

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MAY 26, 2022

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, May 26, 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 12:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Larry Atencio
Mike Cafasso
Barbara Clementi
Chris DeLuca
Dennis Flores

Ed Gutierrez
Harry Hochstetler
Vicente Martinez Ortega
Garrison Ortiz
Chris Wiseman

Those members absent were:

Heather Graham
Epimenio Griego
Regina Maestri

Sarah Martinez
Doug Proal
Lori Winner

Also present were:

John Adams
Nick Gradisar
Carmen Howard

Dan Kogovsek
Louella Salazar

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Citizen Comments)

There were no public comments.

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Louella Salazar, PACOG Secretary, reported there were two items listed on the agenda under the Consent Items. She summarized the Consent Items for PACOG.

Chairman Atencio 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 Dennis Flores, seconded by Mike Cafasso, and passed unanimously to approve the two Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of April 28, 2022 Meeting; and
- A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments' (PACOG) FY 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Re-Categorization of Awarded MMOF Funding for Sidewalk Improvements Along Prairie Ave. from Northern to Pueblo Blvd. and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendments.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

(A) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Atencio thanked Pueblo School District No. 70 for providing lunch for today's meeting.

(B) Support Letter to U.S. DOT regarding FY2022 MPDG U.S. 50B Safety Highway Improvements for Freight and Travel (SHIFT) Project

Chairman Atencio reported he had signed, on behalf of PACOG, a letter of support to the U.S. Department of Transportation pertaining to the FY2022 MPDG U.S. 50B Safety Highway Improvements for Freight and Travel (SHIFT) Project.

MANAGER'S REPORT

(A) EPAC Minutes/Statement Report

Ms. Salazar reported in the PACOG members' packets are the minutes of the April 7, 2022 Environmental Policy Advisory Committee meeting. This being an information item, no formal action was required.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ajin Hu, CDOT, reported an application was sent to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg regarding the FY2022 MPDG U.S. 50B Safety Highway Improvements for Freight and Travel Project.

Ms. Hu reported the State Transportation Commission approved the Policy Directive Advancing Year 4 funding for ROW acquisitions for I-25 through Pueblo New Freeway Project from the 10-Year Plan.

Ms. Hu reported there are two construction projects going on in Pueblo: (1) Highway 50 from Purcell Boulevard, noting there is paving going on and shifting of lanes; and (2) Highway 50 from Bonforte Boulevard to the Pueblo Chemical Depot, noting after the holidays ADA ramps will be installed, as well as a bridgewalk. The initial plan was to replace the concrete by the railroad bridge and lower Highway 50, but the funding did not allow for this to be done. Instead, CDOT will be replacing the worst portions of concrete.

Ms. Hu reported CDOT is preparing the design of Drew Dix Parkway and the roundabout at Love's Truck Stop.

STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) UPDATE

Mr. Chris Wiseman, PACOG's STAC representative, reported the State Legislative Session was held a week ago. A bill was approved giving \$3 million for the expansion of Bustang service, and \$10 million for revitalization to Main Street projects.

Mr. Wiseman stated CDOT was given “go over” authority to MMOF funding for the next three years. On the Federal level, Congress is working on a bill to address supply chain issues. They are working on new projects on MMOF grants, noting the deadline is May 23, 2022.

Mr. Wiseman reported STAC will be moving its meetings from Friday to Thursday. STAC will be working remotely for 8 months out of the year and the other months in person. He stated the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meet on Thursdays, noting there could have been a conflict with the meeting date being moved, but it was decided the BOCC would make an adjustment so he could attend the STAC meeting.

STATUS ON SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER RAIL

Mr. Dennis Flores, PACOG’s representative to the Southwest Chief Passenger Rail Commission, reported there is nothing to report because there is a transition currently going on. The Governor is in the process of selecting individuals to serve on the Commission, noting these individuals still need to go through Senate confirmation. He stated the meetings are being held by Zoom, noting he hasn’t met anyone personally. The first initial meeting is being held tomorrow. He stated the next step is hiring a facilitator. He should have more to report to PACOG next month.

DISCUSSION ON FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION RELATED PROJECTS

Mr. Wiseman stated information was sent on Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs) to the members. The information provided was for three RTAs. There was information on another area, but it contained the ski areas, which generate millions of dollars per year and wasn’t a good example to use. He stated he included Colorado Springs, noting a lot of their funding goes to highways. San Miguel was also included because they also included transportation as far as bus service. Most of the funding comes from sales tax. San Miguel does both a sales tax plus a mill levy, noting they also go after Federal grant funds. The money goes from buses to bike paths to highway and road needs. Some counties include all the cities in it. El Paso County doesn’t include the cities of Fountain and Monument, but everyone else pays into the tax district. He felt this is something we could do and construct in a way we could put the money to use for what we want it to do (i.e., City streets, Pueblo West roads, etc.). He stated he didn’t know what the group wanted. He stated he didn’t know what the possibility of this being passed was or who should be included. He stated he wasn’t sure how the taxes would be assessed but indicated another way to tax them might be a vehicle fee when they register their vehicles, noting he didn’t find any indication of these RTAs doing this. Most are done by sales tax or mill levy. Chairman Atencio asked what major city is in San Miguel. Mr. Wiseman replied Telluride, noting it is an expensive city to reside, but the bus service helps get workers in and out of there.

