

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLICY DIRECTIVE <input type="checkbox"/> PROCEDURAL DIRECTIVE
Subject INTERCHANGE APPROVAL PROCESS		Number 1601.0
Effective 4/15/2021	Supersedes 10/16/08 12/15/04	Originating Office Division of Transportation Development

Please Note: New proposed changes resulting from the Transportation Commission Meeting in March are highlighted in yellow.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Directive is to establish fair and consistent procedures regarding the review and evaluation of requests for new interchanges and major improvements to existing interchanges on the state highway system.

II. AUTHORITY

Transportation Commission, § 43-1-106, C.R.S.
 § 43-3-101, C.R.S. (Freeway Law)
 § 43-2-147, C.R.S. (Highway Access Law)
 2 CCR 601-1 “State Highway Access Code”

III. BACKGROUND

The Transportation Commission (“Commission”) recognizes that state highways are important to meeting the mobility needs of the public, and that it is important to the quality of life and economic health of the state of Colorado for the state highway system to provide safe and efficient interregional and interstate movement of people and goods. To that end, the Commission must manage the location, design, operations and maintenance of interchanges on the state highway system.

IV. POLICY

A. It is the policy of the Commission that all requests for new interchanges and major improvements to existing interchanges on the state highway system be reviewed and evaluated in a fair and consistent manner, that sufficient information be available to make an informed decision, and that duplicative analytical, regulatory and procedural requirements be minimized.

B. Since each request for a new interchange or interchange modification has its own unique circumstances, the Commission will take into account these unique circumstances in judging the relative merits of each request for a new interchange or interchange modification on facilities owned by the Colorado Department of Transportation (“CDOT”). To that end, the Commission recognizes that there must be flexibility to ensure a level of analysis appropriate to the circumstances surrounding each proposal.

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C. In order to ensure consistency with local plans, needs and priorities, and the ability to have the long term contractual relationships that are necessary to maintain the infrastructure of the state highway system, applicants must be local governmental units. CDOT-initiated new interchanges or interchange modifications must comply with the same analytical and procedural requirements as local government applicants.

D. The following general policies will apply to all proposals for new or modified interchanges on the state highway system unless otherwise agreed to by the Commission:

1. Approval of Interchanges and Interchange Modifications: To balance the need for fair and consistent treatment of all proposals to add a new interchange or modify an existing interchange to the state highway system with the need for flexibility to ensure the level of analysis appropriate to the circumstances surrounding each proposal, the Commission has identified three (3) categories of proposals.

a) Type 1: Proposals for new interchanges on the state highway system with a functional classification of Interstate or Freeway will be submitted to the Commission for action. The Commission will also take action on other new interchanges or interchange modifications referred to it by the Chief Engineer.

b) Type 2: Proposals for new interchanges not on the Interstate or Freeway System and modifications to existing interchanges will be submitted to the Chief Engineer for action. The applicant may appeal the Chief Engineer’s decision as it relates to this policy to the Commission.

c) Type 2a: Proposals for minor interchange improvements that will have little or no impact to the state highway system or surrounding local transportation system, consistent with the definition and guidance provided by FHWA. Approvals for Type 2a proposals are delegated by the Chief Engineer to the Region Transportation Director.

2. Cost Sharing:

a) The state highway system shall be owned by CDOT.

b) The applicant is responsible for all costs for the development, administration, and evaluation of proposals for new interchanges or modifications to existing interchanges.

c) The applicant is responsible for all costs including, but not limited to, design, rights of way, construction, maintenance, operations, environmental mitigation and remediation and replacement of structures and ancillary facilities associated with new interchanges in perpetuity.

d) Responsibility for all costs including, but not limited to, design, rights of way, construction, maintenance, operations, Transportation Demand Management strategy implementation, environmental mitigation and remediation and replacement of structures and ancillary facilities owned by CDOT associated with existing interchanges, upgrades of existing intersections on state highways to interchanges, and ancillary facilities on the state highway system will be negotiated through the final Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”) consistent with the financial plan identified in a System Level Study.

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e) The Commission must approve CDOT's participation in any cost sharing proposal.

3. Connections to the State Highway System:

a) Interchange connections to the state highway system are intended to improve the operations and safety of the state highway system, serve regional travel purposes or provide access to regional destinations. Therefore, interchange connections from state highways must be to regionally significant roadways or regionally significant publicly owned facilities, or result in a significant improvement in the operations and safety of the state highway system.

b) A regionally significant roadway is defined as a roadway classified as a principal arterial or higher classification in the most recently adopted Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation plan in urban areas, or if the roadway has been identified as regionally significant within an adopted Regional Transportation Plan, NEPA/environmental study, feasibility study, corridor optimization plan, or access management plan in which CDOT staff has participated and the Chief Engineer finds acceptable.

c) Access to local land uses must be provided to the extent reasonable and feasible by the local transportation system.

