



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

MEMORANDUM

TO: COLORADO TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: HERMAN STOCKINGER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF POLICY
REBECCA WHITE, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT
JEFF SUDMEIER, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2020
SUBJECT: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REBUILDING AMERICA (INFRA) DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose

To discuss projects for submittal and funding opportunities by CDOT under the INFRA discretionary grant program.

Action

The department is requesting up to \$20.0 million new Senate Bill (SB) 17-267 matching funds for an INFRA application on I-70 Vail Pass. Therefore, per PD 703.0, staff requires TC approval. The department seeks Commission backing on the projects submitted as the Bridge Enterprise (BE) Board of Directors will also act on a resolution to include BE funding on the I-70 Vail Pass project.

Background

Senate Bill (SB) 17-267 funding in future years has been allocated by the TC. Using these expected future funds as match, staff requested INFRA project proposals that would not require additional match beyond existing budget and funding that has been previously allocated by the Commission. However, an increase in project scope on the I-70 Vail Pass project and potential excess premium funding from the FY 2019-20 tranche (year two) of SB 17-267 may provide an opportunity for an increase in project funding, in the event the US DOT allocates INFRA funds toward I-70 Vail Pass.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently released the 2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity for INFRA. Eligible applicants (which can be state DOTs or state, local, and tribal governments, including transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other political subdivisions of State or local governments) can submit up to three applications each, due February 25, 2020.

INFRA applications will be evaluated based on the following merit criteria and key objectives:

- Highway and freight projects of national or regional significance;
- Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- Leveraging Federal funding to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- Deploying innovative technology, encouraging innovative approaches to project delivery, and incentivizing the use of innovative financing; and
- Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance.

Additional information on funding amounts and match requirements include:

- Approximately \$1.05 billion will be available to be awarded in FY 2019-20, an amount that was outlined in the federal budget deal from December 2019 with appropriations added from prior years.
- Awards will be made to both large and small projects. For a large project, the FAST Act specifies that an INFRA grant project in Colorado must be \$100 million or greater. For a small project, the project must be at least \$5 million.



- 10% of available funds are reserved for small projects, and 90% of funds are reserved for large projects.
- Not less than 25% (approximately \$250.0 million) shall be for projects in rural areas.
- \$500.0 million of the \$4.5 billion authorized for INFRA grants over fiscal years 2016 to 2020 may be used for grants to freight rail, water (including ports), or other freight intermodal projects that make significant improvements to freight movement on the National Highway Freight Network. After accounting for FY 2016-2019 INFRA selections, approximately \$158.0 million within this constraint remains available.
- INFRA grants may be used for up to 60% of future eligible project costs.
- Total Federal assistance for a project receiving an INFRA grant may not exceed 80% of future eligible project costs.
- Construction must be started within 18 months of obligation (September 30, 2023).

Details

Staff worked with the CDOT Regions and planning partners to identify several potential projects (see Attachment A - List of Candidate INFRA Projects and Descriptions) and further screened those projects to identify those that are most competitive. Two candidate projects have been tentatively identified for the INFRA solicitation: 1) *US 160 - Four Corners to MP 7.6 and 0.8 miles into New Mexico*; and 2) *I-70 Vail Pass Safety and Operational Improvements Project*.

US 160 - Four Corners to MP 7.6 and 0.8 miles into New Mexico

The US 160 project scope is tentatively set as a reconstruction of the highway to include widening shoulders to four feet on each side, the addition of two passing lanes, possible ITS in the form of a VMS board at the state line, guardrail upgrades, resurfacing, and bridge scour repairs. This section of roadway is a main tourist corridor connected to multiple highways in four states, and has not been repaired in many years. The addition of shoulders, guardrail, and passing lanes will create safety benefits for the traveling public, while a reconstructed road along a busy tourist corridor will help create both maintenance and soft benefits for Colorado. Total project estimate is \$25.0 million, and requires no additional matching funds. The application would be submitted by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and would include matching funds from the State of New Mexico.

