

## Planning Connections - August 2016

*CDOT planning news you can use.*

### CDOT Prepares for HOV3+

In early 2013, the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) Board and Transportation Commission adopted resolutions requiring all high-occupancy vehicles (HOV) to have at least two passengers (in addition to the driver) to qualify as an HOV for designated HOV Express Lanes, beginning Jan. 1, 2017. This change is necessary for two reasons: to provide a desperately needed source of funding for the state's transportation infrastructure and to ensure trip reliability - especially mass transit - well into the future as the Denver and Front Range population explodes. Other states that have implemented HOV3+ are California, Washington, Texas, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida.

In preparation, CDOT and HPTE will be rolling out a comprehensive outreach and education campaign to ease the HOV3+ transition for commuters by working with area transportation management organizations (like Smart Commute Metro North, 36 Commuting Solutions and the Denver Regional Council of Governments), business organizations, and other transportation partners to help connect commuters with new carpool participants, transit options, and their final destinations. Before the end of 2016, CDOT will begin implementing Express Lanes solutions to assist motorcyclists and HOV drivers who use the Express Lanes in HOV only, never as toll-paying customers. The intent is to enable "free HOV-only" customers to use the lanes without having to pay for a switchable transponder or put money into an ExpressToll account.

So if you're asking: What is a switchable transponder? Can I get a free transponder? What is an ExpressToll account, and do I need one?, please visit the Express Lanes webpage at <https://www.codot.gov/programs/expresslanes> to learn more, or contact [Kari Grant](#).

### Thousands Listen in to Latest Telephone Town Halls

The first step in a three-phase public outreach effort called Together We Go were nine telephone town halls that drew approximately 20,000 members of the public.

Transportation Commissioners and CDOT regional transportation directors (RTDs) recently completed the telephone town halls for each of the state's Transportation Commission districts. The telephone town halls covered transportation progress made in each Transportation Commissioner District, CDOT technological initiatives, and funding. Commissioners and RTDs answered more than 160 live questions. CDOT continued to see increases in the average minutes that town hall participants stayed on the calls, from 11 minutes in 2014 to 16 minutes in 2016.

The second phase of Together We Go will include presentations to CDOT planning partners, the 10 rural transportation planning regions and five metropolitan planning organizations. The third phase will be presentations to expanded stakeholder groups. Together We Go is an opportunity to highlight CDOT achievements, enhance relationships through dialogue, and inform the next

statewide planning effort through an on-going annual conversation. Contact [Aaron Willis](#) for more information.

### **Adaptations for Climate Change Bring Agencies Together**

The transportation chapter of the [Colorado Climate Plan](#) outlines a number of strategies Colorado can implement to mitigate for and adapt to the effects of climate change on our transportation system, including extreme temperatures, severe forest fires and heavy precipitation on roadways and bridges, railways, and airports. To help advance these strategies, CDOT applied for and received a grant from the Transportation Research Board to host a workshop on climate change adaptations in transportation planning.

Forty-six participants from CDOT, Federal Highway Administration, National Renewable Energy Lab, Colorado Energy Office, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and rural transportation planning regions attended the July 14 Climate Change Adaptation Workshop in downtown Denver. They heard from a variety of panelists: Elizabeth Habic of the Maryland State Highway Administration, Jerri Bohard of the Oregon Department of Transportation, James Cromar of the Broward County (Florida) MPO, and Kim Ellis of Portland (Oregon) Metro. Each speaker focused on their agency's activities in linking climate change factors to transportation planning. Mike Meyer, senior advisor at WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc. and an engineering professor at the University of Denver, facilitated the workshop and provided background material on the effects of climate change. Susan Joy Hassol, a renowned international expert on communicating climate change to varied audiences, gave the keynote address during lunch, followed by small group breakout discussions afterwards. For more information on the workshop, contact [Michelle Scheuerman](#) or [Michael Snow](#).

### **CDOT Sustainability Program Responds to Edicts, Produces Action Plans**

Since 2005, Colorado governors have been committed to statewide sustainability. Because of these mandates and the growing awareness of its value, CDOT formalized a comprehensive Sustainability Program. The Sustainability Program manager, Sarah Mitchell, is located in the Environmental Programs Branch within the Division of Transportation Development (DTD). Sarah has a broad responsibility to identify opportunities to incorporate sustainability principles into agency decision-making, management, activities, and operations.

Sarah also tracks CDOT's progress toward complying with the Greening of State Government Executive Order (EO) and the *Colorado Climate Plan*. The 2015 Greening of State Government EO sets one- and five-year reduction goals in the areas of energy and water efficiency, petroleum use, and greenhouse gas emissions, and for environmental preferable purchasing. The *Colorado Climate Plan* includes specific strategies and policy recommendations for transportation to address the issue of climate change. The Sustainability Program is working with the Multimodal Planning Branch to implement these recommendations.

