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Subtopic E3: Safety/Accidents

Twenty-seven public and agency comments were received for the E3: Safety/Accidents subtopic. From those 27 comments, 10 common concern statements were created. Themes presented in Topic E3: Safety/Accidents subtopic include:

- There are concerns about the burden that would be placed on already stressed emergency resources and infrastructure.
- Emergency service costs should be analyzed and factored into overall alternative cost estimates.
- Safety and the reduction of accident, injury, and fatality rates should be priorities in selecting alternatives.
- There are concerns about geologic hazards, the steep and narrow hazardous materials route across Loveland Pass, and weather factors.
- The highway is dangerous during adverse winter weather, and this problem is compounded by drivers with poor winter driving skills. Because of this, the Transit alternatives are viewed as being faster and safer during adverse winter road conditions.
- Certain specific locations require safety improvements, including Floyd Hill, Georgetown-Silver Plume Hill, and the westbound merge from US 6 to I-70/.
- There were questions regarding the methods that were used to incorporate safety improvements into the alternatives.
- Safety problem areas should be prioritized during construction.

CCS No.	Transportation Common Concern Statements (CCSs)
Subtopic E3: Safety/Accidents	
E3-a	Costs of Emergency Services An analysis of emergency services costs should be performed and factored into overall alternative cost estimates for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing highway (and increasing traffic incidents) already overburdens local emergency resources and infrastructure in areas such as Silver Plume.• Highway alternatives would affect Corridor police resources in locations such as Vail because eight lanes would greatly increase speeding problems and patrol needs, especially during winter.
E3-b	Effects of Traffic Incidents There is no need to add more lanes to improve safety because accidents are the cause of congestion, not traffic. Increasing traffic incidents may have a greater overall impact on congestion than traffic volumes because they can tie up I-70 traffic for hours and are unpredictable. Decreasing traffic incidents may reduce congestion and delays more than expansion of the highway. Safety issues can be addressed selectively, without adding more lanes.

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E3-c	<p>Safety Issues Not Considered in Grouping</p> <p>Safety and reduction of accident, injury, and fatality rates must be a priority for alternative selection. However, the following observations were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the alternatives in the preferred group would have the highest accident and mortality potential. • Important safety issues are deferred until Tier 2. • The Draft PEIS lacks integration of safety performance factors in the grouping process and in the identification of the preferred group of alternatives. • Although the safety analysis includes a discussion of many factors, fatality rates are the only factor used to rank alternatives and the preferred group of alternatives would have the highest fatality rates. • More highway lanes would increase safety problems and mean more danger, more accidents, and more traffic jams.
E3-d	<p>Safety Analysis Concerns</p> <p>The following concerns were noted about the safety analysis presented in the Draft PEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The justification of excluding 2001 bus accident statistics from the safety analysis is invalid and, therefore, invalidates any conclusions made based on the safety analysis. • The Draft PEIS should better quantify the degree of improved safety by alternative and cite studies used in the safety analysis. • The safety analysis should be revised to include an evaluation of the effects of lost property damage and personal injury. • The Draft PEIS does not include a true actuarial analysis of the costs of safety problems (lives lost, injuries sustained, property lost) by alternative and location (specific critical choke points such as Kermitt's should be considered). • The safety assumptions are misleading because it was assumed that accident rates would remain the same in the future. • Numerous hazardous materials spills over the years have resulted in direct and indirect impacts but are not mentioned as environmental or safety concerns. • There is no way to verify the validity of the specific Accident Reduction Factors used in the Draft PEIS.
E3-e	<p>Geologic Hazards</p> <p>The following safety issues are associated with geologic hazards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pavement would seem to be an additional target zone for geologic hazards. • Transit alternatives would be safer than Highway alternatives because Highway alternatives could cause more rockslides and avalanches. • The PEIS should identify the alternative that best addresses rockfall safety issues on Georgetown-Silver Plume Hill.

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E3-f	<p>Hazardous Materials Transport</p> <p>The following observations were made about the presentation of hazardous materials transport in the Draft PEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft PEIS does not discuss the numerous significant hazardous materials spills that occur on both sides of Loveland Pass as environmental, public safety, or health concerns. • The Draft PEIS should have included Loveland Pass in the safety analysis because even though Loveland Pass is not technically a part of I-70, it is a significant part of the I-70 transportation network. • The Draft PEIS does not address the steep and narrow hazardous materials truck route across Loveland Pass on US 6. Taking fuel tanker truck traffic off this route should be considered. For example, the EJMT could be used to transport hazardous materials during off-peak hours instead of the existing US 6/Loveland Pass route. The Loveland Pass route should be a scenic byway, not a hazardous materials byway.
E3-g	<p>Safety Issues in Specific Corridor Locations</p> <p>Safety issues were noted for the following Corridor locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety issues in the area of Floyd Hill were overlooked and consideration should be given to curve safety modification and a runaway truck ramp due to the steep grade. • Safety design should address areas with many fatal accidents such as the Georgetown-Silver Plume Hill and the approaches to EJMT. • The westbound merge from US 6 to I-70 is a major safety problem and improved acceleration/deceleration lanes should be considered. • Relocation of ramps to Silver Plume would result in the increased probability of I-70 becoming blocked (because the length of section without an alternate route increases) and in a lengthened emergency response time. Longer response times mean more noise (sirens run longer) and increase the risk of children being run over.
E3-h	<p>Adverse Weather Conditions</p> <p>The highway is dangerous during adverse winter weather, and this situation is compounded by drivers with poor winter driving skills and vehicles that cannot handle road conditions. Transit alternatives would be safer and faster during adverse winter road conditions.</p>
E3-i	<p>Prioritization of Safety Problem Areas</p> <p>Safety problem areas should be prioritized (built first) during project construction.</p>
E3-j	<p>Concerns about Methods Used to Incorporate Safety Improvements</p> <p>The methods used to incorporate safety improvements into the alternatives are invalid, unsubstantiated, and biased toward the Highway alternatives. All of the safety measures identified for the Highway alternatives and all of the safety improvements proposed for Minimal Action should be included in the Transit alternatives.</p>