

MINIMAL REPAIRS NEEDED TO BRING I-70 IN COLORADO INTO ITS 50TH YEAR AND BEYOND

A concrete section of I-70 located on Colorado's western slope has served its region for 46 years. Despite supporting population growth that took Rifle from about 2,000 residents to more than 10,000 and doubled the expected traffic volume, the pavement has required rehabilitation only twice and is expected to last for many years to come.

Constructed in 1976, the concrete section of I-70 outside of Rifle, Colorado, is 10.5 miles of 8-inch concrete pavement on top of cement-treated base. The road was originally constructed to continue the development of the interstate highway system through Garfield County. It has served western Colorado with minimal maintenance for 46 years and is intended to stay in service for years to come. At the time of its construction, Rifle had just over 2,000 residents; during the decades following the construction of the concrete section of the highway, the municipality's population grew rapidly and now boasts over 10,000 residents. Throughout the five-fold increase in population and doubling of expected traffic volume, the concrete section of highway has required only minor rehabilitation on two occasions. The pavement met its 20-year design life in 1996 with no rehabilitation work needed. In 2004/2005 – nearly 30 years after construction – the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) completed a panel replacement and diamond grind project to improve smoothness. In 2014 – 38 years after construction – CDOT did another panel replacement project. As of 2022 – 46 years after construction – CDOT has spent a mere \$7.9 million on rehabilitating this long-life pavement. The state's pavement condition survey identified that this section of I-70 would benefit from additional panel replacements and diamond grinding, so CDOT has a minor rehabilitation

project scheduled for 2023. CDOT plans to continue to maintain this pavement, ensuring it will effectively perform for well over five decades.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

In a ranching community originally populated after the arrival of the railroad, Rifle depends on its connection to the rest of the state. The concrete section of I-70 outside of Rifle served the area throughout its period of greatest population growth and is older than the majority of the current residents. Connecting the rural region between Grand Junction and Denver, the long life of the concrete pavement has supported Rifle and the surrounding area for 46 years and will continue to do so for years to come.

KEY BENEFITS

The long life of this pavement:

- Saved taxpayer dollars by serving its purpose with minimal repairs
- Conserved resources by not needing reconstruction or replacement
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the fuel efficiency of the large number of trucks traveling over it
- Freed up state resources to pursue infrastructure projects in other parts of the region