I-70 Vail Pass Safety and Operational Improvements Project

This series of projects will create eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) shoulder widening from milepost (MP) 180-190 on I-70 Vail Pass. An EB auxiliary lane will be created from MP 185-190. Projects in the application also include curve modifications (an important safety initiative), improved signage, a recreation trail relocation, a variable speed limit system, a lower truck ramp reconstruction at MP 182, new wildlife fencing, and the installation of an automatic highway closure system (an important technology initiative). The project will also include resurfacing. The benefits to the freight trucking industry will be immense, and a new auxiliary lane and wider shoulders will create safety and mobility benefits for both the freight industry and the traveling public along that freight and recreational corridor. Vail Pass is closed fully or partially an average of over 375 hours (16 days) a year. The safety and technology solutions outlined in the project scope are a relatively inexpensive method of creating efficiencies along this economically important corridor, and greatly adhere to USDOT's INFRA specifications. After completion, benefits will include a greatly reduced crash rate of 35-45% less than current levels. Total combined project costs will reach over \$140.0 million, with \$80.0 million in state and local matching funds, dependent on TC approval.

Receipt of INFRA grant funding for this project will accelerate planned future work on the I-70 Vail Pass corridor.



Options and Recommendation

1. The Transportation Commission endorses the US 160 Four Corners and I-70 Vail Pass Safety and Operational Improvement projects in order to accelerate work on those corridors and allows up to \$20.0 million extra Commission funding for the I-70 Vail Pass Project, should the application prove successful—**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**.

2. The Transportation Commission does not allow additional funding to be allocated toward INFRA projects in FY 2019-20.

Next Steps

The grant application is due for submission on February 25. If, during the coming months, it is determined the projects need additional Program Reserve or other TC-directed funds as matching funds, staff will either cease pursuit of that opportunity or return to the TC for a request of funds.

Attachments

Attachment A: List of Candidate INFRA Projects and Descriptions



ATTACHMENT A: List of Candidate INFRA Projects and Descriptions (No Order)

1. ***US 160 – Four Corners to MP 7.6 and 0.8 miles into New Mexico:*** Reconstruction of the highway to include widening shoulders to four feet on each side, the addition of two passing lanes, possible ITS in the form of a VMS board at the state line, guardrail upgrades, resurfacing, and bridge scour repairs.
2. *US 85 ROW Purchase with Union Pacific Railroad:* ROW purchase price of \$38.4 million, grade separation at Weld County Road (WCR) 44 to compensate for operations impairment, and numerous WCR closures at railroad crossings to compensate for operations impairment.
3. *Resurfacing project on either I-70 Mountain Corridor or I-76 East:* To include a relatively simple resurfacing project in a rural area, if necessary.
4. *Connected I-70 Mountain Corridor Freight Escape Ramps with Dynamic Messaging:* These projects will create freight truck chain-up stations, and up to five new truck escape ramps, including a truck ramp at westbound (WB) I-70 near Silverthorne, runaway truck arrestors on EB I-70 between Genessee and Denver West, and a new climbing lane eastbound (EB) from Bakerville to EJMT. The application will also include technology initiatives to help measure truck speed, weight in motion, and hot brakes, and would build-in new dynamic message boards, video detection devices, and smart fiber for real time situational awareness.
5. *SH 13 Rifle North MP 4-16:* Reconstruction and safety improvement project that will add shoulders, passing lanes and wildlife mitigation measures. Prior application.
6. *I-70 Floyd Hill:* Creation of third lane on westbound I-70 at Floyd Hill. Total reconstruction of bridge and corridor.
7. *I-70 Bridges between Colfax and Sheridan:* Prior grant application, this project would improve numerous bridges along a very busy freight corridor.
8. *I-25 Low Bridges (Speer Blvd.):* Project would raise two bridges in central Denver that have numerous crashes due to height issues.
9. *I-270:* Add a third lane and reconstruct numerous bridges along a busy commuter and freight corridor.
10. *I-25/US 50 New Pueblo Freeway:* Reconstruction of 50B interchange in Pueblo where oversized loads struggle due to height issues at the bridge interchange.
11. ***I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes (I-70 MM 180 East Vail – MM 190 Vail Pass):*** Improve the safety and operations on I-70 on the west side of Vail Pass. The total project scope includes adding a 3rd lane in the EB and/or WB directions, shoulder widening, curve geometry improvements, ITS and signage improvements, truck parking, chain station and truck ramp improvements.
12. *I-25 Segments 5 and 6 South Express Lanes:* Coral funding to finish expansion of I-25 Segments 5 and 6.
13. *Eastern Plains Trucking Accommodations (see attachments):* Resurface select locations on I-70 East, US 385, US 287, and US 85. Construct Truck Safety Areas for parking (Airpark) and Chain Stations. Dynamic Message Boards, Video Detection, Smart Fiber for Real Time Situational Awareness, and Dynamic Speed Warning System.