

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

JULY 28, 2016

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, July 28, 2016, at the Pueblo Regional Building Department, 830 North Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ed Brown, Chairman, at 12:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Ray Aguilera
Larry Atencio
Ed Brown
Nick Gradisar
Terry Hart

Terry Kraus
Frank Latino
Judy Leonard
Ted Lopez
Steve Nawrocki

Those members absent were:

Buffie McFadyen
Tony Montoya
Chris Nicoll

Sal Pace
Bob Schilling
Lori Winner

Also present were:

Joan Armstrong
Sam Azad
Scott Hobson

Dan Kogovsek
Louella Salazar
Greg Styduhar

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Joan Armstrong, PACOG Manager, reported there were four items listed on the agenda under the Consent Items. She summarized the Consent Items for PACOG.

Chairman Brown asked if there were any other additions or amendments to the Consent Items or if any of the members or audience would like an item removed or discussed that was on the Consent agenda. There were no additions or amendments.

It was moved by Terry Hart, seconded by Larry Atencio, and passed unanimously to approve the Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of June 23, 2016 Meeting;
- Treasurer's Report (Receive and file June 2016 Financial Report);
- A Resolution Appointing a Member to the Environmental Policy Advisory Committee (appointed Gail Conners); and
- A Resolution Endorsing Plan B of the Draft Colorado Department of Transportation 10-Year Development Plan, and Directing and Authorizing the City of Pueblo Urban Transportation Planning Division to Deliver Said Resolution to the Colorado Department of Transportation on Behalf of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments

Acting as the Designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and Transportation Planning Region for the Pueblo Region.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

(A) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Brown thanked Pueblo School District No. 60 for providing lunch for today's meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

There was no Manager's Report.

PACOG ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURE STUDY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Chris Hearley, Matrix Consulting Group, reported they started out by interviewing staff and reviewing the strategic documents, including the PACOG bylaws. A comprehensive profile was done, which included a summary of the organizational structure, membership, fees, budget, the various services that PACOG provides, voting arrangements, rules and responsibilities of staff, and key programs and operations. Over the last two weeks, they have been interviewing PACOG members individually. He stated he could still meet with people who have not had an opportunity to discuss their thoughts on the study. At the current time, they are doing a comparative analysis survey study. They are looking at similar organizations not only in Colorado but outside the State with respect to staffing, budget levels, and responsibilities. They are looking at membership levels, how the membership dues are calculated, voting arrangements, committee structures and their voting, any projects the organization outsources, and any in-kind received. He stated this has been time consuming, noting there have been some organizations that have been less than cooperative to obtain their information. He stated they plan on concluding with their analysis and recommendations by the last week of August.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chairman Brown stated there was no report from Mr. Bill Thiebaut, State Transportation Commissioner.

Ms. Karen Rowe, CDOT Region 2 Director, reported the State Transportation Commission is looking at a pilot project which uses a cost-type taxing method, which they would try to roll out with volunteers who would track how much mileage they have on highways. One group would do GPS, the other would submit their mileage, and the other would have another mechanism of measuring where they go. She stated Colorado is one of three states doing this. Oregon has a voluntary road user cost where if you sign up for this program you don't have to pay the gas tax; you just pay a road user cost. This pilot project wouldn't have any money. ACLU is one of the participants. They would like to have rural drivers and urban drivers participate in the project.

Ms. Rowe stated the State Transportation Commission had its retreat this month where they looked at prioritizing their goals and what they are going to do in the next year. Mr. Gary Meek is now the chairman of the Commission, noting Mr. Nolan Shriner from El Paso County resigned. His replacement will be appointed by the Governor, but there is no timeline.

Ms. Rowe reported CDOT is conducting county meetings and will be meeting with the Pueblo Board of County Commissioners in this round. She stated CDOT met with the Pueblo City Council and made a presentation on the Ilex project. CDOT also had the Transportation Legislative Review Committee come and visit the Ilex project. Chairman Brown thanked CDOT for meeting with City Council.

