

## Transit and Policy Options Working Group Transit and Investment Program *DRAFT* Proposals November 12, 2008

### Introduction

The following pages describe proposals for the investment categories that were initially described in the Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel’s *Report to Colorado*. The proposals are programmatic in that specific projects are not proposed, instead the proposals include a:

1. Definition of the program – a general description of the purpose and goals of the program.
2. Criteria for project selection – an outline of the qualifications required for projects to successfully contribute to the goals of the program
3. Administrative Model – a proposed administrative structure for the program

The recommendations of the working group were presented to the full panel for their consideration. The final adoption of any proposal will be the result of actions taken by the legislature, governor and stakeholders. The proposals outlined here are intended to inform the development of legislation by providing a framework that highlights the priorities of the Panel’s Working Group on Transit and Policy Options.

The programs included in the Panel’s report are as follows:

### What \$1.5 Billion Buys

Investment Category	Funding Level	Service Level Outcome
Surface Treatment	\$222 million	Raise from C to B
Bridges \$156 million	\$156 million	Maintain at B
Maintenance Levels of Service	\$82 million	Raise from C to B
Shoulders	\$78 million	Raise from F to D
Mobility	\$562 million total includes:	
• Strategic Projects	\$56 million	Accelerate funding obligation by about five years
• Multi-Modal Mobility	\$337 million	Limit decline of Mobility to D+ rather than to F
• Strategic Transit	\$169 million	Raise from D to C
Transit- Urban	\$36 million	Raise from C to B
Transit - Rural	\$36 million	Raise from C to B
Environmental	\$25 million	Establish at B
Bicycle & Pedestrian	\$10 million	Establish at B
Local Transportation	\$293 million	Varies by local jurisdiction

The descriptions that follow are in the same order as the list from the Panel’s report.

## I. Surface Treatment

The working group confirms that these funds should be administered using CDOT existing management systems. Reconstruction projects are eligible for funding under this program.

## II. Bridges

The working group confirms that these funds should be administered using CDOT existing management systems.

## III. Maintenance Levels of Services

The working group confirms that these funds should be administered using CDOT existing management systems.

## IV. Shoulders

### *Definition of the program*

Shoulders are a key element of any sound roadway. Much of the state highway system was constructed 70 to 100 year ago, before the construction of shoulders was standard practice. There are more than 2,500 centerline miles of state highway with less than four foot shoulders. Shoulders enhance safety and can provide a comparatively safe zone for bicyclists and pedestrians. Shoulders are in high demand by users of two-lane state highways that are experiencing a substantial increase in truck traffic for safety reasons. The intent of this program is to fund the development of additional shoulders in rural areas.

### *Criteria*

Two sets of criteria are provided. The first set is for the regional allocation of funds. The second set provides a methodology for identifying potential project locations.

### *Regional Allocation*

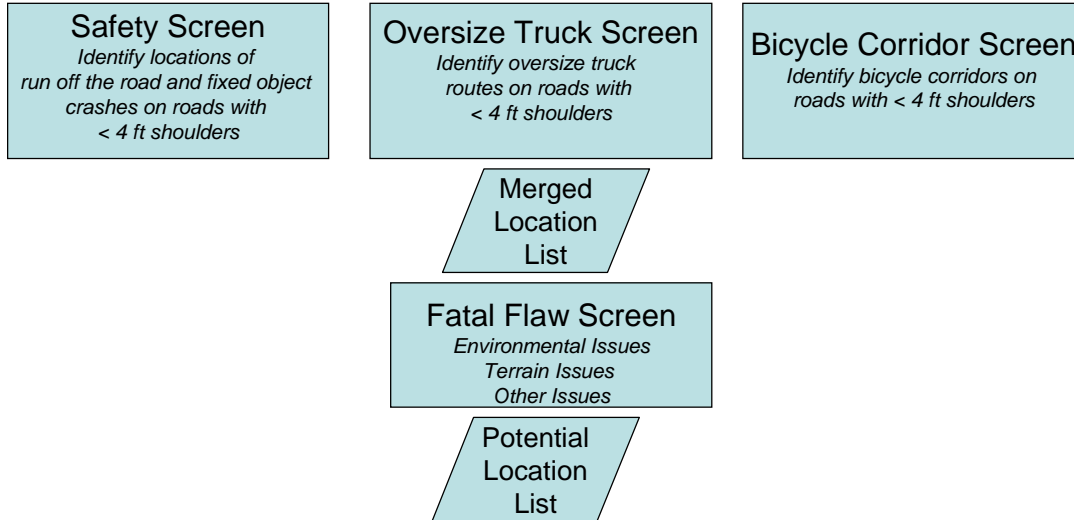
The regional allocation will be based on a region's percent of statewide centerline miles with less than four foot shoulders (see Figure-1).

