

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Secretary Ray LaHood
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As members of the Colorado State Transportation Advisory Committee, representing 15 Transportation Planning Regions from across the state, we are writing urge you to provide TIGER Discretionary Grant Program funding for critically needed transportation projects in our great state. Colorado has submitted applications to the USDOT for a number of worthy projects.

The STAC has prioritized **two / three** projects.

Our first priority is the I-25 North Interim Managed Lanes Project in North Metropolitan Denver. This project would bring immediate relief to one of Colorado's busiest and most congested Interstate corridors. This project adds one new managed lane with variable tolls in each direction on a six-mile stretch of Interstate 25 from US 36 north of downtown Denver to 120th Avenue in Adams County. This new capacity will create a managed-lane network in the north metro area, connecting to existing lanes on I-25 in downtown Denver and soon-to-be-completed lanes on US 36 between Denver and Boulder. In the current fiscal climate, states are being challenged to do more with less. This project puts this concept into practice and proposes to maximize the existing roadway by narrowing the insider shoulder. This approach requires no additional right-of-way. All told, this \$44 million project is \$100 million less than the original cost estimate for constructing new lanes along this stretch in a traditional configuration.

Funding for the second priority project, the I-25 Fillmore Interchange Project in Colorado Springs would help improve traffic flow for a critical north / south artery for the Front Range region. This section of Interstate, which provides significant military movement and access for staff at Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base, and the Air Force Academy, is plagued with high traffic volumes and congestion. Additionally, the project helps provide access for a nearby VA hospital. The I-25 Fillmore Interchange Project would relieve congestion by replacing the current obsolete interchange with an innovative Diverging Diamond Interchange. Recognizing that budgets are constrained and resources are scarce, this project will innovatively utilize the standing bridge structure to avoid full reconstruction of the interchange. Because of this approach, the project is estimated to save taxpayers over \$20 million in design and construction costs while achieving similar operational benefits to the previous planned single point interchange design.

The third priority project, the I-25 Dillon-Eden Interchange Project in Pueblo, would greatly improve access to I-25 for the areas manufacturing firms, commercial operations, retail businesses and service industries. By constructing a "split diamond interchange" this needed

transportation improvement will provide new access to I-25 to local residents and businesses alike while easing congestion in a growing part of the State. Perhaps most importantly, this interchange is critical to opening up serious economic development opportunities in this economically distressed community.

We strongly believe that each of these transportation priorities is deserving of a grant on its own merits and has significant ramifications for long-term outcomes for national, state and regional transportation. We are happy to provide you with any further information you may need and hope you will work closely with us and the State of Colorado to ensure that worthy projects are adequately funded through the TIGER IV Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Vince Rogalski
Chairman, STAC

cc. Victor Mendez

List other STAC members/representative area here