

# Move Colorado News

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*Move Colorado* is a private industry organization that provides information, sponsors education programs, and supports the efforts of Colorado community, business, and political leaders to solve transportation finance issues.

Contact us:  
[www.movecolorado.org](http://www.movecolorado.org)

## Task Force Kick-off

*Move Colorado* announced the kick-off of the *Move Colorado Task Force* under the leadership of Co-Chairs Mark Mehalko, DMJM Harris, Pat Nolan, IHC, and Carla Perez, Carter Burgess. The *Move Colorado Task Force* initiative will formulate options to fiscally restructure, tap alternative revenues, expand tolling, and leverage resources to increase transportation revenues in Colorado to meet long term transportation needs.

According to Chair Mark Mehalko, the Task Force was asked to tackle the long term finance issues facing Colorado transportation because of our experience in the recent issue campaigns, particularly the Referendum C&D campaign. "We have made the point repeatedly on behalf of the transportation industry that Colorado is faced with a growing crisis in funding our transportation needs. We are fixing yesterday's potholes at a slower rate and they are growing. We are not addressing the future.

We have been asked by legislative leaders and candidates for Governor for alternatives that address the magnitude of the problem – we are going to generate some options to start the dialogue."

To lay the groundwork for understanding key issues and possible solutions, Charlie Brown, Principal Consultant to the Task Force and Colorado's foremost tax and fiscal policy expert, outlined the history of conflicting and dysfunctional policies that impact transportation finance in



**Carla Perez & Mark Mehalko**  
 Co-Chairs  
*Move Colorado Task Force*

Colorado - and the difficulties in formulating solutions. "Caution is needed to make conditions better, not worsen the ability of the state to govern and make decisions."

David Pampu, *Move Colorado* Policy Research Consultant, released his White Paper on "A Transportation System at Risk" and briefed the Task Force: "today's challenge is to ensure that the transportation system, which is the backbone of the economy, is maintained and improved to support a growing population.

While voters across Colorado have committed in recent years to visionary investments in air transportation, rapid transit and local roads, investment in our state highway system has not kept pace. In fact, during the past five years there has been a 38% *decline* in the highway construction program."

The *Move Colorado* Task Force will make its report in June. Copies of "A Transportation System at Risk" will be released on the *Move Colorado* Website.

## CCA and *Move Colorado* Honor Senator Norma Anderson for Leadership



**Kim Haarberg CCA President  
acknowledges former  
Senator Norma Anderson**

At the Colorado Contractors Association Annual Convention, former Senator and Representative Norma Anderson was recognized by both CCA and *Move Colorado* for her leadership on transportation issues.

Most recently, she campaigned tirelessly for passage of C&D, debating, presenting, working the crowds and taking the issue to voters all over the state. Kim Haarberg acknowledged her years of contribution: “Her record on fiscal issues, education, and transportation and her role in architecting solutions to Colorado’s problems and opportunities have made her one of our most valuable leaders.

*Move Colorado* President Steve Holt remembered her role in designing the current Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT): “Norma has always conquered the toughest issues and the most important issues confronting our industry. She guided us in the creation of CDOT and made it happen. She served on our original Partnership to help create CMAQ and push for leadership in funding Colorado’s transportation needs. She

has been relentless in leading our state to new heights.”

### Pothole Politics Update

Transportation Advocates and CDOT are continuing to tell legislators how allocations to other programs reduce the funds available to transportation – “Pothole Politics.” Decisions to fund other programs drain the funds that would ultimately be available for transportation through SB1.

According to the most recent Update on protection for House Bill 02-1310 and SB 97-1, the primary revenue streams to fund transportation, legislators are re-directing over \$161 Million from these sources in Fiscal Years 2005-2007 alone.

The cumulative impact of existing legislative threats to these funding measures suggest cuts around \$364.8 million over a six-year forecast period – the same period in which projections totaled \$1 billion for transportation.

Regardless of the results of the session, the outcome for “Pothole Politics” suggests that legislative action will continue to erode important transportation revenues over time.

For information on Pothole Politics and current legislative issues contact Sandra Solin, CCA/Capitol Solutions (303) 837-1714. Sandra Solin also coordinates the activities of the Transportation Advocates group which was organized this legislative session to coordinate support for transportation funding following the passage of Referendum C.

With the end of the session, a recap on legislative issues will be developed for distribution to *Move Colorado* and posted on the Website

## Colorado Faces a Permanent Pothole

“A Transportation System at Risk”  
White Paper Preview Release

During much of the twentieth century a revenue stream adequate to the transportation need could be maintained by increasing user fees periodically. The relatively low cost of motor fuel and the ability to raise fuel taxes legislatively allowed revenue and need to remain in reasonable balance.

Passage of the TABOR amendment in 1992 and dramatic increases in the price of motor fuel in recent years make it much more difficult to increase user fees. Anti-tax sentiment and the perceived political consequences of advocating increased taxes have resulted in little interest on the part of the Governor or the General Assembly to lead efforts to convince the voters to raise motor fuel user fees.

The revenue structure underlying highway maintenance, rehabilitation and construction has not kept pace with societal changes and the way we now build our infrastructure. It is out of balance.

Without changes to the revenue side of the equation we are faced with a permanent pothole—a larger and larger job with a virtually stagnant revenue stream actually decreasing due to inflation. The way we produce highway revenue must be brought into the Twenty-first Century.

The transportation challenge facing Colorado is statewide. Colorado’s transportation infrastructure must be upgraded to ensure a strong and vibrant economy. The ability to efficiently move people and goods into, out of and around the state is vital to a growing and prosperous economy that supports the other needs of the state such as education and health care.