

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

JANUARY 28, 2021

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, January 28, 2021. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Chris Wiseman, PACOG Chairman, at 12:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Mark Aliff
Larry Atencio
Ed Brown
Mike Cafasso
Barbara Clementi

Staphanie Cordova-Catalano
Dennis Flores
Doug Proal
Bob Schilling
Chris Wiseman

Those members absent were:

Ray Aguilera
Greg Collins
Epimenio Griego

Ed Gutierrez
Garrison Ortiz
Lori Winner

Also present were:

John Adams
Nick Gradisar
Carmen Howard

Dan Kogovsek
Hugh Parker
Louella Salazar

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Citizen Comments)

There were no public comments.

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported there were three items listed on the agenda under the Consent Items. She summarized the Consent Items for PACOG.

Chairman Wiseman 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 other additions or amendments.

It was moved by Mike Cafasso, seconded by Mark Aliff, and passed unanimously to approve the three Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of December 10, 2020 Meeting;
- Treasurer's Report (receive and file November 2020 Financial Report); and
- A Resolution Designating a Place for the Posting of Notice of Public Meetings of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments for Calendar Year 2021.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

(A) PACOG Nominating Committee for 2021 Officers

Chairman Wiseman reported the PACOG Nominating Committee met on January 22, 2020 and are recommending the following slate of new officers: Mark Aliff, Chairman; Doug Proal, Vice Chairman; Garrison Ortiz, Treasurer; and Louella Salazar, Secretary.

Chairman Wiseman asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none.

It was moved by Bob Schilling, seconded by Mike Cafasso, and passed unanimously to accept the PACOG Nominating Committee's report and approve the following slate of officers for 2021:

- Chairman - Mark Aliff
- Vice-Chairman - Doug Proal
- Treasurer - Garrison Ortiz
- Secretary - Louella Salazar

(B) New Chair Takes Chair

The gavel was presented to Mr. Aliff.

Chairman Aliff thanked Mr. Wiseman for his service as 2020 Chair.

(C) Presentation of Plaque to Outgoing Chair

Chairman Aliff presented the plaque of appreciation to Mr. Wiseman. He stated Mr. Wiseman did a great job especially with handling of the meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this being a virtual meeting, Chairman Aliff asked Ms. Salazar to make sure the plaque was delivered to Mr. Wiseman.

Mr. Wiseman thanked the members for the plaque. He also thanked Ms. Salazar for her service to PACOG.

(D) Appointment of PACOG Budget Committee

Chairman Aliff asked if there was any member who would like to serve. He stated Mr. Ortiz would serve on the Committee since he was appointed as PACOG's Treasurer. Mayor Gradisar stated the City Council appointed Mr. Atencio to serve on the PACOG Budget Committee. Mr. Atencio stated he is willing to do the job. Additionally, Mr. Wiseman volunteered to serve as the County's representative.

It was moved by Doug Proal, seconded by Bob Schilling, and passed unanimously to approve the following individuals to serve on the 2021 PACOG Budget Committee: Garrison Ortiz, Larry Atencio, and Chris Wiseman.

(E) Introduction of New Members

Chairman Aliff welcomed the new members, who are: Epimenio Griego, County Commissioner and Hugh Parker, 2030 Commission Chair. He welcomed them to PACOG. (Note: Mr. Parker was in attendance by phone.)

MANAGER'S REPORT

(A) EPAC Minutes/Statement Report

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported the members received in their packets the minutes of the December 3, 2020 EPAC meeting.

This being an information item, no formal action was taken.

(B) ADA Advisory Committee Minutes

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported the members received in their packets the minutes of the December 3, 2020 ADA Advisory Committee meeting.

This being an information item, no formal action was taken.

(C) Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported the consultant, Clarion Associates, is doing a fantastic job. They are in the midst of assembling the State of the County report, which will contain the land capacity analysis and the fiscal impact analysis. They are gearing up with an online survey. There is marketing material being distributed to our partners in Pueblo West and the City of Pueblo to get the word out about a survey. The project website is live, and they are starting to gather information on it. The website can be found at: puebloregionalplan.com. She stated if there are any members who wish additional information or should have any questions to please contact her. The better the participation, the better the plan. There will be meetings beginning in February and March, and materials will be coming out in March related to the State of the County report.

This being an information item, no formal action was taken.

