



# COLORADO

## Department of Transportation

Division of Transportation Development  
Multimodal Planning Branch  
4201 E. Arkansas Ave., Room 262  
Denver, CO 80222-3400

DATE: October 15, 2014  
TO: Transportation Commission  
FROM: Debra Perkins-Smith, Director, Division of Transportation Development  
Mark Imhoff, Director, Division of Transit & Rail  
SUBJECT: SB 228 Project Selection Process

### Purpose

To provide an update on the proposed criteria and process for the identification of candidate Senate Bill (SB) 228 projects for highway and transit.

### Action

Transportation Commission (TC) input on definition of strategic project, and evaluation criteria and process in advance of a November workshop on SB 228 project selection.

### Background

At an August workshop, the Commission provided input on project selection for SB 228 and indicated a desire to look beyond the current "strategic" definition comprised of the "7th Pot" list. Also discussed was the concept of identifying projects exceeding by 2-3X the funds available to demonstrate the significant transportation needs and the projects that would be ready to move forward should funding become available. At the time of that discussion, forecasts for SB 228 suggested that CDOT could receive up to \$200 million annually for five years. More recent revenue forecasts suggest that TABOR triggers could substantially reduce or eliminate SB 228 funds. Staff recommends proceeding with project selection as planned both to be ready should funding become available, and to demonstrate the level of need for critical strategic transportation projects.

### Details

DTD and DTR have coordinated with the Regions in developing an approach to identify and evaluate projects using proposed eligibility and evaluation criteria as identified in Attachment A. This includes three basic criteria to determine if a project should be eligible for consideration of SB 228 funding. Eligible projects would be subject to additional evaluation criteria. The main criteria emphasis reflects a focus on mobility benefits and economic benefits. Additional criteria include other factors such as safety and asset life. Staff has also developed a proposed definition of strategic to help in assessing the strategic nature of proposed projects: "A project of regional or statewide significance, serving regional or statewide travel needs, recognized as a high priority at the regional or statewide level, and representing a significant cost or long-term investment."

### *Highway Projects*

DTD and Region staff have already begun the process of identifying potential projects meeting eligibility criteria, including readiness to proceed to construction within five years. This includes identifying specific component projects from larger corridor projects. Region staff are currently working to refine project definition, costs, and identify data associated with the proposed evaluation criteria. Although the proposed evaluation criteria includes a number of criteria, the primary emphasis is on projects with significant mobility or economic benefits. Examples of some of the types of projects identified based on the proposed criteria include:



- *Managed Lanes/Widening*: Widening projects, including managed lanes, on major corridors.
- *New or Upgraded Interchanges*: New interchanges on major corridors, or upgrades and reconstructions of existing interchanges.
- *Operational Improvements*: Operational improvements identified by the Region and TSM&O, often in conjunction with other corridor improvements.
- *Other Corridor Improvements*: A combination of project elements to improve mobility including addition of auxiliary lanes, passing lanes, pullouts, shoulder widening, or intersection improvements.

### *Transit Projects*

SB 228 requires at least 10% of funds be used for transit. SB 228 revenues are expected to be received for one to, at most, five years. DTR staff suggest that these revenues are not appropriate for operating purposes. There may be limited administrative purposes such as studies. By and large, however, the SB 228 revenues are recommended for capital purposes. The following section provides more detail on the categories of projects being considered for transit uses of SB 228 funds.

- *Intercity & Regional Bus Service Network*: During the development of the Statewide Transit Plan, regional and interregional bus service connections were identified as important individually, and important as a role that CDOT could fill to provide connections. SB 228 transit revenues would be used to purchase buses for such service. Existing Federal, 5311, 5311(f), and FASTER Transit dollars as on-going operating assistance, could thereby be stretched further. Supporting capital for statewide ride-matching, dispatching, and scheduling as well as passenger information technologies are also proposed.
- *IX Bus Enhancements*: Although the inter-regional express (IX) bus service by CDOT will start in the first quarter of 2015, many requests have already come into CDOT for expansion of services, hours, and stop locations. SB 228 transit revenues would be used to purchase additional buses, expand park-and-rides, and/or support other enhancements to the system. Current policy direction is that a year of experience is needed to demonstrate a basic level of success, and then to better understand priorities for expansion: existing route improvements versus extensions of the current routes. The IX investments would complement the intercity & regional bus service network.
- *Highway Transit Enhancements*: CDOT policy overall emphasizes "multimodal" projects and emphasizes projects which can "maximize" the safety, capacity, and efficiency of existing infrastructure. SB 228 transit revenues would be used collaboratively with highway projects to offer transit enhancements such as bus-on-shoulder operations, queue jumps, transit in managed lanes, transit signal priority treatments (TSP) and exclusive or enhanced transit access such as transit ramps to park-and-rides at interchanges.
- *Strategic Rail Corridor Investments*: Multiple studies by CDOT and other public agencies, as well as information from public opinion surveys by Chamber & economic development groups show an interest in two key rail investments: completion of the Denver Metro FasTracks program, and preservation of the existing Amtrak passenger rail routes in Colorado. RTD is actively pursuing grants and loans to complete FasTracks. Southeastern Colorado Communities contributed to and were awarded a 2014 TIGER grant, with Kansas. This will repair the worst 50 miles of 600 miles of track along the Amtrak Southwest Chief route in eastern Colorado and western Kansas. A second TIGER grant application has been suggested by members of the Southwest Chief Commission.