Mr. Flores stated one thing that made it palatable in El Paso County was they do this in increments of five years. This seemed to be one of the selling points to the taxpayers that there was a sunset of five years. They have been doing such a good job in raising this money and it has been passed for another five years. He felt we should follow this model.

Mr. Wiseman stated the County, since Pueblo West has given back all their roads, has some huge needs coming up. Not only in five years, but ongoing into that timeframe. There are always issues in Colorado City or Rye and the Eastern Plains on the maintenance of roads. He stated there are probably issues in the City that need to be looked at or addressed. Mr. Gradisar stated the City thought about a sales tax last November, but it was clear that there were some members who wouldn’t support it. He stated if elected officials disagree or are not unanimously behind it, there is very little chance of it succeeding. The City’s compromise was to de-Bruce and try to get the

excess funds for street repairs. He stated if we plan to proceed with this, then we need a plan for the RTA and what it will do, what it will cost, and the money needed to be raised to do this. Mr. Wiseman stated the County Commissioners have some idea on what they will have to spend in Pueblo West. He stated it is interesting why counties do RTAs. Some do it to maximize their funds. He stated we need to know how much we can generate and what will be the actual affect. Mr. Gradisar stated he couldn't see the people in Pueblo raising money to fund roads in Pueblo West. Mr. Wiseman stated it would not only be for the citizens of Pueblo West but the entire community. He stated there are interconnecting needs. He stated for our community to grow, we all must be a part of the process. Mr. Ortiz felt it would be worth investigating. There is a ton of consideration, whether it comes down to polling or how a full transportation district might look. He thought there were two things--one is ongoing maintenance of roads and the other is obtaining the money to get requests to CDOT. He stated if we could explore this, noting a certain amount could be locked down with some defined criteria so that the public knows what types of transportation projects it is going to be used for. Chairman Atencio agreed, noting this would be the best use of a taxing district, not to fill potholes or resurface streets. Mr. Gradisar stated when the City proposed the 1/2¢ sales tax last year, half the money was going to be used for the repairs and the other half was to put aside money so that there is a pot available. Mr. Flores felt that every time we get a report from CDOT, they make it appear that we aren't going to get any funding unless we contribute money to the cause. The question is, we need to study this in order to understand if this is 10% or much higher, noting he doesn't know what the percentage is that the State is expecting us to contribute. The model in Colorado Springs shows that a lot of those smaller communities like Falcon and Palmer Lake have benefitted by belonging to this district. He stated he could see the people in the City of Pueblo and Pueblo West contributing, noting a lot of the thoroughfares cross over, as well as a lot of people who work go both ways. His concern was what is the State going to require communities going forward. If we don't have a transportation district, does that mean we don't get to play the game anymore?

Chairman Atencio asked Mayor Gradisar if it could go to City Council to see if they are amicable to doing it. He felt it could also go to the Board of County Commissioners, as well as the other PACOG member entities' boards. This way we could get an appropriate answer from each entity. Mr. Wiseman felt the Board of County Commissioners is interested in moving forward with this. Mr. Flores stated the next step would be to study this. Mr. Ortiz stated polling could be done to see where everyone is at. Chairman Atencio stated it would be nice to get a feeling from each entity. Mr. Wiseman asked if the City Council is open to a taxing district. Chairman Atencio replied he did not know with the new City Council. Mr. Flores suggested someone coming to the next PACOG meeting to explain the model. Chairman Atencio stated he would like to get affirmation from all the member entities before bringing someone to speak. Mr. Wiseman stated Ms. Holly Williams from STAC would possibly be the one who could speak more on the model.

MPO STAFF REPORT

A) PACOG/MPO Website Update

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the new PACOG website (pacog.net) is up and running. It will be continually updated with information.

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

B) Former MMOF Projects - Extension

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the State allowed an extension on the existing projects. The City requested an extension on three projects: (1) the Arkansas River Trail (Rapids Place); City requested a two-year extension; (2) Prairie Avenue improvements projects; City requested a two-year extension; and (3) Prairie to Lake Minnequa Trail; City requested a two-year extension.

It was moved by Dennis Flores, seconded by Chris Wiseman, and passed unanimously to approve the MMOF projects as presented, with the two-year extensions.

