

Colorado Department of Transportation Resiliency Working Group and Resiliency Oversight Committee

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has established two groups to guide implementation of resiliency efforts within the department:

- The **CDOT Resiliency Working Group** includes staff level subject-matter experts representing a variety of programs and representatives of each of CDOT's regional offices. The working group provides expertise to help implement departmental resiliency initiatives.
- The **CDOT Resiliency Oversight Committee** includes departmental executives such as CDOT's Deputy Director, Chief Engineer, and Planning Director, who make policy decisions and oversee and provide guidance on departmental resiliency initiatives.

Both groups were formed to guide and oversee completion of CDOT's I-70 Risk and Resilience Pilot, which was completed in 2017. Lizzie Kemp, CDOT's Resiliency Program Manager, worked with the department's executive leadership to determine who should participate in each group. Both groups met multiple times over the course of the pilot project. Meetings of the Resiliency Working Group, in particular, were structured as all-day workshops, during which participants focused on reviewing data collected for the project and developing specific work products.

Following completion of the pilot project, members of both groups indicated they wanted to stay plugged in and continue the work to implement resiliency measures into CDOT's investments and operations. It is important to note that CDOT's Resiliency Program Manager continues to serve as the convener for both groups, and the fact that CDOT has a dedicated resiliency staff position has been a key factor in the longevity of these groups. Both groups continue to meet monthly and are providing guidance on several ongoing resiliency initiatives, including:

- A project to refine the results of the I-70 Risk and Resilience Pilot into a Risk and Resiliency Standard, a manual for completing risk and resiliency assessments along different transportation corridors;
- The CDOT Resiliency Integration Project, which will recommend methods CDOT can use to integrate resiliency principles into their investments and operations;
- Proposed projects to mitigate identified risks along the I-70 corridor; and
- Identifying projects that may be funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which provides pre-disaster funding for innovative large infrastructure projects that will

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enable continuous operation of governments and critical businesses, protect human health and safety, or support economic recovery following a major disaster.¹

In addition, Lizzie is working with the Resiliency Working Group to develop ideas for implementing CDOT's Resiliency Policy Directive, which was adopted in 2018. These ideas will be incorporated into the Planning Branch's annual work program for funding. The Resiliency Oversight Committee may also direct Lizzie and the Resiliency Working Group to implement certain actions under the policy directive.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned from establishing the Resiliency Working Group and Resiliency Oversight Committee are summarized below.

- *Invite broad participation.* Staff in CDOT's regional offices sometimes feel as though they are left out of planning processes at CDOT's headquarters. For the I-70 Risk and Resilience Pilot, Lizzie worked with CDOT's executive team to deliberately include representation from every regional office as well as specialty units to foster group consensus and a feeling of ownership in the project. This approach also provided a foundation to establish resiliency champions at each of the regional offices. Lizzie is continuing to broaden participation in the working group by inviting additional units to participate and ensuring continuous participation by regional offices.
- *Executive support is key to success.* CDOT's Executive Director, other executive leadership, and policy commission have shown sustained support for the department's resiliency initiatives. This support has been a large factor in the amount of participation Lizzie has seen in the resiliency working group and the department's continued progress in implementing resiliency initiatives. In particular, support from the department's executive leadership and policy commission allowed the department to adopt its resiliency policy directive under an expedited schedule. (See the next case study for details on CDOT's resiliency policy directive.)
- *Make meetings productive.* Since completion of the I-70 Risk and Resilience Pilot, Lizzie has encountered some challenges keeping participants engaged in resiliency working group meetings. During the pilot project, working group meetings were very hands-on, full-day sessions focused on specific objectives. Following the project, meetings were shorter and focused on collecting feedback on finished materials. Lizzie plans to address this challenge by scheduling less-frequent, longer workshops that will provide more opportunities for participants to work toward specific goals.

¹ FEMA. 2019. Webinar Series 2019: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities. Available online: <https://www.fema.gov/drra-bric>. Accessed May 28, 2019.



