



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMO

DEPARTMENT	PRESENTED BY	DATE
Public Works	David Lady - Public Works Director	November 4, 2024

### ITEM

CDOT State Highway 291 Devolution within City of Salida

### BACKGROUND

State Highway 291 (SH-291) is a key transportation corridor through Salida entering the City near the Arkansas River Bridge adjacent to Heart of the Rockies Medical Center (HRRMC) and ending at highway US-50. SH-291 is currently under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Therefore, regulatory items such as vehicular types and use, access control, special use permits, maintenance of signals and related infrastructure, and other administrative components are under their control. CDOT has statewide policies that govern these functions and there is limited ability to modify them on a case-by-case basis.

As communities expand and have greater development or community related needs adjacent to a State Highway, there are options for the State and local jurisdiction to consider a devolution process of the roadway to take over ownership and responsibilities. Several years ago this was investigated and at the time, it did not move forward due to the scope of it being larger and including Arkansas River bridges and the section west of the Salida city limits. Recent discussions with CDOT staff have been productive in identifying a refined boundary to just include portions within the city limits, specifically from US-50 to the HRRMC entrance. This revised scope significantly reduces the financial liabilities for the City regarding the ownership and maintenance responsibilities related to infrastructure.

In consideration of this process, it should be noted that the current timing of these discussions is ideal as the City has been awarded multi-million dollar grants through the local agency programs to reconstruct major portions of SH-291. The Oak Street (SH-291) project is currently underway with Phase 1 from Park Avenue to US-50 being completed in 2024. Phase 2 of Oak Street (SH-291) project will reconstruct Park Avenue to Walnut Street in 2025. West of this section is 1<sup>st</sup> Street (SH-291) through downtown. In 2018, CDOT reconstructed several blocks of this section including the traffic signal at F Street. The signal alone was over a million dollars and is expected to have an approximate life of 50 years. CDOT has indicated that the devolution process would include an IGA to allow CDOT to continue to maintain and repair this signal for the City, if desired. Staff would recommend this maintenance program as there are currently no traffic signals, nor the necessary technicians, under the City's jurisdiction. Leaving downtown and continuing west on SH-291 approaches the west section of the highway within city limits that borders Marvin Park and exits the City near HRRMC. The City has been awarded several million dollars through local agency grants to reconstruct this portion of highway. Design for this section is underway, which like Oak Street, will have bike lanes, curb and gutter, sidewalks, and storm sewer improvements, along with a roundabout planned at Mesa Lane.

Redevelopment along this corridor and expanded community uses have changed in recent years. The pedestrian mall seasonal closures of F Street, closures for parades, discussion of having an entertainment district, land use code proposed density changes along the corridor, and the ongoing heavy truck traffic traversing this section are all use components that currently impact how the City and others plan for, and are impacted, under the current policies set forth. Consideration of the devolution process and ultimately the community's desire to have flexibility to make changes adjacent to and within this corridor would facilitate meeting the needs of the community within the City's control.



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### Next Steps

CDOT planning staff have predefined processes for reviewing cost components related to the devolution process. An accounting spreadsheet is used to look at maintenance costs over the past five years and average that out over the next 20 years. This value is then provided to the local jurisdiction to help cover anticipated maintenance costs for a period of time. This amount was determined to be approximately \$250,000 for the section of SH-291 under discussion. CDOT has indicated that the next steps, following the City's direction, would be to draft an IGA for the City and State to execute. This would formalize the process and transfer of the section of roadway. CDOT has indicated that they would be in support of pursuing the IGA and devolution process if it is of interest to the City. CDOT has indicated that they would need to provide additional review of existing right-of-way and property boundary information to determine if survey or title work are needed prior to official transfer of ownership.

### **REQUESTED DIRECTION FROM COUNCIL**

Staff is requesting feedback from Council regarding the desire to move forward with the devolution process and directing staff to work with CDOT to prepare an IGA to move the process forward. The IGA would require the Council's approval at a later date.