

CREATION OF A CDOT CORRIDOR OPERATIONS DIVISION

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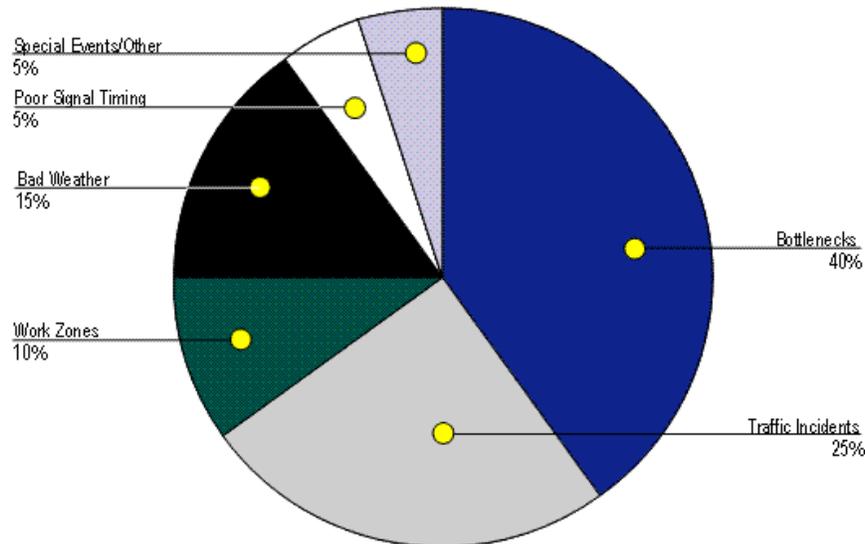
Summary

In FY2013, CDOT will create a new Corridor Operations Division. The purpose of the Division will be to provide real-time operational management of the State's congested highway corridors. The Corridor Operations Division will meet the goal of creating greater mobility, reliability and safety from the existing highway system as an alternative to adding costly new capacity.

Rationale for a Corridor Operations Division

The major response to congestion by state DOTs has been to build new lane capacity. As transportation resources become scarcer and technology advances, there is an increasing emphasis on real-time operations of the existing system as an additional approach to reducing congestion. CALTRANS estimates that operational investments have three times the mobility benefits per dollar spent as traditional capacity improvements.

As noted by the chart below, highway bottlenecks are the source of 40% of highway congestion. However, 60% of congestion is related to events with effects that can be mitigated through real-time operational management.



While there are many reasons to move toward the creation of the Corridor Operations Division, CDOT is also experiencing a catalytic change that will immediately result in the need for real-time corridor management. Managed lanes are becoming a new choice for travel reliability in congested corridors. In addition to the existing I-25 managed lanes from downtown to US 36, at least three current projects are incorporating managed lanes:

- US 36 from I-25 to Boulder, with first phase completion in 2015
- I-25 from US 36 to 120th Ave., with completion in 2015
- I-70 Twin Tunnels, with completion in 2013

CDOT needs to immediately develop an operational capability for these managed lane projects to make the most of corridor travel benefits.

Responsibility and Functions of the Corridor Operations Division

The Division will have the responsibility for operating traffic control on a real-time basis in the congested portions of the Interstate and state highway system. The initial area of coverage will include the Denver metro region and the I-70 mountain corridor.

Some of the core functions of the new Division will include:

- Traffic operations centers
- Managed lane operations and congestion pricing (in partnership with HPTE)
- Peak period shoulder lane operations
- Variable speed limit management
- Ramp metering and interchange signal operations
- Construction lane closures
- Incident response/lane closures
- Traveler information via VMS, CoTrip, 511, and other sources

In addition, the Corridor Operations Division would cooperate with other transportation agencies to implement travel demand management programs to reduce peak period highway use. The Division will also work with Colorado State Patrol and local law enforcement to ensure that incident response plans effectively protect both traveler safety and mobility.

The Corridor Operations Division will not be responsible for construction or recurring operations and maintenance (e.g. snow removal, pavement marking, or fixed signing).

Implementation

The strategy to create the Corridor Operations Division is to hire a Director, and then identify those portions of CDOT that would best be reorganized to form the new Division. The process will occur throughout FY2013, with broad staff participation to build an understanding of the new operations direction and to support a Division shift to a 24x7 service culture similar to existing CDOT units such as the Eisenhower Tunnel.

The tentative schedule:

- August 2012 Advertise for the Division Director position
- November 2012 Hire the Division Director
- January-March 2013 Define the Division Through Staff Workshops
- April-May 2013 Complete the Division Reorganization

The impact to the budget in 2013 will be minor—part of one year salary for the Division Director. In 2014, many of the potential benefits of the Corridor Operations Division can be achieved through reorganization of existing staff. Over time, Corridor Operations will need identified funding through allocation decisions as is currently done with other programs such as maintenance, surface treatment, safety projects, and mobility projects.