

**This Election, don't forget THE BIG LIE:
Platte to Park Hill and I-70**

Many residents saw the destruction of historic City Park Golf Course (**CPGC**) last summer where hundreds of old trees were cut down, giant mounds of dirt rose up everywhere like ugly waves, and brown dust covered surrounding homes. Most knew it was due to the stormwater detention being dug into the west side as part of the costly Platte to Park Hill (**P2PH**) project, even as the City called it the "City Park Golf Course Redesign" (as if playability was the main issue). But always the larger deception was to claim P2PH would "...mitigate flooding in NE Denver." City documents show P2PH's main function was to protect the lowering of I-70, as well as large nearby developments, while community concerns upstream were secondary. But unfailingly, the City continued calling P2PH's relationship to I-70 as "Separate", "Independent", "Complementary", "Secondary", "Redundant", and "Aligned". All throwaway terms for political cover. We simply can't expect the City to acknowledge the actual connection between this giant drain and dropping a highway into some of the poorest sections of the City. But we can.

A Brief History

Lowering I-70 to replace the viaduct was actually rejected by the Colorado Dept of Transportation (**CDOT**) back in 2008. But in 2011, Gov. Hickenlooper and Mayor Hancock began exploring and then pushing for **Winter Olympics** in Denver. When infrastructure became a major concern, Hickenlooper revived the lowered I-70 plan. In 2013, Hancock then formed the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (**NDCC- *important!***) to align six major developments highly prized by the City including the same lowered I-70 project (**PCL**), National Western Center (**NWC**), River North (**RiNo**), and **RTD** Commuter Rail Lines and Stations. All sat near I-70 & Brighton Blvd, or what the Mayor called the "**gateway to downtown**", and all lay along his "**Corridor of Opportunity**" from downtown to DIA. These two events- Winter Olympics' hopes and the NDCC, really set the stage for needing large-scale flood protection right in this area. Soon, three City documents arrived detailing how they would fulfill this need by building a massive drainage project to protect everything north of 39th Ave, from Colorado to Brighton Blvd, with 100-year flood protection, courtesy of the taxpayer.

The Three Documents

The first City document was the wordy **Montclair Creek Drainage Feasibility Evaluation** (Jun 2014), which the City refused to release until a lawsuit made them. It said CDOT's drainage pipe plan for I-70 was inferior and wanted CDOT to use the City's much larger **Open Channel** design instead, knowing it would also protect much of the NDCC (and including all of the NWC). The City wanted to **leverage funding** from CDOT to help pay for this larger project, which meant they had to meet CDOT's schedule and needs and that drove the early design, not neighborhood concerns. This smashed all notions that the City's plans were "Separate" and "Independent" from CDOT's, something both still claim to this day.

The second document was the **MATT LOR** (Letter of Recommendation- Jan 2015) which came from the comic book-sounding Multi-Agency Technical Team formed by the City, CDOT, RTD, & Urban Drainage. Following a lengthy evaluation of flowrates, MATT proposed a **Combined Drainage System** for I-70, expanding on the Feasibility Evaluation above. Using the City's 39th Ave Open Channel and giant Outfall at Globeville, as well as CDOT's I-70 pipes, it added pipes/ponds next door in Park Hill Basin creating the "Two Basins" concept of protection. It, too, gave the NDCC (including RTD's North Metro and the NWC) 100-year flood protection and even cost savings.

The third and most important document was the **IGA** (Intergovernmental Agreement- Jul 2015) between the City and CDOT. This document cemented their relationship and I-70's reliance on P2PH. It had all the parts of the MATT LOR above but got renamed the Two Basins Drainage Project (**TBDP**), which in short order became **P2PH**. *Major Elements include:* TBDP provides the *MAIN* 100-year storm protection for I-70; CDOT helps fund TBDP and the City (taxpayers) help fund I-70 including 30 years of payments to CDOT's developer; TBDP can't be modified to anything less than 100-year protection; the City (taxpayers) pay penalties if TBDP fails to meet CDOT's schedule; and the City and CDOT shall have continuous and on-going coordination. So, "Secondary" and "Redundant" weren't the buzzwords here but in fact TBDP/P2PH became *ESSENTIAL* to I-70. **CPGC** Detention was added by City Council as the final component of P2PH, in Apr 2016.

Why does any of this matter? The City (Mayor) and most of the City Council distorted the main purposes of P2PH from the beginning. City documents help clarify this. So when our beautiful open spaces are being clear-cut and the public trust violated to serve special interests, should we hold them accountable? If not, when should we? Learn more about the P2PH/I-70 connections, an expanded timeline of how we got here, and Source Documents used, at TheBigLie.info. And vote in June in the City runoff elections!