A RESOLUTION AMENDING AND READOPTING THE BYLAWS OF THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Mr. Daniel Kogovsek, PACOG Attorney, reported the Town of Boone has withdrawn from membership from PACOG and the 2020 Commission has agreed to serve on PACOG as an ex officio member, but their name has changed from the 2020 Commission to the 2030 Commission. Due to these changes, the following amendments are requested to be made to the PACOG bylaws:

- Article III, Membership, Section B, Governing Body, was changed from seventeen (17) voting representatives to sixteen (16) voting representatives to reflect the Town of

Boone's withdrawal from membership in PACOG and Section C, Ex Officio Members was amended to change the 2020 Commission to the 2030 Commission.

- Article VI, Section 3 (c), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), was amended to change the 2020 Commission to 2030 Commission.

It was moved by Bob Schilling, seconded by Larry Atencio, and passed unanimously to approve "A Resolution Amending and Readopting the Bylaws of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments".

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A REPRESENTATIVE AND ALTERNATES FROM THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS MPO/TPR TO THE STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. John Adams, PACOG MPO Manager, stated with the departure of Mr. Terry Hart, his position becomes open plus those of the alternates for the State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC). This is a committee that makes recommendations to the State Transportation Commission through CDOT. He stated PACOG needs to appoint a representative, as well as two alternates, to serve on STAC. Currently, Mr. Ortiz and he serve as alternates. He stated STAC meets once a month from 9:00-11:00 a.m., noting the meetings currently are held virtually. Once in-person meetings are allowed, the meetings will occur at the CDOT headquarters in Denver.

Chairman Aliff asked if anyone was interested. Mr. Wiseman stated he would be interested in serving on STAC. He stated he would like to continue the work the County has done on STAC. Chairman Aliff asked if there was anyone else who might be willing to serve on STAC as PACOG's representative. There were no other members interested. He asked Mr. Adams if he and Mr. Ortiz would be willing to continue serving as the alternates. Mr. Adams stated he is willing to continue serving. Chairman Aliff asked if there was anyone else willing to serve as an alternate. Hearing none, he stated Mr. Ortiz would continue to serve as an alternate.

It was moved by Dennis Flores, seconded by Barbara Clementi, and passed unanimously to "A Resolution Appointing a Representative and Alternates from the Pueblo Area Council of Governments MPO/TPR to the State Transportation Advisory Committee". (Note: Mr. Wiseman was appointed as PACOG's representative to STAC, and Messrs. Ortiz and Adams were appointed to serve as alternates.)

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS' MPO/TPR TO THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF AND FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION

Mr. John Adams, PACOG MPO Manager, reported with the departure of Mr. Hart, there is a position open for PACOG's representative to the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission. The Commission meets once a month. Once in-person meetings occur, the meetings will take place in Denver. Meetings occur once a year at the different MPOs on the North Front Range, which are Denver, Fort Collins, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs. He stated it is a volunteer, non-paying position. He stated the Commission has been doing great work.

Chairman Aliff asked if anyone was interested. Mr. Wiseman stated he is interested in serving as PACOG's representative, noting the County has been providing funding for the Commission. He stated he would like to continue the work Mr. Hart has done.

It was moved by Mike Cafasso, seconded by Bob Schilling, and passed unanimously to approve "A Resolution Appointing a Representative from the Pueblo Area Council of Governments' MPO/TPR to the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission". (Note: Mr. Wiseman was appointed as PACOG's representative to the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission.)

UPDATE ON WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported PACOG approved the updated Plan last year. The recent update to the Water Quality Management Plan reflects comments received from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) Water Quality Control Division. The final version was accepted by CDPHE in December 2020 and will be presented to the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) by Mr. Doug Schwenke, JDS Hydro-Consultants, and her on February 8, 2021. A memo from Mr. Schwenke outlining the changes to the Plan was attached to her memo to PACOG, as well as the Plan. Most relative to PACOG's future active participation in the Plan relates to monitoring and education of non-point source pollution contributions to the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek. The following issues were identified in the Plan: (1) on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) failures; (2) agricultural dispersion of nitrogen through use of fertilizers; and (3) conveyance of nitrogen, phosphorus, and E. Coli through irrigation ditches.

Ms. Howard stated neither PACOG nor Pueblo County has the staff or resources available to implement the recommended strategies identified in the Plan. In order to actively participate in the Plan implementation, PACOG staff will pursue grant funding. She stated Mr. Schwenke is in attendance to answer any technical or detailed questions relating to the Plan.

