

Excerpt From "A Report to Colorado"

Process

14 CDOT should continue to ensure resources are expended in an effective and accountable manner.

- Seek opportunities and innovative ways to improve processes and projects
- Use management systems to optimize investments
- Use an asset management philosophy to spend dollars where they will do the most good over the long run
- Expand performance measures to better account for transit

CDOT is regularly recognized for its commitment to efficiency and accountability. The department's performance is validated through the use of a performance measurement program that ensures taxpayer investments are aligned with goals established by the Colorado Transportation Commission. The Panel encourages CDOT to continue looking for ways to operate more efficiently.

Efficiency and Accountability Assessments

The Task Force on Transportation Finance, created in 2003 by Governor Owens, found that CDOT has "minimized administrative overhead, and has instituted measures to maximize innovative opportunities in order to leverage as much funding capacity as possible." Colorado, the task force said, is a leader among the states in innovative financing and efficient and effective program management.

CDOT operating practices were again scrutinized in 2007 as part of Governor Ritter's Government Efficiency and Management Performance Reviews of state agencies. The final report is not yet released, but a draft indicates there will be just two recommendations, both calling for CDOT to contract out less work. The review said using the department's own garage technicians and environmental staff is more cost effective than contracting with private businesses.

During regional meetings, the Panel also heard about other ways CDOT maintenance crews and engineers save money. One example is the installation of snow fences in mountain valleys to catch snow before it blows across highways. Studies show that snow fences save \$100 in snow-removal costs for every dollar invested in them over their 20-year lifespan. Another example: CDOT recycles asphalt, when possible, during resurfacing projects, saving nearly \$40 per ton.

Asset Management and Performance Measurement

Management systems monitor CDOT's performance in four major areas: pavement, bridges, maintenance and congestion. The department's philosophy is to spend money where it does the most good over the long run to maintain, operate and upgrade infrastructure. This approach helps ensure that we get the most from our transportation dollars. Similar performance measures will be put in place for transit, rail and other modes of transportation if those elements become part of an expanded state system.

The backlog of deferred maintenance makes it difficult to optimize the use of available revenue. Just as maintaining your car is less costly than a major repair, preventative maintenance on roadways is less costly than reconstruction. If additional revenue can reduce the backlog, the budget for long-term maintenance may actually decrease.

Innovation

Innovative approaches can make the transportation system more effective and efficient. For example, a design-build contract saved significant time and money in the construction of the T-REX light rail/highway project on I-25. The introduction of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on I-25 provided a revenue-generating alternative to congested general-purpose lanes.

15 Use the transportation planning process to select projects funded with new revenue.

- Seek broad participation for a broad range of investment types
- Assure inter-regional priorities are considered

CDOT develops regional and statewide transportation plans with significant input from the public, elected officials and businesses, as well as environmental and transit interests. Fifteen Transportation Planning Regions hold regular public meetings in an effort to understand the needs of communities. This process is the best way to develop project priorities with grassroots support. An effort should be made to bring new stakeholders to the table if additional revenue allows for the expansion of the state transportation network beyond highways. In addition, the Statewide Transportation Advisory Council should help prioritize inter-regional projects.