

Frontline News Article

Jefferson County Public Information—303-271-8512

04/13/12 - Jefferson County Seeks Legislation to Improve Regional Traffic and Air Quality While Providing Economic Enhancement

Jefferson County Commissioners and the Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority have drafted language for a bill they hope will be introduced into the State Legislature this session.

The proposed legislation, nicknamed “BEEP” for Beltway Economic Enhancement Project, would drive the City of Golden to cooperate in the regional beltway project.

Jeffco Commissioner John Odom said the “proposed legislation is consistent with all our past efforts. It would re-enforce everything we’ve done to get the parkway completed to benefit the entire metro area.”

The Parkway Authority is made up of Jefferson County, the City of Arvada and the City and County of Broomfield.

The lack of a completed beltway overburdens the existing state and local road system, especially the heavily used US Highway 6 and Highway 58. In 2015, the Highway 93/58 intersection will be at level of service “F.”

“We all know the financing structure for transportation is broken,” said Donald Rosier, Chair of the Jeffco Board of Commissioners and member of the Parkway Authority Board. “State and federal dollars for transportation are very difficult to get and will become harder to secure over time. The City of Golden has been the road block to completing the Denver metropolitan beltway – a regional traffic congestion reliever and economic driver, which has been on the regional planning maps and even Golden’s maps since 1987.”

Golden’s roadways are already overburdened, yet Golden has had several offers to help solve the traffic issues it faces. For example, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) spent five years and \$15 million in an Environmental Impact Statement process, analyzing 73 possible alignments.

Jeffco Commissioner Faye Griffin said “In 2006 and 2009 Jefferson County reached out to work

with Golden to seek funding specifically to resolve Highway 93 issues in Golden. The city rejected those offers.”

In 2011, CDOT, the Parkway Authority, Jefferson County, Arvada, and Broomfield identified \$58 million to help Golden with existing traffic congestion -- a negotiated process that took five and a half months and cost more than \$100,000.

“We have now resorted to seeking state legislation to bring Golden back to the table,” Rosier explained. “We want a sincere conversation and Golden’s willingness to compromise. Regional transportation issues are not going away and our proposed legislation is a sensible and responsible approach to address these issues.”

In short:

BEEP is not a usurpation of local control, but a reinforcement of local participation in regional and statewide cooperation and decision-making.

BEEP comes only after Golden walked away from collaborative solutions.

BEEP is an economic enhancement bill, which will create construction jobs and attract business investment in Colorado, by improving mobility for all Colorado citizens.

The Beltway Completion Authority created by BEEP would be a tool to assist the state and local governments and authorities to complete the long-awaited beltway.

“We agree the need to solve regional mobility issues should not be at the detriment of one jurisdiction,” Odom stated. “However Golden’s insincere cooperation has wasted money and time that would be better spent on traffic improvements.”