Mr. Aguilera stated he is embarrassed when he drives on the highway and looks at the homes between Mesa and the Northern Avenue Bridge. He wondered why a sound barrier couldn't be erected so that those homes aren't in view. He stated this would also apply to the Abriendo exit. He stated travelers along the highway judge Pueblo by those homes. He also stated he would like for CDOT to clean the Abriendo exit a week or two before the State Fair. Ms. Rowe replied she would make sure there is a plan to clean I-25 before the State Fair. She stated they didn't want to do it too far in advance before the State Fair. She stated they hire one or two temporary people just for Pueblo to get the interstate to look better in the summer season, noting they don't hire temporary people anywhere else in the region. She stated they can only do so much because they don't have irrigation systems to make some of the areas green. She stated they would work on cleaning up landscaping and trash. Mr. Aguilera suggested CDOT contact Earl Wilkinson from the City's Street Department to see if he could get CDOT in contact with some voluntary group to help with those efforts. Ms. Rowe responded they have a law that limits who is allowed on the interstate to clean it. She stated she would check into the details on doing this. With respect to a wall or fence to block the view, she stated they generally don't consider this a transportation need. She stated PACOG does get Regional Priority Program (RPP) transportation dollars. Pueblo gets \$1.5 million per year. She stated if the City would like to put up a wall that screens the residents from view, then that would be the best direction. Screening is not a transportation need, but rather an aesthetic. PACOG is in charge of the RPP dollars. She stated CDOT is working on improving the erosion control on City Center Drive. She stated a noise wall goes through a noise study analysis, noting it is usually \$1 million per mile. It is up to PACOG to see if they want to use RPP funds to do this. She stated CDOT does recognize the interstate isn't always pretty. If there are any major aesthetic improvements on CDOT's wall, they look to the city to pay for that.

Mr. Azad asked as CDOT goes through the realignment process and they find out there is a need to have those noise barriers, then they will construct them. Ms. Rowe replied, currently, there is a Record of Decision (ROD), which goes from Abriendo to the north, noting it does not go to the south. She stated there are sound barriers to the north, and to the south the interstate would be realigned and, in certain locations, noise barriers would be put up. She stated in the Abriendo area the interstate would be shifted to the east and wouldn't be next to the houses. The southern alignment is \$400 million, and it has not cleared the ROD yet. She stated \$300 million is needed to finish up the north and this is the priority section of the New Pueblo Freeway. The main problem with the southern part is there wasn't enough money projected over the next 25 years, and the

environmental document says you have to have a fiscally constrained plan in order to have that section of I-25 included in the Record of Decision. This section is hard to construct in phases. She stated there are noise walls designated near Mineral Palace Park. There are aesthetic noise walls on the Ilex project near Goat Hill. She stated eventually the interstate is going to be higher than what it is now and the noise walls should help.

Ms. Rowe stated CDOT has awarded the 4th Street (State Highway 96) surface treatment project. A lot of curb ramp construction will be done first. She stated this is a partnership program between the City and CDOT.

Mr. Gradisar stated he spoke with someone who owns property at Sherwood and Pueblo Boulevard where CDOT put the new curb ramps in preparation for the overlay. Since the curb ramps came in, the last couple of gully washes have washed out landscaping in the yards, noting this didn't happen before. Ms. Rowe stated they would look into it and get back to him at the next meeting or before then.

STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) UPDATE

Mr. Terry Hart, PACOG's alternate to STAC, reported STAC had a meeting the day after the last PACOG meeting. He stated if anyone would like a copy of the agenda or minutes from the last meeting to contact him. Items which were discussed included the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, Alt Fuels Corridors, National Multimodal Freight Network, Truck Parking, SB 228/Bustang/Rural Regional Bus Plan, and STAC Workshop and Elections Informational Update.

MPO STAFF REPORT

(A) CDOT Region II TIP/STIP Administrative Items (CDOT Region II Notification of Administrative Amendments)

Mr. Hobson reported there are five (5) administrative amendments to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Four of those amendments include the rollover of projects, which were previously approved in the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program, which will be rolled into the 2017-2020 TIP. Those include the Greenhorn Bridge maintenance project, the Arkansas River Trail-Phase 4, and two trail projects in Pueblo West. The fifth administrative amendment involves additional funding needed for the construction of the West 11th Street Bridge. The additional funding is in the amount of \$2,516,620 in local matching funds. These funds were budgeted in the City's FASTER funds, which were received, to be able to be used for funding on the project. This project has been ongoing since 2008-2009, noting design estimates and property acquisition estimates have been completed. They now have the funds to go out to bid and award the project.