The Sustainability Program also produces an annual summary of Sustainability Action Items and accomplishments. These documents act as multi-divisional resources for disseminating ideas and providing information and direction for the implementation of sustainable actions throughout CDOT. Some examples of ongoing CDOT Action Items/Accomplishments include a CNG Vehicle Fueling Tutorial [video](#), hosting an Electric Vehicle Ride & Drive event, tracking of reclaimed asphalt pavement, and working with the Colorado Energy Office and Regional Air Quality Council on the ALT Fuels Colorado Program.

Links to these documents and several others can be found on the CDOT Sustainability Program website at <https://www.codot.gov/programs/environmental/Sustainability>. If you have questions or want to learn more about CDOT's Sustainability Program, contact [Sarah Mitchell](#).

### CDOT Supports Federal Greenhouse Gas Regulation

CDOT has gone on record supporting the federal government enacting a performance measure aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. CDOT Executive Director Shailen Bhatt signed a letter addressed to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in favor of a GHG measure; also signing the letter were California, Delaware, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington.

In addition, CDOT, the Air Pollution Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the three largest metropolitan planning organizations in Colorado - Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), North Front Range MPO (NFRMPO), and Pikes Peaks Area Council of Governments (PPACG) - met Aug. 15 about the possibility of a federal GHG measure. All but PPACG favor a GHG performance measure. PPACG has an MPO GHG performance measure but doesn't support a federal measure. Each entity will submit comments separately due to time restrictions.

The letter that CDOT signed and the August 15 meeting were both in response to FHWA's issuance of a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) seeking comment by Aug. 20 on whether and how the federal government should establish a carbon dioxide emission measure for on-road mobile sources. Responses were solicited to FHWA on Subpart H, *National Performance Management Measures to Assess the Congestion and Air Quality Improvement Program*. Although the rulemaking refers to greenhouse gases (GHG), it only targets one GHG, carbon dioxide.

Some submitted arguments in favor of establishing a carbon dioxide emission measure were that emissions inventories already exist and can be calculated more precisely with modeling and that it is time that federal regulations address GHG impacts of transportation in addition to air toxics (i.e., ozone and particulates). According to the notice of proposed rulemaking, GHG emissions from on-road sources represent about 23 percent of economy-wide GHGs in the U.S., but have accounted for more than two-thirds of the net increase in total GHGs since 1990, a time in which vehicle miles traveled increased by more than 30 percent. The increase in GHGs in the atmosphere is one of the contributors to climate change.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is sending a letter to FHWA opposing the imposition of a GHG measure. The majority of the states that have submitted comments to AASHTO oppose a greenhouse gas measure. Arguments against a federal carbon dioxide regulation include that developing a carbon dioxide measure would be inconsistent with the federal statute, which limits performance measures to those outlined in law; working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation on future Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards would be more cost-efficient and effective; and application of a GHG measurement and targeting requirement is impractical and unwarranted.

### Updates in Brief

- **National Freight Networks / National Highway Freight Program** - DTD and Region staff are currently working with planning partners to identify corridors with freight

investment needs and priorities for the designation of additional corridors under the National Multimodal Freight Network and National Highway Freight Network. A work group is also developing project selection criteria for the new National Highway Freight Program (formula freight program), with a project selection process for the first two years of the program (FY 16 and FY 17) planned for fall.

- **Alt Fuels Corridors** - DTD is working with the Colorado Energy Office (CEO), Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC), and members of the STAC working group to identify priority alternative fuel corridors for the state and submit nominations to the FHWA by August 22<sup>nd</sup>. FHWA will make final designations by December 1<sup>st</sup>, but no funding is currently associated with this program.
- **First Phase of I-70 West Operations Plan** -The first phase of the I-70 West Operations Plan targets the region between Copper Mountain (Milepost 195) eastbound to the Veterans Tunnels (MP 242). The overall I-70 West Operations Plan is between Dotsero (Milepost 133) west to MP 269 in the vicinity of Wadsworth Boulevard. The overall plan will build upon previous recommendations in the *I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (2011), the *I-70 Mountain Corridor Mobility and Operations Assessment* (2011) and the *FHWA Coordinated Freeway and Arterial Operations Handbook* (2006) to prioritize operational strategies to be implemented in the corridor over the next 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years.
- **Inventory of TDM Strategies** - An inventory of transportation demand management strategies has been completed for the *Statewide Transportation Demand Management Plan*. Early data indicates a good return on investment for vanpool programs. Other popular TDM strategies for municipalities are implementation of bike-share programs.
- **Lessons Learned about 2040 Statewide Planning Process** - Lessons learned from the 2040 planning process are available in a report published last month. The report can be found here, in the [addendum](#) to materials for the July Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting. Integration of other CDOT plans in the statewide plan is among the topics examined in the report.

### Transportation Commission and STAC

- A summary of the Transportation Commission's July 20-21 meeting can be found on the [STAC webpage](#).
- Notes from the July 29 STAC meeting will be available in the August packet, also located on the [STAC webpage](#).

*If you have suggestions for topics or updates to submit, etc. please send to [gail.hoffman@state.co.us](mailto:gail.hoffman@state.co.us). Copies of past issues of Planning Connections are available [here](#) under Planning Process.*