Colorado Department of Transportation Resiliency Policy Directive

CDOT adopted Policy Directive 1905.0 “Building Resilience into Transportation Infrastructure and Operations” in November 2018. Development of the policy directive was inspired by conversations CDOT’s leadership and then-resiliency champion, Oana Ford, had during the Resilience Innovations Summit and Exchange (RISE) held in Denver between October 8 and 10, 2018. RISE was the first-ever transportation resilience conference in the United States and was hosted by CDOT, which presented multiple sessions on resiliency initiatives undertaken by the department since the catastrophic 2013 floods that affected much of Colorado’s Front Range.

CDOT’s executive team saw the policy directive as an opportunity to formalize the importance of resiliency at the department, legitimize future resiliency efforts, and preserve resiliency principles across administrative changes. CDOT’s executive team provided the impetus to develop and adopt the policy directive on an expedited timeframe. Typically the process of developing a policy directive takes about a year, but with executive support, CDOT was able to get the policy directive passed in 36 days. Figure 1 below shows the timeline and process for developing the policy directive.

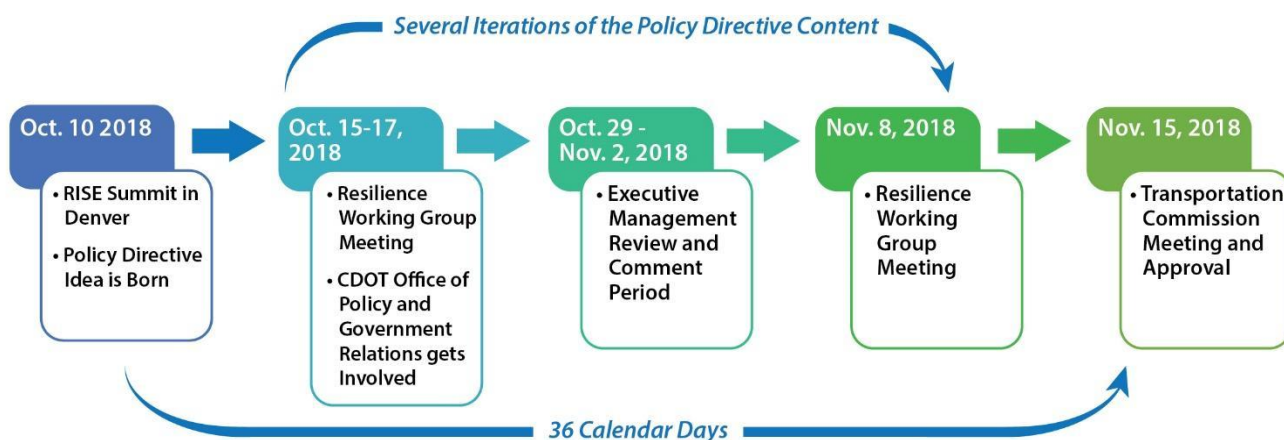


Figure 1 Development Process for the CDOT Policy Directive

The adopted policy directive is general by design. It is up to staff in CDOT’s resilience program to work on the next steps for implementation. The policy directive establishes responsibilities for the department’s Resilience Program Coordinator, including providing guidance and support to department staff in implementing resilience principles during transportation projects, directing and implementing research, and creating a knowledge base of guidance and best practices.

The full version of the policy directive is provided as Attachment 2 to Module 3 of the Colorado Resiliency Playbook.



Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned during development of the policy directive are summarized below:

- *Focus on engagement and outreach.* In the 36-day development timeframe, resilience program staff were not able to get many people at CDOT to read and comment on the policy directive. Engagement and outreach should be a focus of developing a departmental resiliency policy to generate buy-in on the policy and implementation measures. More extended vetting may be needed internally as well as with external partners who may be affected by the policy.
- *Ensure leadership provides support.* Executive support is critical to ensure a policy is adopted and implemented.
- *Seize on opportunities for change.* The CDOT resiliency program and executive team capitalized on internal momentum and support coming out of RISE to establish the new policy.
- *Know how the policy will be implemented.* Another area for improvement identified by CDOT's resiliency champion was the need for extended conversations on an implementation plan for the policy directive. While a policy may be general, implementation will be easier if roles and responsibilities and methods for incorporating resiliency principles into operations are identified before the policy is adopted.

Questions?

For more information about the CDOT resiliency policy directive, the Resiliency Working Group, or Resiliency Oversight Committee, contact Lizzie Kemp at elizabeth.kemp@state.co.us or 308.757.9629.

