

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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To: State Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Tim Harris, Chief Engineer
Ben Stein, Chief Financial Officer

Regarding: Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance & Partnerships (RAMP)

Purpose: The Colorado Department of Transportation is changing how it programs and expends funds for multi-year transportation projects. This new effort, referred to as Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP), will better coordinate project expenditures and available funding. By closely matching project expenditure timing with the availability of total transportation funds, the department will be able to increase state transportation spending over the next five years. The projects implemented with this effort will focus on two main categories designed to improve the safety and operation of the state's highways, bridges and tunnels and to expand public and private partnership opportunities. A third potential pool related to direct federal funding in larger metro areas is also being explored. All projects identified for RAMP funding will be in addition to CDOT's planned construction program or accelerated from this program.

While this change in fiscal management will help to fill the transportation maintenance funding gap for a while, it is not permanent, nor is it large enough to meet Colorado's longer-term system preservation and capacity needs. This is a challenge that will require a much greater, statewide effort.

Background: The Colorado Transportation Commission has been conservative with its budget in the past because both state and federal funds have fluctuated greatly. There is now an opportunity to take a more effective approach to budgeting and begin funding multi-year projects based on year of expenditure, rather than saving for the full amount of a project cost prior to beginning the project. This effort will match project expenditures with available revenues to provide the department with a one-time opportunity, over a five year period, to increase its annual funding for critical unmet transportation needs that help preserve our transportation infrastructure and improve system operations around the state. By making this change, CDOT is joining other DOTs around the nation who have moved to this more efficient and effective means of project delivery.

Not a long-term solution: While this change in fiscal management will help to fill the transportation maintenance funding gap for a while, it is not permanent, nor is it large enough to meet Colorado's longer-term transportation investment and capacity needs. This is a challenge that will require a much greater, statewide effort.

Timing: The Colorado Transportation Commission will begin discussion of program details, process, criteria, and timing at their Commission Workshop on December 20, 2012. Preceding that, CDOT Management will provide an overview to the State Transportation Advisory Committee on the program in advance of an official Public Announcement.