Mr. Atencio asked if any of these efforts are being looked at by the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District or is any coordination being done. Ms. Howard replied she reached out to Ms. Dominga Jimenez-Garcia who contacted Mr. Bill Banks. Staff will be providing Mr. Banks with information and updates as they avail.

This being an information item only, no formal action was taken.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no report from Mr. Bill Thiebaut, Region 10 Transportation Commissioner.

Mr. Richard Zamora, CDOT Region 2 Director, reported CDOT received additional funding via the Federal COVID Relief Stimulus Bill. He stated CDOT received approximately \$130-\$135 million Statewide for transportation projects. This money was allocated to the different regions. CDOT utilized the Surface Transportation Block Grant formula for distribution of the funds. A portion of the funding went to the largest MPOs directly. Region 2's portion was approximately \$17 million. There was a short timeline. The desired focus from CDOT's Executive Director was to look at projects that were completely shovel ready and could be advertised in a couple of months. The project which was selected was the Powers-Research interchange in Colorado Springs. The PPACG agreed to use the portion they were directly allocated to help fund this

project. What it does going in the future is that it frees up additional funding, which might be seen under Senate Bill 267 in Year 3. CDOT is anticipating that COPs will be initiated sometime in April, which could result in \$500 million for CDOT Statewide to put forth the 10-year plan of projects that was developed a couple of years ago. Some of those projects which were anticipated in Year 3 have now received funding due to the COVID Relief Stimulus Bill, and it frees up money from CDOT's cap of \$146 million. CDOT will be engaging in conversations with the different transportation planning partners on how to use the funding available. He stated CDOT will be solely looking at the 10-year plan, projects that are Years 1-4, and possibly some of the unfunded projects in Years 5-10. CDOT is anticipating providing a draft list to the State Transportation Commission in March, with them approving the list in April. He stated one of the projects they are looking at is how to keep the momentum going with the New Pueblo Freeway.

STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) UPDATE

Mr. Chris Wiseman stated he attended the meeting, noting there was talk about some stimulus proposal coming out of Senate Bill 267. There might be an additional grant coming to our region down the road. He stated what he would like to do in the future is send PACOG prior to its meeting his notes from the STAC meeting. He stated this way the members could ask the questions during the meeting

STATUS ON SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER RAIL

Mr. Chris Wiseman reported he attended the meeting. There was a briefing on that doors may be opening a little more up north, noting there has been a change in the Speaker of the House, who is much more open to it. He stated there has been movement from Boulder who wants to become a part of this. There was also a report on the expansion of Amtrak on a national basis. He stated he would provide to the members prior to the PACOG meeting his notes from the meeting. He will then give a brief report and questions can be asked at meeting.

MPO STAFF REPORT

(A) Pueblo Passenger Rail Study

Mr. John Adams, MPO Manager, reported this is one of the subcategories and/or tasks that the County is doing as part of 1A projects. PACOG felt it needed to be involved, so this study was funded by PACOG. He stated the consultant will be asking for PACOG to adopt or approve this study.

Mr. Bryan Robinson, WSP, stated he was the project manager and has been working with Mike Riccatone, the 1A Project Manager. He stated Melanie Wayne and Myron Hora from WSP were also in attendance. He reported the project was about three basic things: (1) selecting a site, (2) the infrastructure improvements for rail and/or street infrastructure to the site, and (3) other amenities which can augment the site area (e.g., bicycle/pedestrian connectivity, new potential development). The CRISI grant is looking at feasibility of grant service from La Junta to Colorado Springs and are doing their own work on that plus the Front Range. The final travel sheds are not being defined, which is how and when the train moves through downtown. They are looking more at responding to the likely travel sheds. He stated this is not an engineering project, but rather a planning process to select the site. The partners on this project include: Pueblo County, Amtrak, BNSF Railway, Union Pacific, Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) Commission, and the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Mr. Robinson stated there were three public meetings held. At the January 2020 meeting, there were 150 in attendance. The May and August 2020 meetings were virtual, and there were 60-75 attendees at each meeting. The attendees were able to give their preferences on the different sites. A public survey was done at each of these meetings. The four core rail stakeholders include Amtrak, FRPR, BNSF, and Union Pacific. There were eight 1A Project Team meetings conducted, as well as three with Amtrak and the Southwest Chief Commission.