### *Evaluation*

Staff is recommending a data-driven approach to project selection similar to the process employed in identifying RAMP Partnership and Operations projects. This approach includes the review of projects statewide, and an evaluation of projects based on data (aligned with the proposed criteria) by an SMT Committee, with a secondary review of the results by the full SMT and the RTDs. Under this approach, staff would provide the Commission with projects identified as eligible, as well as the results of evaluation. The evaluation results would include those eligible projects recommended as candidate SB



228 projects, and those eligible projects not recommended (with an explanation as to why they are not being recommended.) Staff anticipates a November TC workshop to review project recommendations.

#### Next Steps

DTD and DTR will make modifications to criteria and selection processes based on Commission feedback and return to the Commission for a November workshop with project-level information, with the adoption of a list of candidate SB 228 highway and transit projects to follow in December.

#### Attachments

Attachment A: SB 228 Draft Project Evaluation Criteria



Criteria Area	Data/Information	Analysis Scale
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>		
<b>Strategic Nature</b>	Is the corridor of regional or statewide significance, serving regional or statewide travel needs? Describe.	Corridor
	Is the corridor a priority with demonstrated support and importance to stakeholders and the public. Describe.	
<b>Funding Requirements</b>	No construction funding identified - project is not funded through RAMP, Asset Management, FASTER, or any other program.	Project
	Independent Utility - due to the uncertainty of the funding source, the project can be cancelled without significant cost or impact to other projects.	
<b>Project Readiness</b>	Project Readiness - project will begin construction within five years of selection. Provide brief description of readiness (i.e. NEPA complete, design complete, etc.).	Project
<b>Main Criteria Emphasis</b>		
<b>Mobility</b>	Does the project address an identified location of high congestion as measured by V/C, PTI, or speed data, and/or does the project address an identified intercity, interregional, or regional transit need? Provide data.	Project
	Does the project improve connections on the state highway/transportation system or access to or from the state highway/transportation system, or provide operational improvements that enhance mobility? Describe.	Project
	Does the project include multimodal elements or provide access to significant multimodal, or intermodal facilities? Describe.	Project
<b>Economic Vitality</b>	<i>For Highway Projects:</i> Does the corridor serve freight, agricultural, or energy needs? Is the corridor identified as a key freight or energy corridor in respective plans/studies? Is the corridor identified as a Congressional High Priority corridor? Does the corridor provide primary access to agricultural facilities such as grain elevators, feed lots, or market? Describe.	Corridor
	<i>For Transit or Multimodal Projects:</i> Is the project in a corridor identified as a key intercity bus corridor by the Intercity and Regional Bus Plan? Is the project in a corridor identified in the Statewide Transit Plan or TPR Transit Plan? Describe.	Corridor
	Does the corridor provide a direct connection to a National Park, Monument or Historic District, ski area, or other "significant" recreational/tourism facility? Describe.	Corridor
	Does the corridor provide access to a major jobs center (as defined by GIS analysis of census data)?	Corridor
	Does the corridor provide primary access to an established Colorado Enterprise Zone? (Per OEDIT)	Corridor
<b>Additional Criteria</b>		
<b>Other Information</b>	<i>For Highway Projects:</i> --Safety - Does the project include a segment of Level of Safety Service (LOSS) 3/4 that will be addressed by the project? --Asset Life - Does the project address a Structurally Deficient or Functionally Obsolete bridge? Does the project address a large segment of poor Drivability Life (DL)? --Other information to consider.	Project
	<i>For Transit or Multimodal Projects:</i> --Safety - Does the project include a transit state-of-good-repair or transit safety element? Does the project meet transit safety and security guidance? --Asset Life - Does the project address a functionally deficient, obsolete, or poor condition transit facility? --Other information to consider.	Project