is working on long-range traffic alternatives for I-70. Work is expected to be completed in March.

The I-70 Coalition has a memorandum of understanding with CDOT to develop regionally preferred alternatives.

"We find Jefferson County is a very integral part of this process," said coalition director Flo Raitano, since I-70 is a major link to communities such as Evergreen.

Raitano said the coalition also is in "ongoing discussions" with Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper's office about membership, and there has been interest from Grand Junction officials.

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