



April 18, 2022

Kathy Hall, Chair
Colorado Transportation Commission

Shoshana Lew, Executive Director
Colorado Department of Transportation

Members
Colorado Transportation Commission
2829 W Howard Place
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Madame Chair, Members of the Transportation Commission and Director Lew —

The historic passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and its attendant robust infrastructure grant programs, presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to advance critical infrastructure projects across the nation and Colorado. As elected and business leaders in the North I-25 Corridor, we were optimistic at the prospect of a substantial federal grant to complete the unfunded and “shovel ready” North I-25 Corridor Express Lane project to assure the health and safety of the thousands of Coloradans, interstate travelers and freight haulers that utilize the corridor every day while addressing the important air quality concerns caused by unnecessary congestion along the miles of two-lane interstate.

We were recently struck and dismayed to learn that the North I-25 Corridor will *not* be among Colorado’s applicants for IIJA available grants and, notably, the Mega Grant. The decision appears to be internal and without the input or determination by the Colorado Transportation Commission. We wish to understand what process was used by CDOT to determine which project would be pursued for the Mega Grant? What criteria? What stakeholders were involved in the decision? Who was the decision maker?

The IIJA Mega Program was built, according to USDOT,¹ to “support large, complex projects that are difficult to fund by other means and likely to generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.”

Eligible projects include “a highway or bridge project carried out on—

- the National Multimodal Freight Network of title 49, United States Code;
- the National Highway Freight Network, United States Code; or
- the National Highway System, United States Code;”²

The North I-25 multi-modal corridor — stretching from north of Fort Collins south through the North Metro suburbs of Thornton and Northglenn — serves as the spine of Colorado’s Front Range, the essential national multi-modal freight corridor linking interstate commerce, and a critical national defense asset. It substantially serves as the economic connector of Colorado’s fastest growing region - northern Colorado. Left unfunded, the resulting flow of traffic will be greatly impeded, safety will be significantly compromised, and air quality will be acutely impacted from heightened emissions from congestion.

¹ US Department to Transportation, [The Mega Program, March 22, 2022](#)

² US Department to Transportation, [The Mega Program, March 22, 2022](#)

In regard to safety, we are very concerned that upon completion of Segments 6, 7, and 8 of North I-25 and without a financial commitment to fund and complete the outstanding elements of the entire stretch of the corridor, namely Segment 5 (Johnstown to Mead) and Segment 2 (Hwy 128 to US 36), the corridor will be a hodgepodge of roadway and safety conditions that will present significant safety concerns and gaps in roadway capacity, trip reliability and flow. At present, levels of service along the corridor sit at 3 or 4 with significant additional safety concerns that already exist within Segment 2. The current level of service is projected to further erode upon opening of the three lanes in Segments 6, 7, and 8 as it flows south into two-lane segment 5.

Failure to complete the project throughout the corridor, in the expected timeframe, runs contrary to the economic, environmental and quality of life goals established by the Commission³ for the North I-25 Express Lane Corridor, including:

- Making safety improvements to reduce the number of crashes and fatalities
- Decreasing travel time and increasing trip reliability
- Reducing emissions and improving freight efficiency
- Employing congestion management and safety technology to improve the travel experience
- Rebuilding aging and obsolete infrastructure
- Improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity

We remain very grateful for the investment and funding of Segments 6, 7, and 8 of the North I-25 Corridor Express Lanes Project. We are encouraged by the forward progress of the public private partnership option that is pending and working through the CTIO process to address the outstanding corridor elements. We are grateful for the active work undertaken to assess other feasible financing options available to CDOT outside of private investment.

Both financing tracks should — and can, with your commitment — be married with a substantial Mega Program Grant that enhances the funding availability for completion of the full corridor with the multimodal enhancements long sought by CDOT and the community. Absent a viable financing track, however, a Mega Program Grant is one of the last remaining funding options available in the near term to complete the project.

We call on the Transportation Commission to include North I-25 among the IJJA Mega Program Grant applicants. CDOT should avail itself of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to supplement, enhance or fund this critical, nationally significant freight interstate corridor on the national highway system. The time is now. The project costs, and the eventual burden on CDOT, are increasing nearly \$27M every year that the project isn't completed.

We are shovel-ready, have strong support of the diverse community and all stakeholders, and meet all the criteria and more to make the North I-25 Corridor Express Lanes Project an ideal applicant for a Mega Program Grant. Please. Complete North I-25.

Sincerely,

Scott James
Commissioner, Weld County
Chair, North I-25 Coalition

Barbara Koelzer
Chair, Fix North I-25 Business Alliance

Carson Priest
Executive Director,
Smart Commute Metro North

Sandra Hagen Solin
Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

With our respective members:

Local Governments

- Berthoud
- Dacono
- Erie

- Evans
- Firestone
- Fort Collins
- Fredrick
- Johnstown
- Longmont

- Loveland
- Mead
- Milliken
- Northglenn
- Thornton
- Windsor

- Adams County
- City and County of Broomfield
- Larimer County

³ Colorado Department of Transportation, [Background: I-25 Fort Collins to Mead](#)

- Weld County
- North Front Range MPO

**Business
Organizations**
Northern Colorado
Legislative Alliance

Fort Collins Chamber
of Commerce
Greeley Chamber of
Commerce

Loveland Chamber of
Commerce
Upstate Colorado
Economic Development

cc: Governor Jared Polis