

Transit Plan Guiding Principles - DRAFT

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The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has sponsored a transit program beginning in the early 1970s. Since its transition from a department of highways to a department of transportation in 1991, CDOT has increased its support of Colorado's transit systems. That support has grown significantly following legislative creation of the Division of Transit and Rail in 2009 (previously the transit program was staffed within the Division of Transportation Development and rail programs were scattered throughout the Department).

Colorado's Transit Profile

Colorado enjoys a unique transit profile, providing more rural transit trips than any other state in the union – far beyond the relatively rural population. These trips provide access to workers and jobs for the state's second largest economic industry -- tourism.

Nationally transit ridership continues to break records, despite the economic downturn and soft employment. As gas prices rise, transit offers an alternative to automobile trips for households already stretched financially.

State Funding for Transit

State funding for transit was first identified with the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 1 in 1997. This legislation allocated the proceeds of sales and use taxes attributable to the sales or use of vehicles and related items to the highway users tax fund. Transit capital projects were an allowable expenditure for up to 10% of these funds. In 2002, the Colorado legislature included language to *require* that 10% be spent on transit. However, due to the weak economy and triggers placed in the law, no funding flowed into the SB 1 program until 2006.

In 2006, \$21.5 Million of the SB 1 transportation funding flowed to transit. In April 2006, the Colorado Transportation Commission appointed 12 individuals to a 10% for Transit Task Force to recommend to the Commission how the funding would be spent. This marked the first time CDOT offered a competitive, statewide grant for transit capital projects. Included in the first list of projects were elements of RTD-Denver's FasTracks program, commuter service along the front range and in the mountain communities; corridor planning along I-70 and I-25; facilities in Grand Junction, Durango, and the upper Arkansas Valley; initial phases of the Mason Corridor BRT in Fort Collins; and rolling stock throughout the state.

Subsequent legislation, the FASTER bill, passed in 2009, furthered the support of transit by CDOT through allocation of \$15 million for transit programs per year from increased vehicle registration fees. This provided a new and stable source of funding for transit that is separate from the State's general fund to be administered by the new Division of Transit and Rail.

Guiding Principle Recommendations

CDOT is in the early stages of developing a long-range Statewide Transportation Plan. As a key component of this plan, CDOT is developing its first Statewide Transit Plan. DTR in partnership with stakeholders like the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) is proposing transit **policies** for Commission adoption to guide the development of the Statewide Transit Plan.

I. Safety and Accessibility

- When planning and designing improvements to the statewide transportation system, CDOT will consider the current and future needs and safety of all users, including elderly, disabled, veteran, student, low-income, and minority populations as well as those who choose not to drive. When implementing transportation system improvements, CDOT will provide safe access and better modal interface to transportation facilities and services for all users.

II. Modality

- When planning and designing for system maintenance, enhancement and expansion, CDOT will consider all modes of transportation including (but not limited to) automobiles, buses, trains, pedestrians and bicycles. Considerations will include system capacity, transit ridership, capital and operational costs, land-use, and traveler information. CDOT will facilitate increased modal options for all transportation system users, including non-automobile travelers.

III. System and Service Preservation

- CDOT will consider the role of transit to expand the capacity and extend the useful life of existing transportation facilities, networks and right-of-way. CDOT will strive, through partnerships with transit providers, for a state of good repair for transit fleets, facilities, technology and current service levels.

IV. Transit Connectivity and Expansion

- CDOT will promote transit connectivity into and between economic, educational, residential, business, tourist and recreational hubs for all transportation system users, including non-automobile travelers. CDOT will support and enhance intermodal mobility by linking networks of local, regional and interstate (air, rail, bus) transportation services.

V. Relationships with Local Entities

- CDOT will work with local agencies and other stakeholders in a spirit of partnership, while maintaining required state and federal oversight. CDOT will support best practices and local decision making and act as a technical resource for local agencies. CDOT will support business processes for efficient and effective customer service.

VI. State and Federal Presence and Advocacy

- CDOT will advocate for state and federal support of Colorado transit, including sound and effective transit policy and sufficient, sustainable and reliable funding. CDOT will actively pursue federal funding for transit, including applying for competitive grants, partnering with other entities on transit funding from non-DOT sources, and supporting appropriations that bring new dollars to Colorado.

Definition of Transit: (concepts)

Provide access and mobility for non-automobile travelers

Non-user operated

Passenger: shared person travel

Bus

- Public and private
- Fixed, flexible/route-deviation, and demand responsive
- Intercity, interregional, urban & rural

Rail

- All types: local and intercity (Amtrak), public and private

Gondola (i.e. Telluride)

Advanced Guideway

Carpool/vanpool/rideshare matching

Not: Fort Collins historical trolley? Not Durango & Silverton? FTA definition

CDOT staff to refine.

Thank you!