

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

OCTOBER 27, 2022

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at the Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, 101 West 10th Street, 1st Floor Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Larry Atencio, PACOG Chairman, at 12:16 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Larry Atencio
Barbara Clementi
Chris DeLuca
Dennis Flores
Heather Graham
Ed Gutierrez

Epimenio Griego
Harry Hochstetler
Vicente Martinez Ortega
Doug Proal
Chris Wiseman

Those members absent were:

Mike Cafasso
Regina Maestri
Sarah Martinez

Garrison Ortiz
Lori Winner

Also present were:

Eva Cosyleon
Sabina Genesisio
Nick Gradisar
Terry Hart

Carmen Howard
Dan Kogovsek
Lorrie Marquez
Louella Salazar

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, summarized the six Consent Items.

Chairman Atencio asked if anyone would like to remove any of the Consent Items to the Regular Agenda. Seeing none, he called for a motion to approve.

It was moved by Dennis Flores and seconded by Vincente Martinez Ortega. Chairman Atencio asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Flores commented that there are certain Consent Items that should be part of the Regular Agenda due to their significance. No specific items were referred to the Regular Agenda. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously to approve the six Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of September 22, 2022 meeting;
- Treasurer's Report (receive and file the September 2022 Financial Report);
- A Resolution Adopting the 2 and 4-Year Performance Targets Established by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for PM2-Infrastructure Condition and PM3-System Performance for the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) Metropolitan Planning Organization as per 23 U.S.C. 150;
- A Resolution Approving the 2023 Delegation Agreement Between the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) and the City of Pueblo for Transportation Planning Services, Authorizing the Chair of the Council to Execute the Same, and Authorizing and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Administer the Agreement in Compliance with All Applicable Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations;
- A Resolution Amending the 2022-2023 Colorado Department of Transportation Consolidated Planning Grant Agreement Between the Pueblo Area Council of Governments and the Colorado Department of Transportation, an Agency of the State of Colorado, and Authorizing the Chair of the Council to Execute Same; and
- A Resolution to Accept the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Safety Performance Measure Targets for the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as per 23 U.S.C. 150.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Atencio thanked the Board of County Commissioners for providing lunch for today's meeting.

B) Schedule December Meeting Date Either December 1st or 8th

It was decided the meeting would be held on December 1st.

C) Schedule PACOG Budget Committee Meeting

Chairman Atencio indicated that Ms. Salazar would contact the Budget Committee members, who consist of Dennis Flores, Garrison Ortiz, and Larry Atencio, to schedule the meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Howard reported the County, in partnership with the City of Pueblo and Pueblo West, conducted a major update of the region's [Comprehensive Plan](#) for the first time since 2002. The process began late in 2020 and, with the help of all our regional partners, stakeholders, staff, and Clarion and Associates, the regional plan has been finalized and adopted by the County, Pueblo West and City of Pueblo. Although targeted updates to the [Regional Development Plan](#) had been made since it was first adopted, the County changed significantly over the past 20 years. A comprehensive update was needed to respond to shifting population and demographic trends, a newly diversified economy, and the evolving needs of unincorporated areas. This process also represented a commitment on behalf of the County and its partners to proactively plan for a more sustainable and resilient future. Pueblo County covers a vast land area and is home to a diverse set of communities and environments, each with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The updated [Regional](#)

Comprehensive Plan balances the needs of both incorporated and unincorporated areas within Pueblo County. She added that the update was a major undertaking. She is very proud of the work and thanked everyone for their participation to accomplish the updates.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Terry Hart, Transportation Commissioner for Region 10, reported that the State Transportation Commission met last week to address budgetary issues, including reconciliation of the State's fiscal year that ended July 2022. They also worked on the current fiscal year reviewing financial streams, implemented projects, and upcoming projects. They began developing the 2024 fiscal year State budget. The Commissioners were given a tour of the North I-25 Project to view the progress of the project and how it is applicable to all the other projects taking place throughout the State.

Mr. Richard Zamora, CDOT Region 2 Director, reported that CDOT is still in the process of scheduling the public meeting regarding U.S. 50 at 36th Lane which was discussed at last month's PACOG meeting. The meeting will likely be held after the first of the year. He announced his retirement from CDOT at the end of November, and thanked PACOG for their partnership with CDOT. He has enjoyed working with everyone. PACOG will be informed of who will be his replacement. Chairman Atencio thanked Mr. Zamora for his years of service and for the help he provided to Pueblo County.

STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) UPDATE

Mr. Chris Wiseman, PACOG's representative to STAC, reported that the committee is working on a plan to replace gas tax with fees on electric vehicles. (Note: The presentation was sent PACOG members prior to the meeting.)

PRESENTATION ON REGIONAL GRANTS NAVIGATOR SPECIALIST

Ms. Sabina Genesisio asked to comment prior to Ms. Marshall's presentation. She stated that the State has an opportunity that will benefit PACOG. She requested to discuss the opportunity further either following Ms. Marshall's presentation or at the next PACOG meeting.

Ms. Meridith Marshall, Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act Funding Coordinator for the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (COEDIT), gave an overview of the IIJA programs and Regional Grants Navigator Specialist position presentation. She reported that Colorado has a potential to receive between \$4.1 to \$7.1 billion in infrastructure funding. The funding is a range due to being formula based. Across the nation, this is the largest investment in infrastructure since the "*New Deal*". There are approximately 200 IIJA programs available to Colorado with 70 available to local governments. It is a combination of 100 programs coming together to support infrastructure. The challenge will be the complexity of vying for the range of opportunities, the eligibility requirements, and working with different federal agencies. The funding can go directly to state governments, local governments, private sector participants, tribes, nonprofits, or a mixture of groups depending upon the specific program. The programs available to local governments include airports, Broadband, electric vehicles, buses, environmental, power and the grid, passenger and freight rail, public transit, resiliency, roads and bridges, safety and research, and water. Capacity has been a longstanding issue and has been exacerbated by COVID-19. The ARPA and IIJA funds support recovery efforts but further constrained communities' ability to access the federal funding. If communities do not have the capacity to access the funds, sort through the hundreds of programs, and match the programs with their needs, it could lead to missed opportunities. She reviewed the connection of infrastructure between the federal, state, and local

agency levels. The COEDIT works together with other agencies to discuss different issues, lobby for support from federal partners on specific barriers, coordinate efforts, and share best practices. There is a Recovery Office (RO) with a Recovery Officer who coordinates the different opportunities. She gave an example of coordinating efforts, with a CDOT project requiring digging out a road, where there was an opportunity to lay fiber to add Broadband capacity. COEDIT's job is to coordinate, to make the best decisions and maximize efforts. The State offices represented are the DOLA Regional Managers, State Recovery Officers, DNR, and Colorado Broadband Office. The Broadband Office is working at capacity to provide additional technical support and negotiate contracts.

Ms. Marshall explained that COEDIT has been working with COGs throughout the State to find the best approach to navigate through the funding process. They have decided to fund a Regional Grants Navigator Specialist position. The Navigator can provide a perspective of Pueblo's needs, politics, etc. to help best navigate the funding opportunities. The COEDIT is suggesting PACOG determine the projects that need support. The Navigator will help connect PACOG with the different resources to fund projects. The Navigator will connect with the Infrastructure Coordinator and Recovery Officer to make sure they are informed with the most current opportunities available. The agencies will roll out the funding opportunities which could be as soon as a 60-day turn around. The COEDIT will give each COG \$100,000 to hire an FTE for the position. Some COGs prefer to contract the work to avoid indirect costs. It will be up to PACOG to decide which option works best. COEDIT has put together a job description for the position which focuses on outreach to communities within the region. The Navigator will want to connect the communities with various resources, funding opportunities that become available from IIJA, ARPA, and the Inflation Reduction Act to make sure there are no missed opportunities. COEDIT can provide some technical support as local governments begin to apply for assistance. They are giving PACOG the flexibility to design the position in the most helpful way.

Mr. Flores asked who would be the Regional Grants Navigator Specialist for the Front Range Passenger Rail System that crosses over 10 different regions? Ms. Marshall responded that the Rail District will fall outside of the Navigator position. They can bring in the Navigator to help, but given conversations COEDIT has had with CDOT, the rail project is massive and will require someone with very specialized expertise. The Navigator will take on the role of reviewing the 200+ programs that are available to local governments. Mr. Flores asked who is the employer for the specialist? Ms. Marshall replied the COG, noting it will be responsible for hiring the individual whether that be an FTE or a contract position.

Mr. Flores asked if there is an advantage to research funding for projects that have planning already in place and are ready to move forward? Ms. Marshall responded, "absolutely", the more upfront work that is done to identify needs, it will setup the community to be successful at accessing funds, and to find a person to fill the Navigator position with the skills for the particular projects.

Ms. Cosyleon asked who will be the employer for PACOG's position? Ms. Marshall responded that PACOG will either hire an FTE or contract the position. Mr. Dan Kogovsek was asked if PACOG may hire an FTE? Mr. Kogovsek responded by stating that PACOG does not have staff. PACOG could enter into a delegation agreement with the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County, or both to hire for the position. Everyone who works for PACOG is either a City or County employee. The contract would be with PACOG to perform the services. Ms. Marshall was asked for her contact information, and provided the following: meridith.marshall@state.co.us. She commented that the other person that may be contacted is Ms. Alyssa Dinberg at alyssa.dinberg@state.co.us, noting she is the Recovery Officer. She added there is a Recovery Officer dedicated to local governments.

Ms. Marshall was asked how long the funding for the position would last. She responded that the funding would come out of an IIJA cash fund for one year. They know that there will be needs beyond the one-year period. They anticipate the funds will be renewed and perhaps increased. COEDIT has no control of the funding; it is the Legislature's decision to continue the funding. She was asked to provide information regarding the receipt of funds for the Navigator Position, so PACOG can set a timeline to hire or contract for the position. She replied COEDIT is working through whether the \$100,000 for the position will be given upfront or on a reimbursement basis. The preference from the other COGs has been to provide the funds upfront. The State will make the final decision. Chairperson Atencio commented that PACOG will need to decide how the delegation agreement for the position will be written.

Mr. Gradisar commented that having the Navigator will help identify the needs of the community and educate people about the opportunities. The City has a fulltime grant writer that could work cooperatively with the individual. Mr. Wiseman commented that the Navigator may be able to work with the Congressional offices as part of a coordinated effort and should be close to Ms. Cosyleon's office. Mr. Gradisar agreed to contact the County Commissioners to determine where the Navigator will be located. Chairperson Atencio asked that all the entities within PACOG provide a wish list. Ms. Marshall was asked when the wish list should be presented to her. She responded that they are drafting the agreements between the COEDIT and each of the COGs to determine what they will include. Ms. Genesio has a copy of the job description. If any wish list items need to be addressed in the agreement, they should be sent to Ms. Marshall in the next two weeks.

Mr. Kogovsek asked that the Navigator agreement be sent to him as PACOG's attorney. He will review and send it to Mmes. Marshall and Dinberg. The preference would be to receive advance payment of the funds to hire the Navigator as soon as possible. PACOG is not required to hire a City or County employee. There may be an outside contractor who can be engaged for the position. Chairperson Atencio stated that the decision if it is a contractor or a City or County employee should be discussed by the two government entities.

Ms. Clementi asked if the wish list is for the Navigator position? Chairperson Atencio responded, no, the wish list is for projects. Ms. Marshall stated that she will need information regarding the scope of the Navigator position for the job description within the next two weeks. A project wish list will be helpful to keep an eye out for available resources but is not necessary at this time. Ms. Clementi asked if there is a deadline for a project wish list? Mr. Gradisar responded that a list of projects should be provided to the Navigator once the position is filled. The Navigator will investigate and coordinate with the cities, towns, and school districts for funding opportunities. The City of Pueblo has a grant writer; there may be some grant writing assistance available depending how intensive the process. Chairperson Atencio stated that the wish list submission process will be formalized by PACOG and given to the Navigator once in place. Ms. Marshall suggested they refer to the list of State priorities included in the PowerPoint presentation. Grants will be rolled out on a regular basis; deadlines will depend on the grant opportunity. It will be important to have a project list ready to provide the Navigator so that coordination with the different entities can begin as soon as possible to meet the required deadlines. She encouraged the group to review the match assistance information included in the PowerPoint presentation and reach out to her with any questions.

STATUS ON FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL DISTRICT

Mr. Flores, PACOG's representative to the Front Range Passenger Rail District, reported that the District meetings take place the day after the PACOG meeting. The District has been going over routine items that any startup business goes through. They have received their funds from the State Commission, have a checking account, and have financial documents in place. Tomorrow their

search committee will present their recommendation of a finalist for the new executive director. The District Board includes 24 people, which is a large group. They have not met in person but are scheduled to have a retreat on December 8th and 9th. He commented that meeting in person will make a difference and hopes to be able to provide more substance when reporting at future meetings.

MPO STAFF REPORT

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Manager, reported that there are several presentations for today's meeting, Ms. Corinne Koehler will give an update of the Pueblo Conservancy District; Mr. Jacob Kershner from CDOT will present an update about Safety Performance Measures; and Ms. Libba Rollins will present an update about Greenhouse Gas 101.

A) Pueblo Conservancy District Update

Ms. Corinne Koehler, President of the Conservancy District, gave an update of the improvements to the 100-year old levee project. She reported that 16 murals have been painted and an art sculpture has been installed along with 5 pads for future sculptures. There will be work done to a parking area next to the levee, and soon a second pedestrian bridge will be completed. Construction of a 100-unit apartment building near the levee will begin as early as January 2023. She informed PACOG of the improvements they are planning to make at Runyon Lake including trash cleanup, restrooms, and docks. They are meeting with GOCO and the Office of Economic Development to find more grants opportunities and will construct restrooms by Pillar Park.

Mr. Jim Pioreschi, Pueblo Conservancy District Board member, reported that they have installed 6,800 linear feet of trail, worked with many local contractors, and have plans to extend the trail when funds become available. Mr. Flores thanked the Conservancy District for the reconstruction of the levee. Not many people know that if the levee had not been reconstructed, it would have had a huge economic impact to the people and businesses located in the Midtown area. Pueblo is back in the good graces with FEMA. Mr. Pioreschi commented that they are finalizing all the requirements with FEMA to prevent most of downtown from being in a flood zone.

B) Safety Performance Measures Presentation

This item was continued to the December 2022 meeting.

C) Greenhouse Gas 101 Presentation

This item was continued to the December 2022 meeting.

D) CDOT Region 2 Request(s) for PACOG MPO/TPR TIP Amendment(s) FY 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Cosyleon, MPO Manager, reported that there are three TIP amendments. The first is the I-25/Drew Dix/Dillon Project, which provides improvement on the frontage road to build a roundabout on the west side of Interstate as part of the 10-Year Plan at the cost of \$3 million. The second is the I-25 through Pueblo Project, which provides for the right-of-way purchases for the U.S. 50 and I-25 Project at the cost of \$6 million. The third is the U.S. 50B and U.S. 50C at SH 231 to provide design safety improvements at each intersection at the cost of \$112,395.

This being an information item, no formal action required.

E) Other Transportation Matters

There was no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Flores thanked Mr. Zamora for everything he did for Pueblo and for taking down the Hangar Restaurant building. The City of Pueblo received several complaints about the building, and Mr. Zamora took care of having it torn down. He wished him best of luck with his retirement.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further regular business before PACOG, Chairman Atencio adjourned the meeting at 1:19 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 12:15 p.m. (Note: Following the meeting, Chairperson Atencio requested an email notice be sent to PACOG members informing them that due to time constraints with the Thanksgiving holiday, the next meeting would be held on December 8, 2022 rather than December 1st as decided during the meeting. The meeting will be held at the Pueblo County Emergency Operations Center, 101 West 10th Street, 1st Floor Conference Room. The meeting will also be held virtually on Zoom.)

Respectfully submitted,



Louella R. Salazar
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS/LM