

# **I-70 Mountain Corridor Proposal Genesee – El Rancho Section**

***A Proposal to Build a Bicycle Link between  
Junctions 251 and 254 of Interstate 70, west of Denver***

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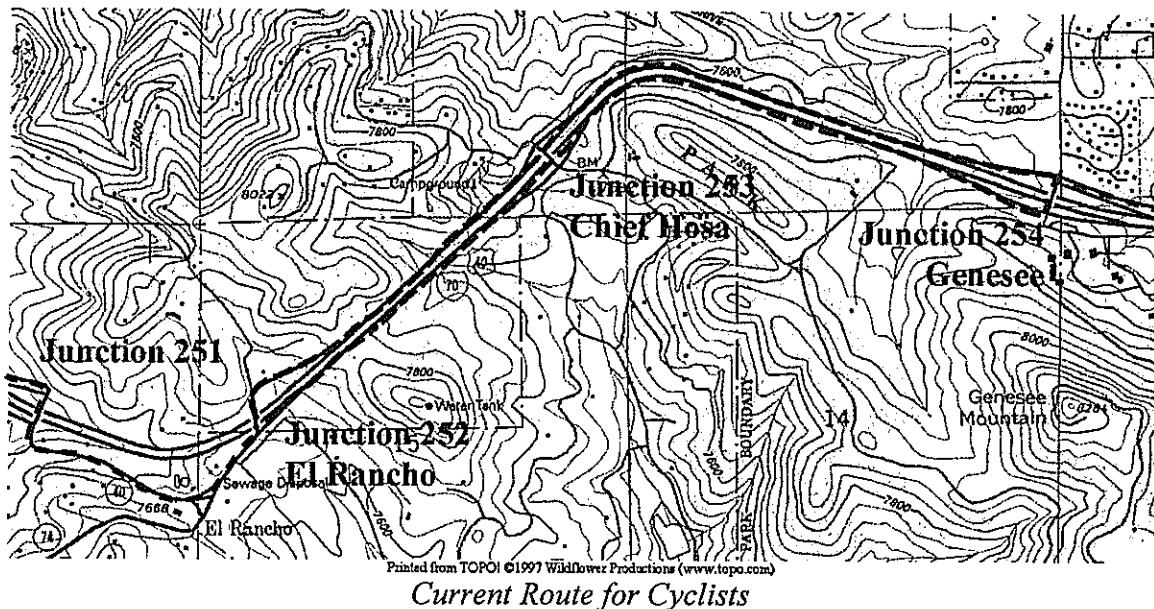
## **Executive Summary**

The Interstate 70 corridor, west of Denver, is the principal road route from Denver into the Colorado Rockies and for further destinations in Utah, Nevada and California. The corridor carries traffic of all types - long distance commerce, vacationers, commuters, local residents – and many cyclists. Unfortunately, cyclists are forced to ride on the freeway itself for some sections, due to the absence of any alternative

To fill what is arguably the most critical gap, this report proposes that a bicycle link be built between junction 251/252 (El Rancho), junction 253 (Chief Hosa) and junction 254 (Genesee). This would allow cyclists to ride the 60kms from Golden to Bakerville on roads or trails parallel to Interstate 70 and never have to enter the freeway.

Potential routes are analyzed from engineering and cost perspectives. Special emphasis is given to using existing infrastructure, wherever possible, in order to minimize costs.

## Existing Conditions



There are very few routes for cyclists heading west from Denver into the high mountains of the Rockies. There are even less safe routes. The I-70 corridor is attractive to cyclists as it is a direct route west from Denver to many principal destinations in the mountains. It is used both by local riders and visiting cyclists. It affords a 70km. route, parallel to the freeway, from the Denver metro area to the base of Loveland Pass. However, to complete the journey, cyclists must ride (legally) on the freeway shoulder at two places

- Junction 216 (Loveland Pass) to junction 221 (Bakerville)
- Junction 252 (El Rancho) to junction 254 (Genesee)

There is no alternative route to riding on the shoulder of the six lanes Interstate between junctions 252 and 254. In both directions, cyclists must cross traffic entering and exiting at junction 253 (Chief Hosa).

Riding in the westbound direction is particularly dangerous as freeway traffic is moving downhill from junction 254 (Genesee) into a sharp left hand bend. At this point, the freeway is built on an embankment with the 2.5m wide shoulder bounded by a guard-rail and a steep drop off. The cyclist has no escape route if a vehicle leaves the freeway lanes for any reason.