### **Figure 1 – Regional Allocation of Shoulder Funds Formula**

$$\frac{\text{Region X Centerline Miles with <4 shoulders}}{\text{Statewide Centerline Miles With <4 Shoulders}} = \text{Region X allocation of shoulder funds}$$

*Potential Project List*

The proposed criteria for project list creation are based on the primary reasons to provide shoulders. It would be anticipated that at least 75 percent of the shoulder projects build by regions would match projects identified by this process. This standard is similar to CDOT’s resurfacing program.



*Administrative Model*

The funds would be distributed to and administered by CDOT engineering regions.

**V. Mobility**

▪ **Strategic Projects**

The Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel recognized the need to allocate additional funds to the 28 Strategic Projects in order to accelerate their completion.

▪ **Multimodal Mobility Corridors**

*Definition of the program*

The development of future state transportation projects is guided by the corridor visions written into the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan. Throughout Colorado there are corridors that face serious mobility challenges. In addition to highway improvements, transportation alternatives under consideration in some corridors include transit and toll roads. When a study identifies a transit opportunity to improve mobility, CDOT has limited ability to fund these opportunities as CDOT’s resources are largely constitutionally restricted to spending on highways. The panel has strongly suggested a funding source that can be invested in any mode of transportation to meet future demands. Corridors need not meet all of the criteria to be considered a multimodal corridor.

### *Criteria*

- **Critical for regional or statewide economies.** To qualify as strategic the corridor itself and the economic benefits of the improvements should be across multiple regions and in some cases, statewide.

The following criteria are a means of comparing the benefits among projects.

- **Congestion alternative/mitigation** – includes alternate modes for addressing congested corridors
- **Increases workforce mobility** - improvements may be directed to increasing mobility to the workforce thus increasing access to jobs
- **Increases freight mobility** - addresses improvements to truck or rail freight corridors
- **Coordinates with land-use planning to maximize the effectiveness of transportation investment.** Local land use planning has been developed to promote travel choices and a reduction in the regional growth rate of VMT.
- **Consistent with regional strategies addressing greenhouse gas emissions.** For corridors in non-attainment areas, they should also contribute to meeting AQ conformity requirements.
- **Provides public accountability for the investment.** The public needs to understand how investments are being made, what results are achieved and believe those investments are sound.

### *Administrative Model*

These funds would be administered by CDOT. Corridors and strategies would be identified and prioritized through the existing planning process. The implementation of specific transit projects may require a yet to be determined change in CDOT structure. See the strategic transit proposal section.

## ▪ **Strategic Transit Proposal**

### *Definition of the program*

A state-supported strategic transit program will make investments in inter-regional transit service that expands accessibility to economic centers and multimodal hubs, including airports. Inter-regional service should connect with local transit networks to provide comprehensive accessibility. Inter-regional transit may be provided by bus or rail service, depending on the operational requirements and funding available. Nothing in this program will usurp current authorities or revenue sources for existing transit agencies.

### *Criteria*

- **Regionally significant** – To qualify the economic impact should be regionally significant
- **Increases the population that has realistic choices for inter-regional travel, considering travel-times, frequency and affordability.** In many parts of the state this suggests connecting more destinations with new service. In parts of the state with existing transit service this success could be achieved by expanding hours of service or frequency of service.

- **Addresses systems that are beyond the ability of any one jurisdiction to operate by either expanding or preventing a substantial reduction in service.** . A fundamental challenge of inter-regional transit is the coordination between local jurisdictions; this program should address these challenges.
- **Coordinates with land-use planning.** To be successful, strategic investments require that local land-use be supportive of transit.
- **Provides public accountability for the investment.** The public needs understand how inter-regional transit investments are being made, what results are achieved and believe those investments are sound.

### *Administrative Model*

These funds would be administered by CDOT with approval by the Transportation Commission. Projects will be identified and prioritized through the existing planning process. A Transit Advisory Committee would review, comment and make recommendations to STAC and the Commission on proposed projects. CDOT is developing concepts for a Division of Transit to be established within the DOT which is anticipated to be discussed in the 2009 legislative session.

## **VI & VII. Urban and Rural Transit Systems Proposal – Formula + Grant**

### *Definition of the program*

Local public transit in rural and urban areas is a critical element of a statewide transportation system. Local public transit gives those who can not or choose not to drive a viable means of transportation. Historically, local public transit has been funded primarily with local funds. Beginning in 2006, state funds became available to support capital improvements, through the *Senate Bill 1* (SB1), which allocates at least 10 percent of available funds for transit. The SB1 funding is irregular and limited to capital improvements.

County and city governments are supported by the State for investment in their local road systems by formula funds from the state's Highway User Trust Fund. City and counties have discretion over the expenditure of funds, as long as expenditures are for the development, maintenance or repair of roadways. Local governments are free to invest in the capital or maintenance of their roadway systems. The disbursements are based on a set of criteria that recognize the diversity of roadway conditions across the state.<sup>1</sup> The formula funding plays an important role in supporting the maintenance and development of local road networks. A 2003 CDOT study found that formula funds typically account for a quarter of local roadway investments.

The panel proposes providing equal urban and rural allocations for public transit. The Transit and Investment Programs working group believes an opportunity exists to build on the success of local road formula funding by instituting a program of local public transit formula funding. The formula would be based on criteria described below.

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<sup>1</sup> Criteria include jurisdictional roadway mileage, square feet of bridge deck, rural vehicle registrations, lane miles adjusted for terrain and surface type.

Formula funds would be dispersed to existing public transit agencies. Prior to implementation, analysis is required to establish the appropriate weighting of criteria. Further, a role for local governments to provide input on the use of funds by public transit agencies needs to be affirmed by both transit agencies and local governments.

The working group proposes setting aside a percentage of funds to support new public transit operations where demand warrants. Criteria to fund start-up operation grants are also discussed below. The apportionment of funds between formula and grant will be dependent on the amount of funds available.

### ***Criteria***

Criteria for transit formula funding recognize the diversity of transit operations across the state, reward efficiency and acknowledge needs. The criteria for service start-up grants create incentives for the development of systems that serve high needs and/or provide high ridership. Eligible recipients are open door public transportation providers.

*Formula Criteria* A specific formula would be developed to distribute the urban and rural allocations to existing public transit operators based on the following criteria.

#### Quality of Service

- **Percent of category ridership (Boardings)** – trips are measured as passenger boardings and reported to CDOT on an annual basis. The measure reflects, in part, the ability to provide a service quality that attracts riders.
- **Percent of category service miles** – total of all miles that service is being provided and reported to CDOT on annual basis. This measure reflects, in part, the willingness of a provider to offer service that meets community needs, beyond just the shortest trips.
- **Percent of category service hours** – total of all hours that service is being provided and reported to CDOT on annual basis. This measure reflects, in part, the willingness of a provider to offer service that meets community needs, beyond just the highest demand hours.
- **Percent of service that specifically serves elderly and disabled** – estimated elderly and disabled ridership for paratransit, demand responsive service and regular service as percent of total ridership.

#### Efficiency of Service

- **Cost per Rider** – this measure is reported annually to CDOT and generally favors high ridership low mileage operators.
- **Cost per Mile** – this measure is reported annually to CDOT and generally favors to high mileage operators.

#### *Service Start-Up Grant Criteria*

- **Local Commitment** – The percent of start up cost provided by local agency or government.
- **Percent of households without vehicles** – Households without vehicles are likely transit dependent. Data provided by the decennial census.

- **Percent of population under 18 and over 75** – These populations are among the most likely to require public transportation to meet their mobility needs. Data provided by the state demographer.

### *Administrative Model*

These funds would be administered by CDOT. Implementation will require a yet to be determined change in CDOT structure. See the strategic transit proposal for options.

## **VII. Environmental**

### *Definition of the program*

The management of environmental impacts is a critical component of any transportation program. Wherever possible, CDOT's own Environmental Stewardship commitment, as well as federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and permitting requirements assure that before a transportation project creates an environmental impact, the impact must first be evaluated to determine if it can be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. In addition, CDOT seeks to address, when feasible, transportation-related environmental impacts from previous projects. As noted in the Panel's January 2008 report: "It is essential that the maintenance and possible expansion of the state's transportation system not materially degrade the contribution our remarkable environment makes to the quality of our lives."

### *Criteria*

- **Regionally significant** – to qualify, the environmental strategy should be regionally significant, whether in whole or in part;
- **Habitat preservation, wildlife protection (crossing, etc.), and water quality improvement** – to qualify, the environmental strategy should address resources such as these, which have been identified by CDOT, environmental advocates, and the resource agencies as having the greatest opportunity for impact with this program. Other resource areas may be evaluated as strong opportunities arise.
- **Resources affected by Projects in the current STIP** – to qualify, the environmental program should develop strategies to protect those resources affected by projects included in the long-range plans and STIP. The investment should contribute to streamlining the approval process for programmed projects.
- **Programmatic utility** – to qualify, programmatic approaches (for example, minimizing wetlands impacts on a watershed level rather than a local stream level) should lead to managing these resources more efficiently.
- **Multiple Resources Addressed** – to qualify, the environmental strategy should prioritize those initiatives that indicate multiple resource benefits. The strategy should support goals included in the Governor's climate action plan.
- **Leverage Current Assets** – to qualify, initiatives that build on existing environmental assets (for example, regional habitat connectivity, existing or new watershed efforts, or complementing existing wildlife crossings) should take priority.
- **Provides public accountability for the investment** – to qualify, the program must assure that early stewardship and impact avoidance, minimization, or mitigation clearly result in a better environmental condition and more efficient project delivery.

### ***Administrative Model***

These funds would be administered by CDOT's Environmental Programs Branch in consultation with CDOT's Regions. Initiatives would first be identified and prioritized either through the existing long-range planning process, or through initiatives brought to the program from resource specialists or by the Transportation Environmental Resource Council (TERC). Implementation may require some modification to CDOT's current structure. Development of programmatic strategies can be formalized within the Department's work plan and properly vetted through the TERC.

## **IX. Bicycle and Pedestrian**

### ***Definition of the program***

The option to safely and conveniently travel by foot or bike is a cornerstone of successful communities. The Panel recognized that state support of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is important to making non-motorized trips convenient and safe, while also improving air quality and promote healthy communities.

### ***Criteria***

- **General**
  - **Transportation Focused** – Prioritize facilities that will be primarily used for transportation purposes, such as work/school commutes and trips to access shopping or services.
  - **Stand Alone** – Should *not* fund the bicycle/pedestrian components of major highway or transit projects. This criterion is not envisioned to exclude support for adding bicycle/pedestrian facilities to minor local projects, such as adding shoulders to a local road during resurfacing.
  - **Multi-Modal Connections** – Should favor connections to both transit and parking facilities, as well as completing missing links in regional and statewide systems.
  
- **Eligible Project Types**
  - **New Facilities** – for example: paths, striping, signing, signals, over/underpasses etc...
  - **Major Repair** – the reconstruction of facilities described in *new facilities* bullet
  - **Education** – education programs to increase bicycling and walking and promote safety.
  
- **Local Commitment**
  - **Match** –The Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel recommended a minimum 10 percent match for any funds.
  - **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan** – Communities receiving grants should demonstrate how the project fits into a broader bicycle and pedestrian plan.
  - **Leveraged** – Leverage state transportation funds with private, other state or federal funds should be rewarded.

*Administrative Model*

These funds would be administered by CDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian unit, through a grant application process. Applications would be accepted from counties, cities, MPOs, CDOT, and non-profit groups.

**X. Local Transportation**

**The working group confirms that the HUTF formula should be used to determine a local allocation, with the aspiration that funding is flexible for investment in all modes.**