C) New MMOF Projects Update

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported on the current MMOF projects. Requests for Proposal (RFPs) were solicited and there were five proposals. They are: one from the City of Pueblo, Pueblo Transit, Pueblo County, and two from Pueblo West. The final due date is May 27th. Next month, staff will be coming to PACOG with the final applications. Pueblo Transit has requested a van pool to subsidize 14 vans which will go either to the industrial center, PuebloPlex, or Grupo Cementos.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the City's first priority was the Northern Avenue Trails, Phase 3. This is an existing project extending the multi-use trail on Northern Avenue from Cambridge going north towards Prairie to the Colorado State Fair. The second priority was the Lake Minnequa Connector Trail Project, which is an existing project. The scope of the project is from Prairie Avenue to Lake Minnequa on to Tucci Avenue. This new project would go along the Bessemer Ditch from Tucci Avenue down to Pueblo Boulevard. This would be a new bicycle/pedestrian route to Lake Minnequa. The third priority is the Colorado State Fair. This would include a 10' wide sidewalk on the north side of Small Avenue, which includes ADA curb ramps along the corridor, as well as improving the sidewalk on Beulah Avenue and Arroyo Avenue. The whole project would improve access around the State Fair. The fourth priority is the Dillon pedestrian improvements, which includes ADA curb ramps and sidewalks going over the railroad to Walmart. The last project is the Westside Trail, which is a continuation of the multi-trail which starts at 18th Street. It would go along Wildhorse Creek to 18th Street to 24th Street all the way to 31st Street. This would allow people to access YMCA from the river trail.

Ms. Cosyleon reported the County has requested the Joe Martinez Boulevard trail. It would be a 10' wide concrete trail with 6' crusher fine material for the runners, which run parallel off the boulevard going 3.8 miles from Purcell to Joe Martinez. The County would like to have a trail connecting where the intersection of Pueblo Boulevard and Joe Martinez would connect, noting this trail would go south connecting to the 11th Street trailhead. The County has also included EV charging stations in its proposal.

Ms. Cosyleon reported Pueblo West has requested a trail from Joe Martinez Boulevard (going west) as well as north. It would go from McCulloch to 24th Street. The 2nd project is the SDS trail, which is an existing project for the last eight years, noting it has been consistently redesigned. The trail would go from Safeway in Pueblo West going east to the SDS trail and then north to Jaroso.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the total cost of these projects is \$10 million. On June 8th, there will be a workshop to decide which projects can be funded. There is a possibility that some of these might be scaled down so more can be funded. There will be representatives from the CDOT, County, City, and Pueblo West at the workshop. PACOG will be provided the results at its next meeting.

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

D) RAISE/MEGA/InFRA/Rural Grants

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the City and County are working on getting funding. The deadline date was April 14th for the RAISE grant. The City and County applied for the grant. The City's grant was for \$15 million, noting it was for the construction and roundabouts extending Spaulding Avenue, which is soon to become Sun Mountain going to 24th Street. This proposal also included 70 ADA bus stops on the west side. It included a corridor study going from 24th Street over the railroad tracks, which included a design of a bridge and a connection going downtown. The study entails how to get people on the west side downtown. At the present time, there isn't a lot of access for residents in the area.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the County also applied for a RAISE grant for an extension of Joe Martinez Boulevard.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the Federal Transit Administration has several grants which the City applied for. An application was applied for the Transit Bus Facility and the low to no emissions. The City has applied for the last few years and has not received any funding.

Ms. Cosyleon stated an application was made for the Rural Grant. The City reapplied for the same corridor study on 24th Street with the RAISE grant. The City also duplicated the same project for funding on the Transit Bus Facility. The Pueblo Transit also applied for the Congressional Directives Grant for \$1.2 million to upgrade 100 bus stops in the City to make them ADA compliant. If the City gets these funds, it will get Pueblo to 78% compliant with bus stops.

Ms. Cosyleon stated there are other grants which are forthcoming, noting some deal with electric vehicle charging stations. She is keeping the City and County abreast of grants.

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

E) TAC Bylaws Update

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported staff reached out to PPACG regarding their TAC bylaws. The PPACG has positions for a chair and vice chair, which the PACOG TAC does not have. She stated having a chair and vice chair helps create a neutral territory, while at the same time getting these positions more involved.

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

F) Other Transportation Matters

It was announced that Mr. John Adams, MPO Manager, would be retiring effective July 1, 2022. Chairman Atencio stated Mr. Adams has served PACOG well for a long time. He asked Ms. Cosyleon if she would be providing the reports until such time as someone is hired. Ms. Cosyleon replied yes.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further regular business before PACOG, Chairman Atencio adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, June 23, 2022, at 12:15 p.m. (Note: 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

JOINT PUEBLO CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Following the regular PACOG meeting, there was a joint meeting held between the Pueblo City Council and Board of County Commissioners to make appointments to the Pueblo Regional Building Department's Building Board of Appeals. The following persons were selected:

- Andrew Hayes (Experienced Person), and
- Robert Leverington (Engineer).

The City Council and BOCC will need to ratify these appointments at their respective meetings.