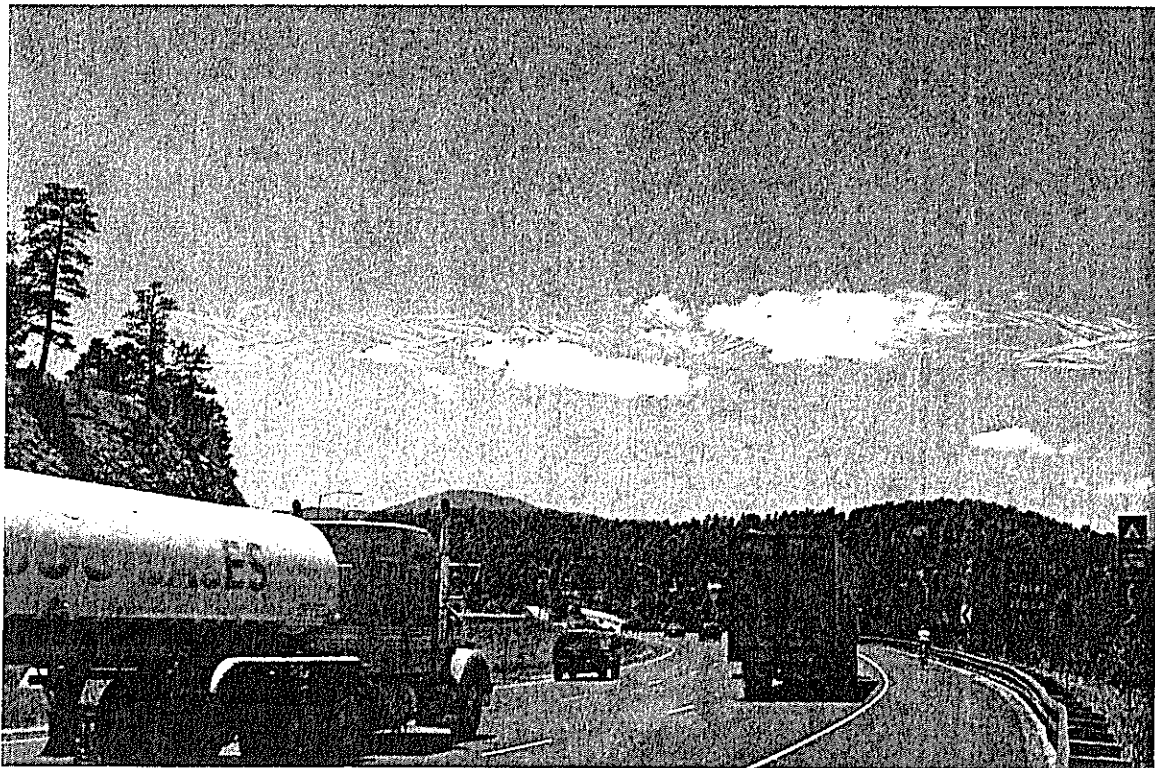
Joining the freeway at junction 252 (El Rancho) to ride eastbound, the cyclist is forced to travel in the vehicle acceleration lane on an uphill gradient where the speed difference between bicyclists and vehicles is at its maximum.

Riding on the freeway, the cyclist is exposed to the noise, pollution, spray and wind of large commercial vehicles traveling in the nearside lane at a maximum distance of two meters away.

