

## Tough issues on the table

**"The panel represents the finest collection of minds to ever address transportation issues in Colorado."**

*-Russ George,  
Executive Director,  
CDOT*

The Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel has met twice since the April 5<sup>th</sup> Statewide Transportation Summit.

The panel's first post-summit meeting, in Mid-April, was highlighted by an extensive Q&A session with Governor Ritter. He encouraged the group to begin its work with a willingness to consider all issues and examine all revenue options. Governor Ritter emphasized that the panel should ultimately recommend revenue options that are significant and will win the support of voters.

CDOT Executive Director Russ George has described the process undertaken by the panel as a funnel. "The Panel's discussions are wide ranging. We are just beginning to filter ideas and options down. No question though, there is an end line for the Panel and it is this November," he told a recent meeting of municipal officials.

The panel was briefed, at its April meeting, on the deteriorating condition of state and local roads, increasing demands for transit services, opportunities for passenger rail development, the role of aviation and environmental concerns.

Reactions to the multitude of issues are as diverse as the panel itself. Maintenance of the current system is pointed to by many as a key concern. Others urge that the state's efforts be connected with federal and local funding approaches. Panel member Mick Ireland observed that the briefings and early discussions have made clear that the panel needs to think big, "if the outcome of

our work is a four cent gas tax increase, we haven't done our job."

The Panel met again in early May to discuss visions of Colorado's transportation system. The panel affirmed the planning efforts of the state's 15 Transportation Planning Regions, seeing no need to duplicate the regional efforts, however there may be a need to summarize the work of the Regions for public consumption. The need to recognize the connection between cost of goods and transportation was raised, as well as the need to meet the mobility needs of Colorado's car-less population. Additionally, funding source criteria were brainstormed with many possible criteria noted.

The link between transportation and land-use emerged as significant point of discussion for the panel. Addressing land use is a local responsibility and not part of the mandate of transportation agencies. Simultaneously, the transportation system is profoundly impacted by local land-use decisions and an argument was made that the rest of the state should not have to pay for local land use decisions that impose additional infrastructure costs.

Executive Director George acknowledged that the issues facing the panel are numerous, but expressed confidence in the group's ability to address these difficult issues, "The panel represents the finest collection of minds to ever address transportation issues in Colorado."

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***The Update is prepared by the Division of Transportation Development's Planning Branch to keep CDOT employees and the public informed about the work of the Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel. The Update will be distributed periodically during the term of the panel.***

# Advisory Committee Membership

## Chair

Cary Kennedy, Colorado State Treasurer

## Members

Debra Baskett, City and County of Broomfield

Dan Blankenship, Colorado Association of Transit Agencies

Dr. Ray Chamberlain, Parsons Brinkerhoff

Tom Fisher, Mesa County

Dan Grossman, Environmental Defense

Carol Hedges, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute

Bill Jensen, Vail Resorts

Mike Johnson, Kutak Rock

Cal Marsella, RTD

Karin McGowan, DRCOG

Bill Moore, Pueblo Metropolitan Planning Organization

Rachel Nance, Colorado Realtors Assoc.

Joe O'Dea, Concrete Express

Flo Raitano, I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition

Bill Vidal, City and County of Denver

Tamra Ward, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Dee Wisor, Sherman & Howard

Wayne Williams, El Paso County Commissioner

Governor Ritter appointed an advisory committee of transportation policy experts to support the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel. The committee advises the panel on technical issues ranging from finance to planning to public opinion.

The advisory committee meets the Tuesday following panel meetings at CDOT headquarters. All advisory committee meetings are open to the public. During the committee's first two meetings the group reviewed the revenue option study prepared for CDOT. Additionally, the committee has advised the panel to consider revenue options using five year increments to 2028.

The committee has made available its reading list on the CDOT web site (see "On the Web" for details)

## Up Next

The Blue Ribbon Panel will next meet on May 31 at the offices of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). The meeting will include a briefing by DRCOG staff on recent work examining the implications of different development scenarios. The Panel will hold its first public meeting, outside of Denver, in Meeker on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Throughout the summer the panel will be meeting around the state. A complete list of meeting dates, locations and times is available on the Panel's web site

## On the Web

Governor's Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel site: <http://www.colorado.gov/governor/blue-ribbon-transportation-panel.html>

The CDOT web site includes information provided to the Panel: <http://www.dot.state.co.us/StateWidePlanning/PlansStudies/blueribbon.asp>



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