Mr. Gradisar asked why the four projects haven't been done. Mr. Hobson replied the Arkansas River Trail project had the ability to bring matching funds into it, noting it has occurred and City Council approved the contract with CDOT and budgeted/appropriated the funds. The 20% matching funds are being provided through the City's Conservation Trust Fund, as well as the City's underground utility funds. There are overhead utility lines that run along the bluff to the south of 4th Street and up above the whitewater area,

noting as part of the project these are being placed underground. He stated in the Pueblo West trail projects there are land acquisition requirements, which have created some issues. He stated he isn't familiar with the Greenhorn Bridge maintenance project. This bridge is south of State Highway 165 in Colorado City. He stated he would follow up with Pueblo County and find out what those issues are. He stated on the West 11th Street project a lot of the problems occurred with the funding and land acquisition being required. Mr. Gradisar asked if the federal government made the money available before we were ready to go. Mr. Hobson replied in some cases. With the West 11th Street Bridge, it is an off-system bridge so you have to qualify for having your bridge being in such poor condition that it makes it onto the list. There is a committee made up of Colorado Municipal League officials and Colorado Counties, Inc. officials that recommend bridge replacement projects for off-systems.

(B) Pueblo Area Wide Transit Feasibility Study

Mr. Hobson reported there was a kickoff meeting with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting. They have interviewed transit staff. A tour of the transit facilities was conducted today--the administrative office and bus operations area as well as the transit station. Next week they will be riding the buses and doing surveys of the bus riders and evaluating the bus routes. This will all be a part of their initial report, which is an overview of the existing operations and existing transit system. The completion date of the transit study is February 2017.

(C) West Pueblo Connector Update

Mr. Hobson reported Matrix Design Group is taking on this project. He stated there are seven alternatives, which have been developed by the consultant along with the project stakeholder group that is made up of Pueblo Transportation, City Planning, Pueblo West, and Pueblo County. This is the study that looks at the connection from 18th Street across the railroad yards and over to 8th and Blake Street (or northeast of the Midtown Shopping Center next to the Pueblo Chieftain). He stated some of the alternatives involve crossing Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo (CMHIP) property. Prior to going out to public comment, we've had two meetings with the CMHIP staff to review those alternatives. He stated comments were received from the CMHIP on what they do and do not like about the different alternatives. In addition, there are facilities that are provided to the Department of Corrections (DOC) that are on CMHIP property, including a Level 5 security building and a Level 3 security facility. DOC has had an opportunity to look at those alignments and see what impact they would have on their facilities. The next step is to be able to assemble those comments. The consultant is going to provide an overview report of what they heard about each of those alignments. This will be provided to PACOG. Afterwards, public meetings will be held in the area to get input on those alternatives. On some of those alternatives because of the issues with DOC and CMHIP, we may pull those from alternatives that are already being actively considered. They may become alternatives that we look at but are not going to be pursued because of specific issues and concerns. The alternatives will be presented at the next PACOG meeting, as well as the public comments on the alternatives. He stated they are following a Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) study format so that in the future if any federal funds are solicited for this project, we have gone through a NEPA-style process that follows federal guidelines similar to what was done on the U.S. 50 West corridor prior to developing a phasing program for the improvements.

Chairman Brown asked when moving the power lines if there is a fund and if that is something we receive from Black Hills Energy. Mr. Hobson replied it is part of the City's and Black Hills Energy's agreement. There is a portion of the utilities bill that is placed into the Overhead Utility Underground Fund, which is used for placing underground utility lines for public projects. This fund is kept in a separate account and the City gets monthly reports on what the balance is. The City has to approve the use of the funds for any of the projects.

(D) U.S. 50 East Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Hobson reported CDOT is going through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for improvements to U.S. 50 from Pueblo to the State line. CDOT has released an environmental impact document. Public comments are able to be received and are accepted to August 12th. Within the MPO area in Pueblo, there were three options. One of the options was an alternative route for U.S. 50 being extended around the north side of the airport and connected back into U.S. 50/S.H. 96 before getting to the Pueblo Chemical Depot. In the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Preservation Corridor Plan (50-year plan) this is an alignment within it. Another option was to follow S.H. 47 (Cesar Chavez corridor) and extend around the back side of the auto salvage yards and connect into U.S. 50/S.H. 96 right across where Transit Mix has its operation, which will require a new interchange and would have S.H. 47 become a direct flow through and become part of U.S. 50 and continue on to the east. This would include a new interchange and additional miles of new highway to be constructed. The option was to keep the same alignment for S.H. 47 and utilize the same intersection where S.H. 96 (4th Street)/S.H. 47/U.S. 50 all come together, and do some improvements to that intersection. This is the preferred alternative in the EIS. He stated staff did not come up with any specific language to be recommended to PACOG for this project.

