



COLORADO
Department of Transportation
Division of Transit & Rail
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DATE: July 13, 2018

TO: Transit & Rail Advisory Committee

FROM: Michael Snow, Transit Infrastructure Specialist, Division of Transit & Rail

SUBJECT: Transit Development Program

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the Transit Development Program (TDP).

Action

CDOT requests TRAC provide input on the next steps in the development and utilization of the TDP.

Background

The Transit Development Program is a planning tool that serves as a means to 1) identify the un-funded capital transit project needs in Colorado and 2) to prepare for unexpected new funding opportunities by identifying a Tier 1 subset of those projects that are the highest priority and therefore the most likely to be considered for funding should new revenues become available. Transit stakeholders throughout the state have been engaged in recent months with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and rural Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs) to identify the capital project needs in their respective planning regions and their Tier 1 priorities.

In May, both the Transit & Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) and the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) approved recommendations forwarded by a subcommittee of TRAC and STAC representatives. The subcommittee's purpose was to identify the optimal dollar size for the Tier 1 Priority Program considering the need to identify candidate projects for several funding opportunities, including the 2018 Sales Tax Ballot initiative, Senate Bill 267 passed in 2017 and the funding being considered by the state legislature in Senate Bill 1. The committee's purpose was also to devise a *Regional Planning Allocation* formula that would identify the proportion of the Tier 1 program to be identified by each of the 15 planning regions. The subcommittee recommended the Tier 1 program identify priority projects totalling \$1.5 Billion statewide and to utilize a Regional Transit Planning Allocation formula based on population, transit dependency and current Ridership criteria. In addition, the subcommittee recognized the significance of Operational Costs in the sustainability of new transit capital projects and recommended total project costs in the Tier 1 program include capital costs plus ten-years net associated operational cost.

Details

Division of Transit & Rail (DTR) staff began extensive outreach in April to TPRs and MPOs and to transit agencies and stakeholders in their regions to engage in TDP development. The goal was to engage stakeholders in each region of the state to compile a TDP inventory and to finalize a Tier 1 priority program by mid to late July. Most TPRs and MPOs have now held two formal meetings on the topic, with some opting to hold additional special meetings of transit stakeholders to work through details. Stakeholders and planning organizations have been very engaged in the process and have welcomed the robust discussions on transit. To date, half of the TPRs and MPOs have successfully finalized their TDP and Tier 1 programs, and the remainder are expected to do so over the next two weeks.



The current draft TDP resulting from these efforts has grown to approximately 385 projects with a total estimated capital cost of roughly \$7.3 Billion. This is likely to grow slightly as the remaining regions finalize their project cost estimates.

The highly accelerated pace in developing a Tier 1 program has posed challenges for a number of reasons. A comprehensive planning process such as this would otherwise be expected to take place over the course of a year or more, not in just a handful of months. Colorado has never before taken on such a bold exercise to identify its unmet transit needs, and in many cases, transit agencies had never before engaged in the formal planning processes through their TPRs or MPOs. Some agencies have not had opportunity to consider capital expansion before, and many others do not have staff that could readily develop project concepts or cost estimates.

The short timeframe of the process posed some challenges for some to attend planning discussions, and CDOT staff and MPO/TPR leaders worked very hard to enable participation when possible from stakeholders that were unable to attend. In the Denver region however, where there are a large number of local governments and transit agencies, full comprehensive participation in the region was especially challenging. Agencies and stakeholders here were very appreciative of the opportunity to engage in the effort, but contended that for a collaborative and comprehensive process to take place, many more months and series of outreach meetings would be necessary. The Denver area's draft Tier 1 list therefore represents more of a list of top priorities of those agencies that were able to attend the second meeting on June 8, rather than a well-vetted list of regional priorities.

The TDP development process will continue to mature and grow, giving transit stakeholders more opportunities to develop regional priorities.

Considerations

One of the biggest challenges in this effort has been to engage a vast number of stakeholders in the metropolitan areas. Regional planning in urban areas is more commonly facilitated by an MPO, rather than the state. The TDP and the Tier 1 program will be an important planning support tool where regional, statewide or national competitive decisions are made. In other situations, its utility may be limited, such as in the case of the 2018 Ballot, which gives MPOs direct funding decision responsibility.

In rural regions, transit operational needs generally outreach capital needs. The total of all capital projects in some rural regions was less than their Tier 1 planning target, even when accounting for the associated net operational cost. In these regions, the entire TDP is considered "Tier 1".

The TDP does not fully identify all Colorado's transit needs. In addition to the capital needs in the TDP, CDOT seeks to identify other operational or service needs and the state's Asset Management backlog, such as vehicle or equipment replacements and facility rehabilitations. These latter two components of transit need could be addressed in separate and subsequent planning efforts in the coming months and would be valuable in supporting regional decisions when new funding opportunities require spending tradeoffs between capital and operating needs, such as with 2018 Ballot Initiative 153.

Discussion

CDOT seeks general input, questions and discussion on the next steps for the TDP, including the following questions and topics:

- What are the best means to assess the state's operational and asset management needs?
- What are the best means to maintain the TDP in urban areas? What should the MPOs' role be?
- Does the TDP and its Tier 1 Program need updating after the November election? And how frequently should the TDP be updated?

Next Steps

A final TDP with the state's Tier 1 priorities identified will be available in late July, in time for STAC review on July 27, followed by a review and approval by the TC on August 16.

Attachments - None.