4. Inclusion of Transportation Demand Management Strategies

a) To preserve the overall functionality and operability of the state of Colorado's highway system, the applicant will implement traffic reduction or Transportation Demand Management ("TDM") strategies to preserve the long-term functionality of the constructed interchange improvement. The effectiveness of TDM strategies is highly dependent on the specific location, complementary strategies, the nature of the travel segment being targeted, and implementation and promotion. TDM requirements apply to new Type 1 and Type 2 interchange proposals. The TDM requirement does not apply to Type 2a proposals. The proposed TDM improvements will be included for analysis in the System Level Study.

b) As background, TDM helps the traveling public by offering access to multiple transportation modes through strategies like promoting increased transit, integrating with mobility hubs, ridesharing, walking, biking, and teleworking in order to reduce reliance on travel in a single-occupant vehicle. TDM helps the state by optimizing the use and available capacity of the existing transportation infrastructure. This TDM requirement intends to implement appropriate TDM strategies that preserve the functionality of interchanges on the state highway system in order to maximize the benefit created from new infrastructure investments. Therefore, the implementation of TDM strategies reduces vehicle miles traveled, highway congestion, and the subsequent greenhouse emissions.

c) At the discretion of the CDOT Chief Engineer, TDM strategies would apply to Type 2 interchange modifications on interstate facilities where the current operational Level of Service ("LOS") is an F, for the current year, during peak hours for the mainline in at least one direction of travel as identified in the System Level Study. Additionally, TDM strategies would be required if the LOS is predicted to be at level 'F' at the 20-year design year timeframe under a no-build scenario.

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d) As a goal, the recommended TDM strategies should result in a 3% or greater average daily traffic (“ADT”) reduction for the preferred alternative in Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”) Boundary Areas and a 1% or greater ADT reduction for the preferred alternative outside the MPO Boundary Areas. The reduction threshold goal shall be calculated from the opening day of the new facility, or 5-years from opening day if the TDM strategies are implemented on a phased schedule for traffic conditions with the assumption that the interchange improvements have been built. The trip reduction goal applies to the traffic volumes for the interchange ramps (all movement) as identified in the System Level Study.

e) The final IGA will outline TDM-related commitments along with a phased implementation schedule, if necessary. Any phased implementation schedule should be based on a combination of traffic volume ADT and LOS forecasts identified in Procedural Directive 1601.1.

f) It is the discretion of the Chief Engineer if TDM strategies could be reduced for interchange applications based on factors such as changes in land use and existing TDM programs or strategies. The factors used by the Chief Engineer are identified during the Pre-Application Meeting and are detailed in Procedural Directive 1601.1.

g) The applicant should also recognize that TDM strategies require some level of education and outreach to multiple stakeholders. TDM strategies can be highly effective and range in cost and should be accompanied by local capacity enhancements. These suggested strategies can be considered individually or grouped depending on the location, population, employment, land use, and if there is an existing transit system available. Lastly, CDOT recognizes that the suggested TDM strategy list identified in the Procedural Directive requires a range of possible partnerships that could include, but are not limited to, the private sector, local and regional transit agencies, Transportation Management Organizations or Transportation Management Associations, Business Improvement Districts, homeowners associations, special districts and other quasi-government and non-profit organization to fully execute the agreed-upon TDM improvement(s).

h) The Procedural Directive provides the applicant with a TDM scorecard and a target point system based on the type and location of the proposed improvement, to develop a project-specific TDM plan that will be included in the System Level Study. The project-specific TDM plan will include an analysis of the proposed TDM improvement, and how that proposed improvement will achieve the goals identified in Procedural Directive 1601.1.

5. Approval Process:

a) An initial IGA must be developed between the applicant and CDOT addressing responsibility for administrative and application costs, analytical procedures and responsibilities, anticipated level of design detail, approval process, anticipated schedule and other necessary issues following a project scoping meeting between the applicant and CDOT. An initial IGA may be developed for Type 2a proposals at the discretion of the Region Transportation Director.

b) The Commission (for Type I proposals) and the Chief Engineer (for Type 2 proposals) shall take action on a System Level Study of the impacts of the proposed interchange or

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interchange modification on the state and local transportation system and surrounding area. The System Level Study must include a preliminary financial plan that identifies which parties are responsible for applicable costs.

c) Following the System Level Study approval, the new interchange or interchange modification proposal must be determined consistent with the applicable fiscally constrained regional transportation plan, receive approval of the applicable environmental documents consistent with the CDOT Environmental Stewardship Guide and receive NEPA approval and access approval by FHWA for all Interstate related proposals.

d) A final IGA, consistent with the approved System Level Study and approved by the Chief Engineer, that addresses all necessary commitments by the applicant including, but not limited to, construction, mitigation, operations, TDM strategies, maintenance, ownership will be negotiated after the System Level Study is approved and the applicable environmental and design requirements are addressed.

e) As an incentive to encourage cooperative corridor planning, a full systems analysis is not required when a proposed interchange or interchange modification is consistent with an approved corridor optimization and access control plan. In such cases, the Chief Engineer may define additional information necessary to ensure the proposed interchange meets acceptable design, safety, operational, and other applicable requirements.

f) The applicants must demonstrate significant progress, as defined by milestones in the IGA, towards implementation of the project within three (3) years of approval of the System Level Study by the Commission or Chief Engineer. If the applicant has not made significant progress toward implementation of the interchange project within three (3) years of this approval, the applicant may submit a written request to the Chief Engineer for a one (1) year time extension. No more than two (2) one-year extensions may be granted by the Chief Engineer.

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Policy Directive shall be implemented by all Regions, Branches, Divisions, and Offices of the Colorado Department of Transportation.

The Office of Policy and Government Relations shall post this Policy Directive on CDOT’s intranet as well as on public announcements.

VI. REVIEW DATE

This Policy Directive shall be reviewed before April 2026.

Herman Stockinger, III
Transportation Commission Secretary

Date