Mr. Hart stated he went to the public session and was looking at the alternatives around the airport. He stated Alternative 3 has been a discussion for many years of making U.S. 50 an east/west connection through the City. He stated there was comment on the agricultural interest on this alternative, noting he didn't believe there were any agriculture uses occurring in the area because it is mostly junkyards and open prairie. He felt the real issue is the expense of the construction of three miles of new highway and the interchange. He didn't know if PACOG might want to weigh in from a long-term design perspective or whether it is better to go ahead and let it ride and do it individually. Mr. Hobson replied when staff reviewed the alternatives with TAC that one of the questions which came up was when they use the review criteria on the EIS that it didn't appear like they factored in the operational benefits of any of the alignments as major factors of coming up with the preferred alignment. He stated the current CDOT policy is to not add any additional lane miles to the State's highway system. A good part of the EIS is what other improvements can be made on this section of U.S. 50 east of Pueblo into the rural section of the County where in some places it is two lanes and what can be done to upgrade the passing lanes or divide it into two lanes in each direction. Mr. Hart felt if PACOG tries to take a position that this is beneficial to our community, but then that offsets something else that is being considered then that is problem. Many of the comments he heard at the public session was not related specifically to Pueblo, but the areas to the east. In these areas, they were showing the route around the community because it speeds up traffic and it reduces gas consumption. He stated these

communities felt the highway corridor is their commercial livelihood. Mr. Hobson stated this has been a fairly long process. The stakeholders that initially started with the project have changed and the opinions of the new stakeholders changed from their predecessors. Mr. Hart felt the shorter route has a benefit to the community. The route which goes up north to the highway constricts the airport. This would possibly hamper any expansion in the future. He felt the short loop would straighten out U.S. 50 and make it smooth through the northern part of the City. Mr. Hobson stated staff could draft a comment on behalf of PACOG and email it out to get comments back. The closing of the official comments is required before the next PACOG meeting. Mr. Hart stated he would be interested. Mr. Atencio felt this would also entrap the neighborhood. Mr. Hart wondered if this would provide a stronger commercial lane where more businesses could move in up and down U.S. 50. Mr. Atencio asked if it would be redesignated U.S. 50 instead of Bypass 50. Mr. Hobson asked if S.H. 47 would become U.S. 50 and replace 50B. Ms. Rowe replied that would have to be determined. She stated U.S. 50 (Bonforte exit) would probably be donated to the City. She stated in the other towns where U.S. 50 would go around, the existing highway is donated to the counties. She stated CDOT is trying not to create any new highway miles. If that was the preferred alternative that is something which would be looked at later on. At this time, this is Tier I. Mr. Gradisar felt that Alternative 1 isn't feasible, but he would also like to know the pros and cons of Alternatives 2 and 3. Mr. Hobson stated the existing alignment would involve improvements to the existing interchange, but keeping the same alignment as is seen today. The new alignment for the additional three miles would add new highway construction and would require a bridge crossing over the railroad and then a new interchange at U.S. 50 and S.H. 96. From an investment standpoint, there is a difference in significant cost between the preferred alternative and the alternative for adding the three miles. Mr. Hart asked if it would offset other projects. Ms. Rowe responded there is no money, noting it is only a planning document. Mr. Hobson stated the current alignment (Belle Plain interchange) stays to the north and to the west of the railroad. Once you get onto S.H. 96/50 then you go under the railroad. The other alternative would probably look at going over the railroad and there would be a new interchange to connect to.

Chairman Brown asked if you kept the same alignment could the intersection be redone where that would be the primary route as opposed to where the bypass is now, noting S.H. 47 would be the primary route. Mr. Hobson replied that is something they could put in as a comment. As far as an improvement to the existing interchange, possibly CDOT could look at how to make this more operationally functional and make it flow better. Mr. Hart liked the concept of the comments going in and taking a look at it as we go towards improving the efficiency of the flow of Highway 50 east and west through Pueblo.

