

COLORADO'S TRANSPORTATION CRISIS

Transportation infrastructure is the backbone of the state's economy. To the extent that transportation infrastructure supports the efficient movement of people, goods and services, it creates jobs and improves our quality of life. A first-rate region and state cannot survive on a second-rate transportation system.

We cannot expect a healthy transportation system and economy if the following conditions continue to exist.

- Current sources of transportation funding are not stable or reliable
- The Denver region is known for its congestion (18th in the nation¹)
- Congestion and lost time cost money (\$1,000 per household in Denver metro area²)

How bad is it?

- The Denver metropolitan region faces a **transportation funding shortfall of \$40 billion**³

How did we get here?

- No state or federal gas tax increase since early 1990s
- State gas tax is a flat tax that does not rise with inflation or cost of fuel. Two decades ago, the 18 cents of tax collected could buy much more than the same 18 cents collected today.
- Even though the number of cars on the road continues to increase, better fuel efficiency means gas tax revenues have remained flat
- Transportation funding is further limited by a recent recession and TABOR revenue constraints
- Meanwhile, costs to implement transportation projects have increased. The Colorado Construction Cost Index has increased annually on average by 55 percent from 2004 to 2007.
- The bottom line: we have less money to pay for increasingly expensive projects



Photo provided by CDOT

I-70 viaduct

It will get worse without new funding...

- The region is expected to add 1.6 million more people by 2035, the same as adding **another** Adams County, Denver, and Jefferson County
- Annual delay time will nearly triple from 60 hours/households to 170 hours/household
- Congested lane miles will triple, from 1,400 to 3,600
- Congestion increases air pollutant emissions, degrading our region's air quality

¹Texas Transportation Institute 2007 Urban Mobility Report

²DRCOG 2007 Annual Report on Traffic Congestion

³2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

What have we done to try to solve the problem?

- Generate new funding sources:
 - Our region has supported alternative financing mechanisms such as tolling (I-25 HOT Lanes) and public highway authorities (E-470, Northwest Parkway)
 - Many local governments have already passed additional sales taxes, impact fees or registration fees to supplement the gas tax. More than 80 percent of municipal transportation dollars are from sources other than the gas tax.
 - FasTracks will add more than \$6 billion in transit projects in the metro area over the next 10 years
 - Referendum C is estimated to generate \$900 million for statewide transportation projects⁴, but addresses only a **small fraction** of the total needs. Also, it is a temporary fix that sunsets in 2010.
- Plan and zone responsibly:
 - Our region has tried to plan and zone more compact development and reduce congestion by focusing on infill, redevelopment and transit-oriented development. Infill development accounted for 34 percent of all new housing units in 2004 in the Denver metropolitan region.
 - The regional transportation plan encourages congestion mitigation by emphasizing programs that get people to carpool and vanpool, work from home and use public transit to reduce congestion
- Leadership in bringing stakeholders together:
 - DRCOG's Ad Hoc Committee on Transportation Finance was convened in August 2006 with representation from a broad range of interests. The committee's recommendations were forwarded to the Governor's Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel in April 2007.
 - The DRCOG Board of Directors adopted a resolution in support of the Governor's Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel's report and recommendations in May 2008
 - The DRCOG Board has taken a position in support of SB 09-108 (FASTER) as a first step toward meeting the state's needs.



Congestion on southbound I-25

Considerations for seeking a long-term solution...

- Stopgap measures and temporary fixes will not produce an adequate and reliable transportation system
- Referendum C has only bought us time to find a real solution. FasTracks cannot solve all our congestion problems and tolling can only be a partial solution since not all roadways can be tolled.
- The state and our region need permanent and stable federal and state funding sources, whether as enhancements of existing funding mechanisms, the creation of new funding sources or a combination of the two
- Metro area local governments, the business community and voters are ready to partner on a solution



Photo provided by CDOT

Pavement conditions on Colorado Boulevard

⁴Legislative Council, Revenue Forecast (6-09)