Mr. Robinson stated there are two potential services coming through Pueblo. The first graph depicted as "Pueblo Region" shows a blue line indicating the existing Southwest Chief line, noting they are considering rerouting a full version through Pueblo or they are considering taking off a few trains at La Junta and shipping them up to Pueblo and Colorado Springs and back in a day. Amtrak is looking at either rerouting the current version which is the 1,200' train or taking a few train cars off and shipping them up and back (i.e., the branch service option). The graph depicted as "The Front Range" shows a longer-term consideration of 10 years plus and is more of an inner-city type rail service. It would be a more frequent daily service from Fort Collins to Pueblo, which would be done multiple times per day. This also means there can be many different ways their service can come through Downtown Pueblo. The graphic entitled "Downtown Pueblo" depicts a brown line, which are potential movements of the Front Range service and the green lines are potential Amtrak movements. He stated they are trying to pick a site that can respond to these many different, future variables.

Mr. Robinson stated the two different services have two different types of ridership. One is on the commuter side and the other is tourism. Amtrak would be likely providing the tourism side for individuals coming in for different events. The Front Range Passenger Rail would more than likely handle the daily commuter. These two different services have two different fundamental needs. The consultant's immediate focus is to make sure that this works for Amtrak, and as the CRISI grant moves forward that they are advancing Pueblo at the same time. He stated, based on likely ridership, the Pueblo station will be an Amtrak Class 4 Station Type (i.e., Amtrak has limited station needs). Most people will be getting their ticket on their phone, grab their bag, run on the platform, and get on the train. It can be voluntarily staffed by the City or County, noting it is not a situation where full-time staff is required. There are limited infrastructure improvements necessary (i.e., parking, kiosk, platforms, etc.).

Mr. Robinson stated five sites were looked at: (1) the Union Avenue Station Area, (2) the Civic Center Station Area, (3) the Recreation Complex Station Area, (4) the Grove Neighborhood Station Area, and (5) the North Riverwalk Station Area. The first site, the Union Avenue Station Area, includes the area around "B" Street, which had 80-90% public support. The second site, the Civic Center Station Area, which is mostly City-owned property south of Main Street and southwest of the Arkansas River, had 60-70% public support. The other three sites had less public approval. Those sites included the Recreation Complex Station Area, which is the Runyon Field area and had 50% approval; the Grove Neighborhood Station Area that had 30% approval, and the North Riverwalk Station Area that had 40% approval. This public holder process was being conducted simultaneously as the stakeholder process. Union Depot had no fatal flaws identified. The 1A team notified the consultants at the onset that the feasibility of getting Amtrak running was a critical priority for them. The Civic Center had a few issues related to the eastern approach for the FRPR. The remaining three sites had fatal flaws and had operational issues for freight, noting they had a lack of support from the stakeholders on the rail side.

Mr. Robinson stated at their last meeting they disseminated the final survey asking the participants their preference on the Union Depot Station and Civic Center Station areas. It was essentially a 3-1-1 break. For every three people that wanted the Union Depot, there was one that was undecided and one who wanted the Civic Center area. It was still overwhelmingly even when the options were narrowed down, a 60-70% approval on that binary selection situation. Based on the input from the stakeholders, the consultants developed conceptual ideas for Union Depot and different phases on how to move forward with the site. The Union Depot is a district which celebrates all the history of rail, noting this area is a big part of Pueblo's history. He stated rail was an important part of it. Ideas include establishing a central public outdoor space for community activities and events and linking programming of the Depot, railway museum, heritage museum, and new station. They want families to be able to experience the rail culture and history of the area. He stated some of the existing railcars could be placed onto the sidewalks and streets with lights and stories could be told to make it into an experience. A graphic was shown on what it could look like. He stated Phase 1 would be all about Amtrak. The consultant has been working with the County to layout a shorter 700' platform and 1,200' siding with parking, kiosk, bicycle racks, and other basic amenities, as well as relocating some railcars. The idea is to land hold for the future for a Front Range/Amtrak station, which would come years down the road when Front Range gets implemented. Phase 2 is basically the Front Range portion. There is a need for waiting space, parking, connection to buses, etc. This essentially brings the new station in on top of the first phase. The first floor would be the ground floor area and the second floor would be a waiting area with a bridge across to the Front Range platform.

