

Colorado Transportation Investment Office Memorandum

To: The CTIO Board of Directors
From: Piper Darlington, CTIO Director
Date: January 15, 2025

Subject: I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) Expansion of Operations Update

Purpose:

To update the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO)¹ Board of Directors on the efforts to expand the current operating parameters under the existing I-70 PPSL Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Requested Action:

No action is requested at this time.

Background:

The I-70 PPSL, more commonly referred to as the Mountain Express Lanes (MEXL), are 24 miles long (12 miles in each direction), running eastbound from Empire Junction through the Veterans Memorial Tunnels and westbound from the Veterans Memorial Tunnels to Empire Junction. The eastbound direction opened for tolling in December 2015 and the westbound direction opened in 2022. They both use a Hard Shoulder Running concept, whereby the inside shoulder lane is used as a single-lane Express Lane to provide additional capacity in the corridor, during peak travel periods only. The hours/days of operation each year are restricted based on the MOU between CTIO, CDOT, and FHWA.

Over the past year, CTIO staff has reviewed the MOU's parameters and discussed possible amendments with FHWA to better reflect the corridor's growing needs. In August, CTIO staff briefed the CTIO Board on the proposed amendments. In November and December of 2024, CTIO and CDOT convened a working group of stakeholders with representation from Idaho Springs, Clear Creek County, Denver Transit, the I-70 Coalition, FHWA and law enforcement to discuss how provide more flexibility to CTIO through expanded hours/days of operations. The attached presentation provides information on the outcome of that stakeholder outreach and next steps.

Attachments:

- **Attachment A:** I-70 Peak Period Shoulder Lanes (PPSL) Expansion of Operations Update

¹ The High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) is now doing business as the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO). CTIO is how the enterprise refers to itself now and in the future. However, the HPTE name is retained for legislative and legal documents.