

**CITY OF BOULDER  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD  
INFORMATION PACKET  
MEMORANDUM**

To: Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

From: Tracy Winfree, Director of Public Works for Transportation  
Mike Gardner-Sweeney, Transportation Operations and Planning Coordinator  
Bill Cowern, Transportation Operations Engineer  
Marni Ratzel, Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Planner

Date: Apr 14, 2008

RE: Work Area Traffic Control and Safety Handbook update

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Transportation staff has initiated an effort to amend policies and standards that guide work zone traffic control. Goals of this project are to assure public safety and protect the integrity of the transportation system and travel mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and motorists during construction activities. A primary objective is to update the *Work Zone Traffic Control and Safety Handbook* (the Handbook), a city document adopted in 1980 that offers guidance on principles and standards to be observed by those who perform work in the public right of way.

It is the intent to develop work zone traffic control policies that are reasonable in achieving a balance between environmental, financial and social impacts of right of way closures and associated mitigation. Agreement of this balance and consensus among stakeholder interests will assist in seeing that these policies are adhered to and enforced.

Transportation staff has met with an interdepartmental staff working group, to learn about current practice and policies as well as discuss proposed amendments to include in an updated Handbook. This working group has met three times in 2008 and is making steady progress on DRAFT policies and procedures. Case study examples have guided productive discussion on whether there are specific circumstances when differing levels of impact to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, or motorists may be reasonable in the interest of the following three factors:

1. Safety for all modes of travel in the public right of way; and,
2. Efficiency and mobility for all modes of travel in the public right of way; and
3. Financial costs involved with projects and their related work zone traffic control.

Transportation staff will bring examples of some work zone traffic control approaches taken on projects that last few years. Staff seeks TAB member input on these example work zone traffic control approaches, as well as on our work to date and suggested next steps.

## BACKGROUND

Maintaining safe and efficient travel mobility during construction operations ensures continuity and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and motorists. Chapter 8 of the Boulder Revised Code (BRC) regulates work in the public right of way and public easements to assure public safety and protect the integrity of the transportation system. At least one ordinance references the *Work Zone Traffic Control and Safety Handbook* (the Handbook) and stipulates that a policy in the Handbook be followed. The Handbook was prepared in 1980 and is outdated, lacking clear guidance on maintaining safe, efficient access at a reasonable cost, for all modes of transportation.

According to Chapter 2 of the BRC, the responsibilities of traffic engineering are appointed to the city manager, who in turn may delegate these responsibilities to city staff as appropriate. The code authorizes the city manager to approve roadway closures during construction and outlines that “in exercising the discretion delegated...the city manager shall consider the following factors that apply under the circumstances”:

- 1) The standards of the traffic engineering profession and of the state and federal governments;
- (2) Public safety;
- (3) The most efficient use of the streets and city parking areas; and
- (4) The costs involved.

Staff has convened meetings with an interdepartmental staff team comprised of representatives from Planning & Development Services, Transportation and Utilities Project Management, Transportation and Utilities Maintenance, and Communications. This work group has identified key factors considered in authorizing and implementing work zone traffic control plans, which include:

- Duration and time of work zone traffic control impact
- Scope and size of work zone traffic control impact
- Type of facility being impacted by work zone traffic control
- Type and amount of each mode being impacted by work zone traffic control alternatives

Additionally, the following case study examples have guided productive discussion on whether there are circumstances when differing levels of impact for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, or motorists may be reasonable in the interest of the factors to be considered by the city manager in his traffic engineering responsibilities.

- Twenty-ninth Street Mall development (multi-use path and roadway closures)
- 33<sup>rd</sup> Street Lofts development (multi-use path closure)
- 1095 Canyon development (roadway and sidewalk closure)
- Sidewalk repair program projects (sidewalk closure)
- Broadway bicycle lanes – Iris to Norwood (multi-use path and roadway closure)

From these discussions, staff has developed several concepts that are being considered for inclusion in the Handbook. One concept is a hierarchy of different types of closures and impacts, along with very specific considerations for each of these types of closures and impacts. Another concept is the establishment of a specific fee that would be assessed on a daily basis for impacting a transportation related public right-of-way. The City of Denver has a fee program similar to this and our staff is evaluating the feasibility of adopting a similar structure.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Our internal staff work group will continue to meet and discuss the components of an updated Work Zone Traffic Control and Safety Handbook. Staff will also be consulting with the City Attorney's Office on any needed updates to the BRC, associated with this update.

Once staff has developed a draft document, we will seek community review and comment by interested groups in the public, including Community Cycles, Walk Boulder, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the development and work zone traffic control industries.

Staff intends to bring a draft handbook to the Transportation Advisory Board for review later this spring. Staff is tentatively scheduling a briefing for the June, 2008 TAB meeting, and a public hearing for the July, 2008 TAB meeting.

Should you have any questions or comments on this update, please feel free to contact either Bill Cowern or Marni Ratzel by phone at 303-441-3266, or e-mail at [CowernB@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:CowernB@bouldercolorado.gov) or [RatzelM@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:RatzelM@bouldercolorado.gov) .