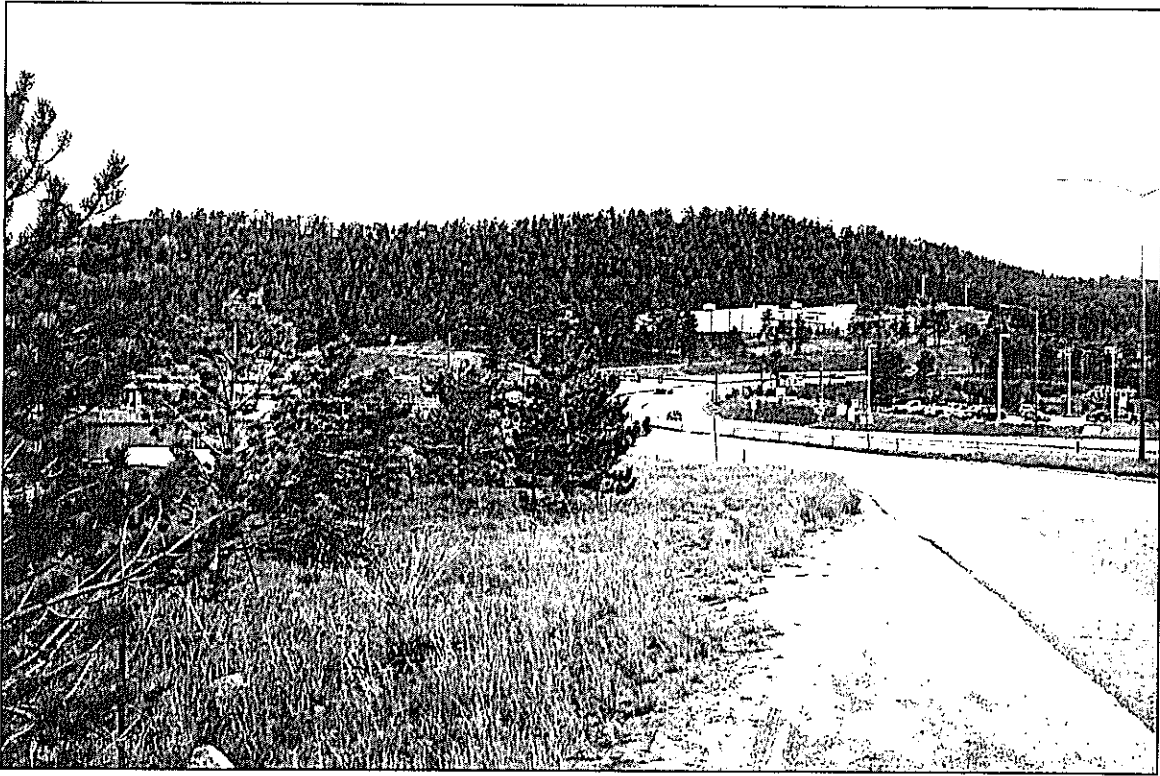
If a large vehicle is stopped on the shoulder, the cyclist is forced to move into the vehicle lane at very great risk to himself.



