



# 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:** MARCH 18, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REBUILDING AMERICA (INFRA) DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM

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#### Purpose

To discuss the I-270 Corridor project for submittal and funding opportunities by CDOT under the INFRA discretionary grant program.

#### Action

The department seeks Commission backing on the I-270 project submitted as the Bridge Enterprise (BE) Board of Directors will also act on a resolution to include BE funding on the I-270 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.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently released the 2021 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 March 19, 2021.

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;
- Addressing climate change and environmental justice impacts;
- Advancing racial equity and reducing barriers to opportunity;
- 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 \$889 million will be available to be awarded in FY 2020-21.
- Awards will be made to both large and small projects. For a large project, the FAST Act specifies that an INFRA grant must be \$25 million or greater for a project that is \$100 million or greater. For a small project, the grant 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% shall be for projects in rural areas.
- 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, 2024).

### Details

Staff worked with the CDOT Regions to identify several potential projects. Based on the criteria in the NOFO and with further discussion with executive management, one candidate project has been tentatively identified for the INFRA solicitation: *I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project*.

The I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project improves safety and mobility on the seven-mile corridor by reducing the rate of vehicle crashes, improving travel time reliability, reducing delays, and updating obsolete and deficient bridges and highway infrastructure. Many of these safety findings are related to traffic congestion, speed differentials, and geometric features, such as short weaving distances, short ramp merge areas, narrow shoulders, and tight loop ramps. A total of 1,584 total crashes occurred from 2014 to 2018 along the I-270 mainline, including six fatal crashes and 369 injury crashes. Through an ongoing Environmental Assessment, solutions have been identified that will replace decaying infrastructure, improve safety through improved roadway geometry, and improve traffic flow and travel time reliability through the corridor. Wide shoulders will provide flexibility for emergency response vehicles and safely accommodate truck breakdowns. Relieving congestion and improving multimodal connections will promote lower greenhouse gas emissions in the corridor. This project will address many of the physical constraints of the road which will improve safety for the travelling public and enhance connectivity to the rest of the freight network in the United States.

The project also includes the replacement of six Colorado Bridge Enterprise (CBE) eligible bridges. Addressing these structures as part of the I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project provides a shared benefit to both CBE and CDOT and this approach will increase the probability of a grant award by increasing the percentage of the state funding match, diversifying the proposed project funding sources, and establishing partnerships with a broader range of stakeholders. Additionally, a traffic and revenue study of the corridor is currently underway and scheduled for completion in summer of 2021. Financing through the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTTE) will also contribute to the state grant match.

Receipt of INFRA grant funding for this project will accelerate planned future work on the I-270 corridor.

### Next Steps

The grant application is due for submission on March 19. 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.

