



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Division of Transit & Rail

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DATE: March 9, 2018
TO: Transit & Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC)
FROM: Michael Snow, Transit Infrastructure Specialist, Division of Transit and Rail
SUBJECT: Transit Development Program

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the Transit Development Program and related planning outreach activities.

Background

The Transit Development Program (TDP) is an inventory of capital project needs throughout the state for which there is currently no identified source of expected funding. Similar to the Highway Development Program, this planning tool supports the identification and prioritization of Colorado's transit and rail capital needs to effectively plan for and respond to future unexpected funding opportunities.

The scope of original versions of the TDP were defined by the Division of Transit & Rail's (DTR) role as a pass-through entity, whereby it administers FTA (federal) and FASTER (state) transit program awards for projects identified and sponsored by local transit agencies. For this reason, it included projects located in Rural Areas and projects related to Intercity and Inter-regional transit services (Bustang), but NOT projects in metropolitan areas, since transit agencies in these areas receive federal funds directly from the federal government.

Recent new funding sources such as SB267, and the potentially much larger 2018 Ballot Initiative, offer significant increases to both local and state resources, and require comprehensive statewide planning to invest those funds effectively. This has driven the need for the TDP's expansion to include transit and rail projects statewide. While the Highway Development Program has now been through several iterations and updates, and in January formalized an expanded priority list for the 2018 Ballot Initiative, the expanded TDP is now in the earliest stage of the overall Development Program process.

The details below provide information about the process DTR will facilitate over the coming 5-6 months to further develop and refine the expanded TDP.

Details

The TDP will follow the same process the Highway Development Program followed:

1. Project Identification and Compilation: CDOT staff begin by capturing major investment projects identified in statewide, regional and local transportation plans, studies and other previously created project lists. A subsequent and continual process follows that allows CDOT staff, Planning organizations, local agencies and transportation stakeholders ongoing opportunities to identify additional projects and contribute to project information.
2. Prioritizing the Development Program: The Tier 1 Development Program is a subset of the full list of major investment needs that will summarize those projects deemed highest priority through formal planning processes. To guide the prioritization process, TRAC, STAC, CDOT Staff and planning partners must agree upon a Tier 1 Planning Target - that is, a certain total dollar figure that provides fiscal constraint to the priority project list. Further, to ensure geographic equity of prioritized projects, a Regional Allocation formula must also be developed to determine how that Planning Target is proportionally allocated to regions of the state.
3. Utilizing the Development Program: The Development Program's principal purpose is to aid in identifying priority projects for new funding opportunities by allowing candidate projects to be selected from the Tier 1 program.



As a result of its expanded scope, the TDP is again in the “Project Identification and Compilation” stage described above. Projects listed in the draft version presented to STAC in January (Attachment 1) are those compiled by staff from Statewide, Regional and Local Transit Plans, special transit or rail studies, and some early input by a few transit stakeholders. TPRs, MPOs and local agencies have not yet had a full opportunity to review and contribute to the inventory and, therefore, this draft list should not yet be interpreted or used as a comprehensive list of project needs, nor as an indicator of statewide priorities nor as an indicator that any particular projects will be funded.

In the coming months, DTR will conduct broad outreach to continue identification of projects in Step 1, and to facilitate the prioritization process in Step 2. Staff will utilize the formal state and federally recognized transportation planning process to identify the priority projects in each planning region. This includes visits with each TPR and MPO to provide stakeholders the opportunity to identify additional projects, to provide more current project scope, costs, and details and to identify their region’s project priorities. CDOT recognizes that many Transit Agencies are not familiar with their transportation planning organizations, nor are they accustomed to engaging with the statewide planning process to identify their transportation needs. Therefore, DTR staff will also conduct outreach directly to Transit Agencies through stakeholder groups such as CASTA, through its Transit Town Halls scheduled in April, and through its monthly Grant Partner telephone information conferences. Because prioritization of projects will occur through the TPRs/MPOs, DTR will also notify local transit agencies about TPR meetings to ensure they have opportunity to attend and provide input.

As part of the prioritization process, DTR staff will rely on STAC and TRAC to discuss topics related to Tier 1 Planning Targets. Immediate questions to address include:

- What should be the overall dollar value of Tier 1 Transit Development Program?
- What is an appropriate Regional Allocation for transit in the state? Should it be allocated by TPR/MPO region, by CDOT Region or some other method? For example, what proportion might be allocated to the metropolitan areas vs. rural areas? DTR will lead conversations to determine appropriate planning targets that provide acceptable geographic equity.
- What criteria should be considered to formulate a Regional Allocation? Example criteria might include: equity, transit dependency, economic vitality, local commitment, etc.

Several upcoming transit funding decisions are fast approaching that are dependent on prioritization of capital needs throughout the state, including the latter years of the SB267 program and the need to provide a bonded capital project list for the recently submitted 2018 Ballot Initiative. The timing of these decisions will require a Tier 1 TDP be drafted by early summer.

Input Requested

DTR is seeking input and questions from TRAC regarding the status of the TDP, the proposed process to refine and develop its Tier 1 program and related funding decisions.

Next Steps

DTR and other CDOT staff are preparing to attend TPR and MPO meetings in March-May to seek input on the content and regional priorities in the program. Subsequent related discussions will be brought before the STAC and TRAC with the goal of defining a Tier 1 subset of the TDP and to address immediate funding decisions that will rely on a Tier 1 program, such as SB267 and a 2018 Ballot List.

Slides for this TRAC presentation are included in Attachment 2. Please submit comments or questions to Michael Snow, michael.snow@state.co.us, or 303-512-4123.