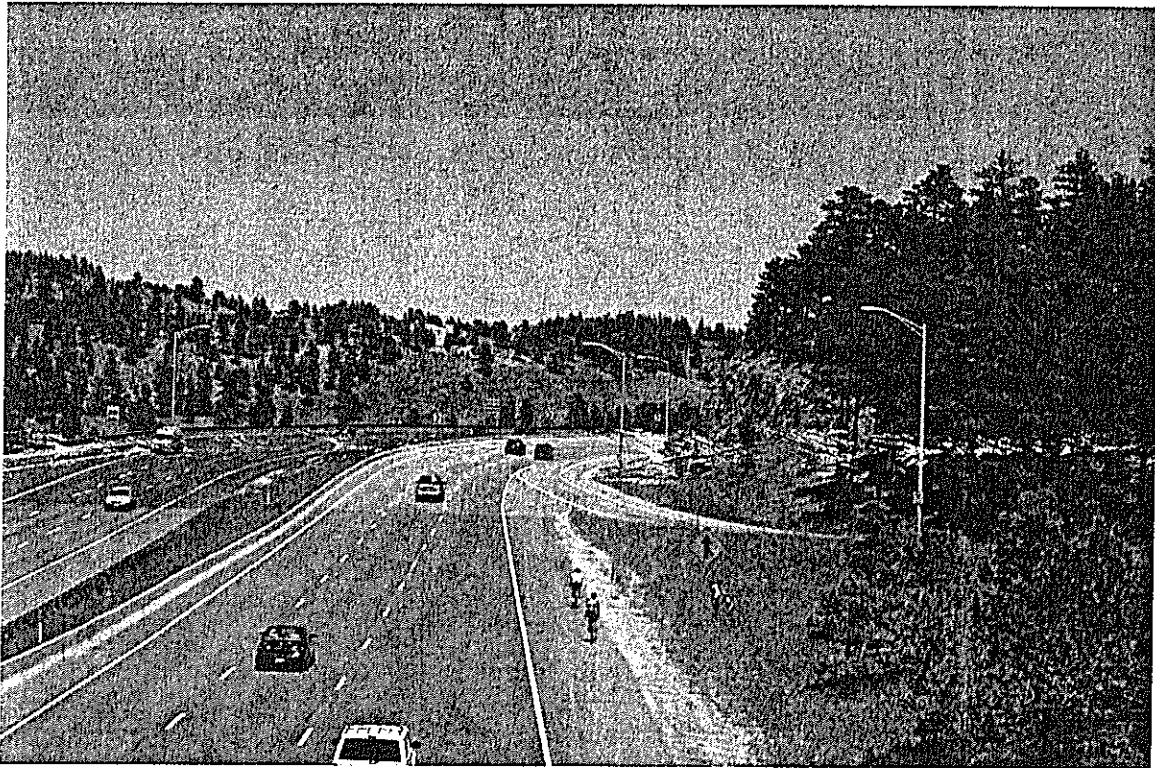
*Junction 254 Westbound On Ramp*



*Cyclist on WB I-70 between Junctions 254 and 253*

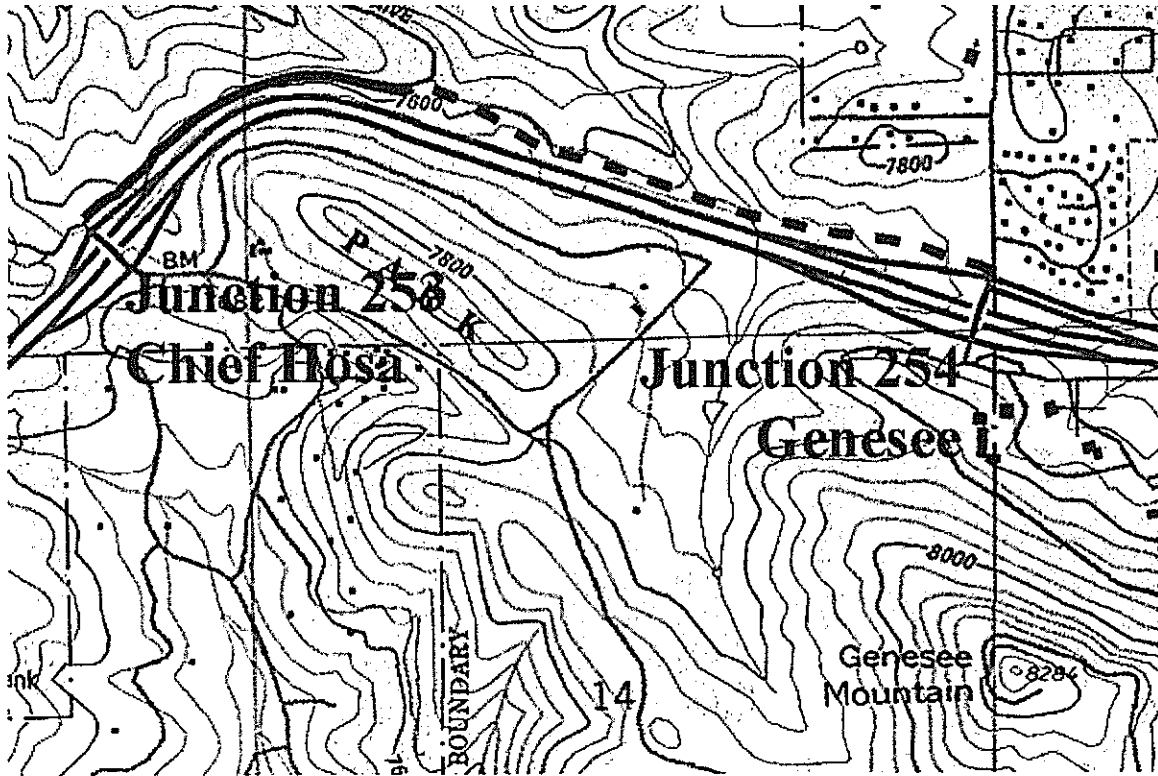


*Junction 251 (El Rancho) Eastbound on ramp with no shoulder*



*Cyclists on EB I-70 at Junction 253 (Chief Hosa)*

## Alternative Route One – North of Freeway



Heading west from the intersection of US-40 and Mt. Vernon Road, at I-70 junction 254 a new 1.2km. trail would be constructed, initially adjacent to the WB freeway on ramp but descending below the freeway to link into the Denver Park access road. A 1km. stretch of this hard packed dirt road would then be used to reach junction 253. While the dirt road is sufficiently wide (~10m.) and is lightly traveled, the surface suffers from wash-boarding in some sections, due to the high speed of vehicles using it.

This section of new trail is either within the CDOT right of way or within an unused portion of the Denver Mountain Parks land.