Mr. Robinson stated they recommend that Union Depot move forward into Phase 1 and it be the preferred station area. There were hardly any questions thrown out to them from any of the rail stakeholders that this site could not successfully address. He stated they are also suggesting and recommending that the Civic Center Station Area be retained as an alternate site just in case you are not able to work out all the deals necessary for the Union Depot. There may be a few issues with this site relative to Front Range, but that is longer down the road. There is nothing major or insurmountable from Front Range's side. Phase 1 would provide Amtrak with essentials such as siding track, land, and parting minimum facilities to implement branch services (and land hold to accommodate reroute) in the next 3-5 years. This would be tied in with the CRISI grant as well as Colorado Springs' station planning effort. Phase 2 is from 5-10 years and is more related to a new station for combined Amtrak/Front Range Passenger Rail and supportive studies. Phase 3 (8-15 years) would expand the established station area with added development, parking, etc. He stated the Phase 1 recommendations are as follow: (1) Pueblo County/PACOG adopt the Station Area Plan with final recommendations, phased plan, and site preference, (2) Pueblo County partner with City to identify funding for land acquisition and design and engineering for Phase 1, (3) Pueblo County support CRISI Grant Study for Branch Service Planning between La Junta and Colorado Springs, (4) Pueblo County coordinate with Amtrak regarding design and engineering for Phase 1, including design review, and (5) Pueblo County continue to work with Amtrak Southwest Chief/FRPR Commission regarding implementation of access rights, station ownership, freight coordination, and Phase 1 implementation.

Mr. Schilling asked regarding the amount of funding for Phase 1. Mr. Riccatone stated the funding is in place, noting it would be through Pueblo County. He stated the County would have to work with the City because it has land in the area, as well as the Konciljas and others. There will have to be some agreement. He stated this is also the reason for keeping the Civic Center area as an alternate. The County is working on the next phase (the contract) and they are

hoping to have it in place by the end of February. The consultant will be kept on board. Mr. Schilling asked if the consultant could provide the City Council an update within the next couple of months. Mr. Robinson replied they would be happy to come to a City Council meeting. Mr. Riccatone stated as they move forward, they would be working with Mayor Gradisar and the City Council to establish these things, noting they would be kept well informed.

It was moved by Dennis Flores, seconded by Bob Schilling, and passed unanimously to approve the Pueblo Passenger Rail Study recommending that the Union Depot Station area be the preferred site and the Civic Center Station area be retained as an alternate site if needed in the future.

(B) PACOG 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Update (LRTP)

Mr. John Adams, MPO Manager, stated the LRTP is in its public comment period phase and can be obtained at pueblomovestheregion2045.com. A draft copy of the 2045 LRTP can be found at this website. The final approval of the 2045 LRTP will be presented to PACOG next month for final approval. He stated a few comments have been received and the consultants have addressed those comments, noting there have been no significant comments which would stop the process.

Mr. Flores stated he noticed there was a public notice in the newspaper today. One of the subsections pertained to aviation. He asked if it was important that the director of City Aviation look at the LRTP and provide input. Mr. Adams replied the acting director attends the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee meetings and has provided input on the LRTP. Mr. Flores stated he didn't realize that aviation was a part of the LRTP. Mr. Adams responded it is part of the process because it is a mode of transportation that affects the region.

This being an information item, no formal action was taken.

(C) Consolidated Carry-Over Planning Grant Funds for FFY 2021

Mr. John Adams, MPO Manager, reported this a standing agenda item. Through the years, the Urban Transportation Planning Division has accumulated a balance of funds in its Consolidated Planning Grant, which are the Federal funds that are filtered through CDOT. Last week, he met with CDOT, and they are comfortable with his plan. Staff will be coming to PACOG regarding hiring an on-call travel demand modeling consultant, noting they have been getting interest from developers on areas, and the other project would be a County-wide transportation safety plan. Safety is one of the priorities coming out of the Federal Highway Administration. He stated staff supports the State's effort for performance measures.

This being an information item, no formal action was taken.

(D) Other Transportation Matters

There were no other transportation matters.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

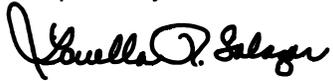
FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items provided.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further regular business before PACOG, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 12:15 p.m. (Note: At this time, the meeting will be held virtually on Zoom.)

Respectfully submitted,



Louella R. Salazar
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS