



COLORADO
Department of Transportation
Division of Transit & Rail
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For Presentation at TRAC Meeting July 14, 2017

DATE: July 20, 2017
TO: Transportation Commission
FROM: Mark Imhoff, Director - Division of Transit & Rail
SUBJECT: Colorado Transit Network

Purpose

In 2018, CDOT will begin the next update to the Statewide Transit Plan. The Colorado Transit Network sets the stage to begin the Plan efforts. The purpose of this memo is to start the dialogue with the Transit & Intermodal Committee dialogue about policies which affect future distributions of funding, and how much of which transit services are delivered around Colorado.

Action Requested

No Action. Concept for discussion

Background

Transit services exist throughout Colorado. How transit services function together to form a complete system is what the concept of a Colorado Transit Network is all about. CDOT has an active interest in the form and function of Colorado's overall transit network. While CDOT does not have the ability or desire to control the state transit network, it does have the ability to influence it through investments, policy, and communication. Policies are set by the Transportation Commission and by state and federal law. The Colorado Transit Network concept is the intent, and with the participation of transit agencies around the state, to strengthen all the pieces together, to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The reason to strengthen all the pieces is so that the network fulfills CDOT's mission to provide a transportation system which "most effectively and safely moves people, goods, and information".

Details

Transit services are operated by various entities: local (city/county), regional (RTA/RTD/5311f), inter-regional (mixture of providers) and state (CDOT and some human service programs). The services are sometimes operated directly by a public agency, other times contracted through a public agency to a private company ("privatization"), and still other times by non-profit organizations.

Colorado is a state where local government control, called home-rule authority, is a very important part of the political landscape. Home-rule authority are those decisions that the state government specifically delegates to cities or counties ("divisions of the state") to make for themselves. Cities and counties, through local sales and property taxes, provide the majority of the funding for transit services. Simultaneously, other transit money managed by, administered by, and passed through CDOT has state and federal "strings" attached to ensure coordination, accountability, and efficient use of funds.

During the 1990's the Colorado Transit logo was developed. The intent at the time was to provide a recognizable logo to visually connect all services together and be displayed on every bus regardless of who delivered the service. The idea was that people around the state would come to associate the linkages among local, regional, inter-regional, and state services. The logo is shown at right.



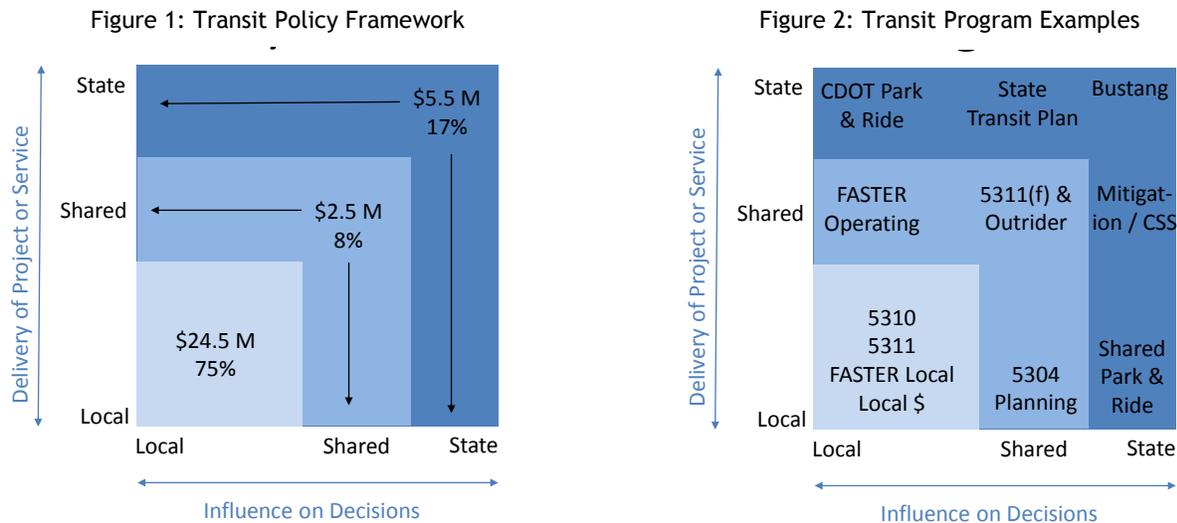
The Colorado Transit Network concept is primarily concerned with fixed schedule (published schedule) services, with the acknowledgment that demand-responsive (aka call-and-ride) are essential for seniors and persons with disabilities who cannot use fixed-schedule services. The CDOT Transportation Commission has established planning performance measures in the form of Policy Directive 14 (PD 14), including for transit. The transit measures are:

- Fleet condition which should be maintained at fair or better condition for the safety of all passengers.
- Growth in statewide annual transit ridership should be consistent with 1.5%/year growth of Colorado's population, and



- Connectivity of Colorado’s transit services which should maintain a 2012 base of “revenue miles” of service, or preferably expand service.

Figures 1 and 2 further these themes by graphically displaying the “space” or policy framework within which transit operates in Colorado. The two dimensions on the graphic are “influence on decisions” and “delivery of project or service”. Depending on what funding is used, the service could be completely controlled by local home-rule decisions, or could be influenced to a greater degree by State or Federal regulations. Depending on those decisions, the project or service might be provided or delivered by someone other than the decision-maker. CDOT operates the Bustang bus service (state-influenced, state-delivered) and, as an example, it serves the Frisco park-and-ride (state influence/funding, locally-delivered). Summit Stage (locally influenced, locally delivered) also makes stops there.



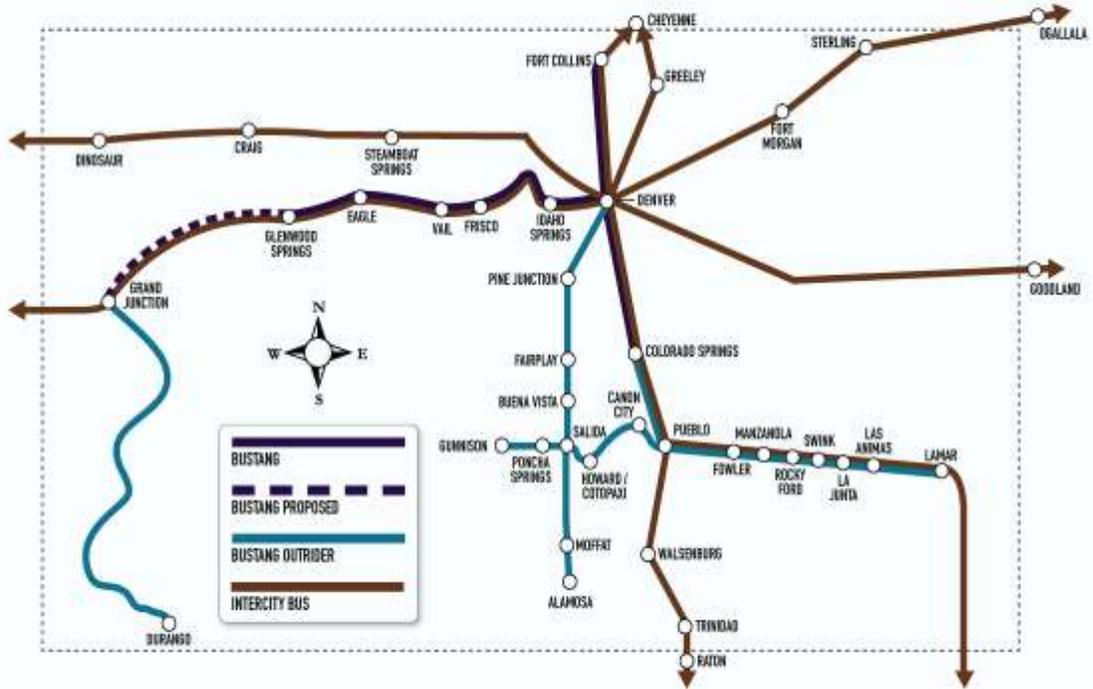
CDOT passes through approximately \$24.5 M of its \$32.5 M revenue stream into the local-local “space”, or 75%. Just follow some basic eligibility criteria of the funds, and the local government can use the funds to run local service or buy a bus. Another \$2.5 M of the \$32.5 M is in the “shared” space, or 8%, comprised of \$1.7 M in 5311(f) intercity funding, \$0.5 M in FASTER Operating, and \$0.3 M in 5304 planning funds. The final \$5.5 Million or 17% is in the “space” most heavily influenced by State & Federal requirements. Of the final \$5.5 Million, \$2.5 Million (8%) is for administration, compliance, technical assistance, and planning; and \$3.0 Million (9%) is for Bustang.

The stylized Bustang Outrider map on the next page shows a practical application to this policy framework. The first three 5311(f)-funded routes to be re-branded as Bustang Outrider are (1) Gunnison-Salida-Denver, (2) Almaosa-Salida-Pueblo, and (3) Lamar-Pueblo-Colorado Springs. These three are interesting because a number of influence-delivery combinations are possible. The funding is 5311(f) which comes with a certain set of Federal requirements for the use of the funds. The *outcomes* from the use of those funds are also important to the PD 14 goal of increasing statewide ridership and maintaining or improving the connectivity of Colorado’s transit services statewide. On the “influence” dimension, the choices are either shared influence or state/federal influence. On the “delivery” dimension, the service could be operated by a local agency, it could be wholly contracted out by the State, or it could be a shared combination of the two.

This policy framework helps to answer questions such as, “Why can’t CDOT just give me [my agency] the money?” or “Does spending on Bustang Outrider mean there is less money for me [my agency]?” The answer to those questions are as follows:

- (1) CDOT can grant Bustang Outrider (FTA 5311(f)) and FASTER Rural-Regional Operating funds to local transit agencies if the local agency is willing and able to operate service outside their local jurisdiction to make regional, inter-regional, or inter-city connections.
- (2) By State and Federal policy the money must be used for the intended regional, inter-regional, or inter-city purpose, so it cannot be converted to purely local uses. There is no “loss” to any agency in that sense. Whether there is more or less money for an individual agency depends on the willingness and ability to operate the service outside the local jurisdiction.





Another example of this is policy framework relates to construction projects. For construction funded only using local dollars, generally only local permitting is required. When state or federal dollars are used, construction projects undergo an extensive coordination, review, environmental clearance, and approval process required by state and/or national environmental policy. Construction projects can easily move from the local-local “space” to the state influenced - locally delivered “space.”

Next Steps:

CDOT will continue to exert some influence on some parts of the Colorado Transit Network for the benefit of all, and to fulfill the mission to provide a transportation system which “most effectively and safely moves people, goods, and information.”

In 2018, CDOT will begin the next update to the Statewide Transit Plan. That is the venue for all transit agencies and interested parties to dialogue about policies which affect future distributions of funding, and affect which or how much of which services are delivered around Colorado.

Attachment:

Colorado Transit Network Power Point Presentation

