



Date: March 17, 2021

To: High-Performance Transportation Enterprise Board

From: Nick Farber, Director, HPTE; Tony Meneghetti, HPTE Major Projects Manager

Subject: Resolution in Support for the I-270 Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Application

Purpose

The High-Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) Board of Directors (Board) is being asked to approve the attached resolution that commits HPTE toll backed financing for the I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project being submitted for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 INFRA Discretionary Grant Program

Action

The HPTE Board is asked to adopt a resolution that supports the staff recommendation.

Background

On February 17, 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY 2021 INFRA Discretionary Grant Program. CDOT Staff evaluated projects with the highest probability of award based on the selection criteria outlined in the NOFO. The I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project was identified as a top candidate for submission through this process.

Interstate 270 serves as the gateway connecting northern Denver metro communities with eastern metro areas, including Denver International Airport. I-270 is a National Freight corridor heavily used by commercial vehicles and is a critical economic driver in the region. Over the past decade, I-270 has become the most heavily-congested corridor in the state, resulting in negative economic impacts due to excessive delays and unreliable travel times. Emergency freeway closures occur at an increasing rate to make necessary repairs to failing bridges and crumbling infrastructure designed in the 1960s. Through an ongoing Environmental Assessment, solutions have been identified to 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 road's physical constraints, which will improve safety for the traveling public and enhance connectivity to the rest of the freight network in the United States.

At the core of the project, the outdated US6/Vasquez Boulevard interchange is a safety hazard for automobiles and pedestrians alike. The I-270 Corridor Safety and Mobility Project will eliminate the substandard "clover-leaf" loop ramps, add acceleration/auxiliary lanes to improve merging operations, and include extensive pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including trail connections to the regional Sand Creek Greenway. As a package, the I-270 improvements will reduce barriers to opportunity for lower-income individuals by accommodating alternate forms of transportation, increasing travel time reliability, and reducing negative environmental impacts heavily present in the corridor.

HPTE Resolution in Support of I-270 INFRA Grant Application

Based on traffic and revenue estimates from the Express Lanes Master Plan (ELMP), HPTE staff believe it reasonable for the HPTE to contribute **\$200M in HPTE toll-backed revenue financing**. A more in-depth traffic and revenue analysis is currently being conducted, taking into account post COVID traffic volumes, a gradual return to 2019 traffic levels, and an Express Lane direct connect at Central 70 only (the ELMP assumed additional direct connects at US 36, and I-25N). The study will be complete by early summer

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and could result in this contribution increasing or decreasing, depending on the results. If a larger portion of the project can be financed based on toll revenue projections, the HPTE contribution may increase; however, if the project cannot support that amount, other funding may have to be identified.

Options / Decision Matrix

1. **Staff Recommendation:** Approve the resolution supporting the HPTE financing amount.
2. Review but do not approve the resolution. Provide instructions on changes or revisions.

Attachment

Resolution #351: HPTE Financing Support for the I-270 Project