Mr. Nawrocki asked what the primary route taken by tourists on I-25 going east is. Ms. Ajin Hu, CDOT, replied U.S. 50 through Belmont. The other two routes are used mostly by local traffic. Mr. Atencio felt it would be easier for travelers to take the bypass where it turns into U.S. 50 and make S.H. 47/U.S. 50 to connect with U.S. 50 west. Ms. Hu stated any of this would impact U.S. 50 through Belmont to I-25. If S.H. 47 is made as the primary route, then the existing interchange at Belmont (the design and planning) would have to be reconsidered.

Ms. Rowe stated what PACOG is looking at is the Pueblo version, noting the study goes from Pueblo to Holly. There is an operational analysis. It is mainly for safety and

mobility. They look at it if it would reduce your travel time for this 150-mile corridor, noting they are not looking at it as an urban project in this area. At this time, it is high level planning and they are going to stay with the 1,000 foot swath and if they should decide to do more they would get more detail. Once that is decided they would get into the analysis of an interchange. If money should become available, CDOT would have to look at the whole 150-mile corridor and determine what section the money would be spent on first and how much would it cost. They would then go into the Tier II document, which entails the impact of the highway. She reiterated there is no money, noting it is a \$1 billion corridor to construct. She stated she did not want to discourage PACOG from making comments, but CDOT has not gotten into a lot of details on this because it is high level planning. Mr. Nawrocki asked if the next phase of the interstate in the intersection coming off of it heading east is still being built as if it is the main thoroughfare. Ms. Rowe replied that is correct. Mr. Hart felt this conversation is timely because of what is going on with I-25. He stated he would like to raise these as comments and concerns about both of the issues with the idea of having a better flow of U.S. 50. He felt over time Highway 50 has evolved. Mr. Atencio felt it would make sense to make S.H. 47 contiguous to U.S. 50.

Mr. Hobson stated that staff could draft comments addressing having four lanes on the eastern end of the County and the issues with the U.S. 50B interchange and being able to maintain that within the New Pueblo Freeway project with some concerns about how the future connection would be located as far as the east end by the airport. Mr. Hart liked this. Mr. Nawrocki felt the real issue is what is going to be prioritized to do the redo of the interchange on the interstate. If the alignment is going to be further north, then why spend the money. Mr. Hobson stated staff would draft comments early next week and get them to the PACOG members before finalizing a letter to CDOT.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Frank Latino reported there are groups within the community working on a plan of action with regard to this important topic. Mayor Michael Hancock in Denver has put together a plan of action with a community safety ad hoc committee regarding community block parties. He stated, being a native Puebloan, neighborhoods were very safe at one time. People knew each other and interacted with each other. He stated he didn't know if this type of interaction was currently taking place. The purpose of the program in Denver is to get to know your neighbors and be cognizant of what's around you. The big issue is the drug infestation that has infiltrated the communities and you don't know what is happening in your neighborhood. He felt law enforcement has done all it can, and are limited in their personnel. He felt it would take a grassroots effort to protect the communities. He stated this is not limited to Pueblo, but is all over the nation. He felt it would come down to the neighborhood concept and being aware of what is going on in your neighborhood. He stated the cul-de-sac concept in the 1980s worked because people knew each other and cared about each other. He stated if PACOG members should have any ideas that there are groups working on this, or they could contact him. He stated a plan would be done from all the information from the various groups.

Mr. Atencio stated he met with the officer in charge of the local Neighborhood Watch Program. Three years ago there were 22 active neighborhood watch programs in Pueblo and today there are 48. He is working with Officer Brandon Beauvais on getting

one established on the Eastside, noting the problem is getting a neighborhood watch captain in the block to lead the effort in their neighborhood.

Mr. Latino stated he could invite Officer Beauvais to attend a PACOG meeting and make a presentation.

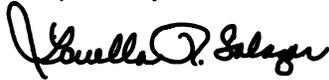
FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items provided.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further regular business before PACOG, the meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, August 25, 2016, in the 3rd Floor conference room at the Pueblo City-County Health Department, 101 West 9th Street.

Respectfully submitted,



Louella R. Salazar
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS