



April 21, 2021

Attn: Senator Faith Winter, Representative Matt Gray, Sarah Hughes  
cc: Pete Piccolo

Dear Senator Winter, Representative Gray, and Ms. Hughes,

Thank you for your work on the upcoming transportation funding proposal. We appreciate many of the investments currently included in the proposal that prioritize economic and environmental sustainability as Colorado works to modernize its transportation system. In particular we support the investments in electric vehicle equity, including eBikes.

We are also happy to see the focus on pollution mitigation in nonattainment regions. This puts a focus on sustainable transportation solutions where they are needed most, in congested areas that don't yet have good multi-modal options.

However, based on our analysis of the current proposal, Bicycle Colorado is not yet able to support the transportation funding package without stronger investments in bicycle and other multimodal infrastructure that provide safe, affordable, convenient, non-polluting forms of transportation. With a few exceptions, this package continues a trend of overemphasis on expensive urban highway projects. This focus has historically precluded significant opportunities to advance the multimodal options needed for a complete and balanced transportation system, including bicycle infrastructure and safe road conditions for bicycling in rural and urban areas. Instead, the focus on widening major road corridors encourages more motor vehicle transportation and the detriments associated with this such as greenhouse gas emissions, bad air quality, and a growing threat to the [safety of vulnerable road users](#).

Bicycling facilities are cheap, and along with transit and pedestrian infrastructure they are an essential component of a complete transportation system. The benefits of bicycling are numerous and help communities thrive. Funding them and creating dedicated, safe places for people on bikes to recreate and travel:

- Increases the physical and mental health of Coloradans
- Protects kids while riding to school, as well as everyone who chooses to bike or relies on bicycling for transportation
- Allows people safe options other than driving, protecting Colorado's climate and air quality while reducing traffic congestion
- Creates thriving communities by bringing tourism dollars to Colorado
- Saves Coloradans money

In rural areas, bicyclists are faced with roadways with no shoulders to ride on. This provides an unsafe, challenging environment for even experienced bicyclists, and it is a major barrier to increasing healthy transportation and recreation. CDOT's 10-year plan points to only 166 miles of projects that include widening shoulders for bicyclists, or about 0.09 percent of Colorado roadways. There are only a handful of unique bike-ped projects, alongside small scale bike improvements promised in later planning stages. Improving conditions for bicyclists needs to be a much greater part of this funding proposal.



In urban areas, bicyclists face significant safety issues that are a very real barrier to bicyclists of every age, background and ability level. It is hard to safely cross arterials on a bike, and only Boulder, Denver and Ft. Collins currently have a connected network of bike lanes or safe routes to ride on. To put this in perspective, a city bike network costs approximately \$60 million in 2008 dollars; this is extraordinarily affordable compared to highway project costs, but only six cities in Colorado could create a network with the current MMOF funds.

Here are six key changes that would help make the proposal bicycle-friendly to create the healthier, safer and more equitable options so many Coloradans are asking for:

### **Dedicate 20% or more of electric vehicle funding to eBike purchase incentives**

There is an immediate opportunity to capitalize on the growing popularity of eBikes following on the success of the Colorado Energy Office's fall eBike pilot program, which provided eBikes at no cost to low-income Coloradans. [Program results show](#) that participants used their eBikes for 30-35% of their trips, replacing Single Occupancy Vehicle trips the majority of the time and saving nearly 1,400 pounds of CO2 emissions in just three months. This is local evidence backing up data from the [National Institute for Transportation and Communities](#), which indicates people primarily purchase eBikes to replace trips they would otherwise take in a car. Dedicating 20% of electric vehicle funding toward eBike purchase incentives translates to approximately \$64.6 million annually, or the complete cost of 26,000 or more eBikes for Coloradans per year to drive a change in the way we think about and use our transportation system. 26,000 additional eBikes on Colorado roads could translate to 2.8 million pounds of CO2 emissions removed from Colorado's transportation system—the [equivalent of reducing 3.2 million VMT](#)—every three months, if not more. This is an even more effective use of dollars than EV charging stations, and one that is capable of eliminating the leading source of GHG emissions nationwide—[local trips](#). Colorado's climate future would look immeasurably brighter with sustained funding sources for programs like this one.

### **Invest at least \$50 Million annually in CDOT's innovative Revitalizing Main Streets Program**

CDOT's most innovative program in years has enormous potential to change the liveability, safety, and economic vitality of Colorado's main streets. These investments in creating people-friendly environments benefit everyone, including people biking, walking and driving. We recommend allocating some of these funds from the CDOT HUTF dollars to offset the current imbalances in road and multimodal funding.

### **Restore the Multimodal & Mitigation Options Fund (MMOF) to at least 2018-19 levels of \$75 Million annually**

The \$366 million currently allocated averages \$36 million a year. This is far too low a figure to fund relevant multimodal projects and operations, especially if it is also meant to support transit needs and Front Range Rail. For perspective, the first third of a Trinidad to Walsenburg bike-ped project that's one of the few signature bike-ped projects in CDOT's 10-year plan will cost \$33 million.



## **Prioritize projects and programs on the CDOT 10-year project list for road repair, maintenance, and multimodal projects**

It's important that maintenance projects are the priority. Colorado faces an immediate need to improve safety conditions, and can do so while benefiting people biking and taking other sustainable modes of transportation. To create a sustainable transportation system, improve air quality and quality of life, we need to move bike, ped and transit projects forward first to support behavior change now. Each dollar spent on new roads and widening existing roads is a missed opportunity that will result in more of the same—congestion, dependence on driving, and steadily increasing VMT.

## **Require that CDOT review and update the 10-year project list within the next year to add and prioritize projects that deliver VMT and GHG reductions in line with state goals**

When VMT goes up, it's bad for bicyclists and all Coloradans. As people are forced to drive, more roads get more crowded, without the addition of safe spaces for people biking. We appreciate that multimodal improvements are contemplated within the projects on CDOT's current list of major road projects, however these improvements, as stated above, aren't a proactive vision to create more opportunity for clean, equitable, active transportation. There is a clear need to work with communities to identify and advance new signature active transportation projects unique to each region and prioritize the key mobility projects that already exist in the plan.

## **Remove CDOT's Asset Management Restrictions on road shoulder construction and maintenance**

Building road shoulders for bike-ped use is the exception and not the rule due to CDOT's current Asset Management guidelines and the interpretation in Policy Directive 1602.1. Installing road shoulders and striping should be the norm and not the exception, as it is today. Shoulders are the lifeline vulnerable users rely on, whether it's an officer at a traffic stop, a driver with a breakdown walking to get gas, farm vehicles engaging in agricultural work, or people biking for transportation or recreation. Added expense should not be an obstacle in the way of keeping people safe.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to identifying ways we can move these ideas forward and support the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Piep van Heuven". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Piep van Heuven  
Director of Government Relations | Bicycle Colorado  
piep@bicyclecolorado.org