

C.6. Regional Priority Program Technical Plan

C.6.1. Introduction

The Regional Priority Program (RPP) is funded through annual Colorado Transportation Commission (TC) allocations. The objective of the RPP is to provide the five CDOT engineering regions with funding for region-specific priorities. CDOT makes priority determinations through consultation with the Transportation Planning Regions (TPR), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and other stakeholders. This consultation is accomplished through a structured transportation planning process that determines priorities and selects projects.

RPP funds are distributed to the CDOT Regions according to a formula based on 50 percent population, 35 percent state highway system lane miles, and 15 percent state highway system truck vehicle miles traveled. This formula was adopted during the 2016-2040 TC Program Distribution process. The formula may be reconsidered in the next Program Distribution cycle (2050) and after the 2020 United States Census. RPP is a flexible funding allocation from the TC with a primary purpose of capacity improvement; however, it is not dedicated toward a specific asset or need so it may be used for a variety of purposes including traffic safety, operations, new capacity, design, environmental, maintenance, safety, and drainage projects. In addition, RPP funds are used on large and small projects with statewide significance to address funding gaps. RPP funds may also be used for smaller priority projects where this might be the only source of funding.

RPP funds have been used to fund preliminary engineering, design, environmental clearances and mitigation, right-of-way acquisition, and utility work in preparing very large projects that leverage bonding or federal grant funds like INFRA, FLAP, TIGER, BUILD, and the state Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) program. However, some of the above-mentioned discretionary programs were considered one-time or legislation-specific programs that may no longer exist. RPP dollars provide flexibility for CDOT to respond to emerging funding opportunities as they arise.

In recent years, RPP distribution has increased to \$50 million per year, from a low of \$7 million. When RPP originated the funding was as high as \$200 million annually. CDOT's Permanent Water Quality program receives off the top funds from the \$50 million, prior to region distribution but that has been suggested to end.

C.6.2. Regulatory Considerations

C.6.2.1. Regulations/Resolutions

The following list provides an overview of relevant federal and state regulations and requirements governing planning, policy, data, performance, funding, and project selection of surface treatment projects.

- United States Code, 2000 Edition, Title 26, Section 9503 ([26 U.S.C. § 9503](#))
- [Colorado Constitution Article X, Section 18](#)

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- Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) [43-1-106\(8\)](#), [43-1-109](#), and [43-1-110](#).
- [Transportation Commission Program Distribution Allocation Methodology for RPP, Resolution #TC-3160](#)
- [Policy Directive 14](#)

C.6.2.2. Guidelines

RPP is a TC designated funding program and as such can use both Federal and State fund types depending on the project. The Colorado Highway Users Tax Fund is one of the largest contributors of revenue to the State Highway Fund. The Colorado Constitution specifies that revenue generated from the operation of vehicles on Colorado roadways be used exclusively for the construction, maintenance, and supervision of public highways in the state. While this provides a wide range of projects that can be accomplished with this type of funding, state funds cannot be spent for funding transit or other improvements that are not directly related to the construction or maintenance of the state highway system.

C.6.3. Asset Inventory & Condition

RPP indirectly impacts assets and conditions by funding related projects. However, it is a funding program and does not contain asset performance guidelines.

C.6.4. Performance

There are no direct performance metrics or targets specific to RPP and RPP funds are not required to meet specific quantifiable objectives. RPP is designed to provide the CDOT Regions flexibility to address high priority and critical projects identified through stakeholder engagement and participation. By funding high priority and critical projects, RPP funds are responsible for improving performance through the benefits provided by these projects.

C.6.5. Funding

C.6.5.1. Funding Mechanisms

The RPP is funded through annual TC allocations of CDOT's budget. To the extent the activities funded by RPP are eligible for federal reimbursement, Federal National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) funds and Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are used. State Highway funds are used to match the federal contribution and for activities that are not eligible for federal funding.

C.6.5.2. Region Pool Distributions

Region pool distributions are determined by TC approved formula. The current formula ([approved in June 2014](#)) is 50 percent for population, 35 percent for lane miles, and 15 percent for truck vehicle miles traveled. This translates to a distribution of 35.5 percent, 19.9 percent, 14.3 percent, 23.2 percent, 7.1 percent for regions 1 through 5 respectively for the 2045 Transportation Planning Cycle.



C.6.6. Investment Strategies

RPP investment strategies are rooted in the funding source’s versatility. RPP funds can be applied to a broad category of transportation improvements, can often be utilized rapidly, address region-specific priorities, and leverage partnership opportunities. RPP investment strategies are developed through a collaborative planning process undertaken by each TPR. TPR’s are comprised representatives and elected officials from each city and county in the defined geographic region.

C.6.7. Project Selection

CDOT conducts a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C), performance-based, multimodal transportation planning process in accordance with federal and state requirements. The process provides for broad public involvement in the key decisions made for Colorado's transportation system, including the development of both long-term and short-term performance goals and objectives, the identification of strategies to achieve those objectives, and priorities for investment in transportation programs and projects. The results of this process include the development of several required planning products including a [Statewide Transportation Plan](#) (SWP), [Regional Transportation Plans](#) (RTPs), and the [State Transportation Improvement Program](#) (STIP).

In 1994, the TC, in cooperation with Colorado Counties Incorporated, the Colorado Municipal League and the MPOs established the “Project Priority Programming Process” (4P). The 4P encourages Counties and TPRs to meet with their respective Transportation Commissioner to discuss transportation questions and concerns. In addition to the federal and state planning requirements, CDOT meets with Colorado counties to understand each the transportation priorities of each county.

RPP projects are selected through the 4P process and the planning process when TPRs and CDOT identify transportation priorities. Priorities for RPP funding are first identified in a RTP, with final project identification occurring during the development of the STIP. Both the RTP and the STIP are posted for public comment and are intended to inform stakeholders of the transportation projects that will be implemented in the time period listed.

The TC makes the final decision to adopt the STIP and the Statewide Plan (SWP).

C.6.8. Region Roles

Region Planners collaborate and consult with stakeholders through the planning process to identify RPP priorities, work with TPR’s as they develop their respective RTP’s and programming projects into the STIP. They participate in the Statewide Planning Team to guide policies and procedures. The Region Budget Office performs budget actions that shifts RPP into a project. CDOT’s Region Transportation Director approves final RPP project selection with consideration of input from the 4P meetings and TPR stakeholders.

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C.6.9. Reporting, Management, Documentation

C.6.9.1. Reporting to Internal and External Stakeholders

There are no formal reporting requirements for the RPP. However, RPP project selection is part of a complex transportation planning process.