

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

AUGUST 25, 2022

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, August 25, 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 12:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Larry Atencio
Chris DeLuca
Dennis Flores
Heather Graham
Epimenio Griego

Harry Hochstetler
Ed Gutierrez
Vicente Martinez Ortega
Chris Wiseman

Those members absent were:

Mike Cafasso
Barbara Clementi
Regina Maestri
Sarah Martinez

Garrison Ortiz
Doug Proal
Lori Winner

Also present were:

Eva Cosyleon
Carmen Howard
Sabina Genesisio

Nick Gradisar
David Russell
Louella Salazar

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Citizen Comments)

There were no public comments.

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Carmen Howard, PACOG Manager, reported there were four 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 Chris Wiseman, seconded by Epimenio Griego, and passed unanimously to approve the four Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of July 28, 2022 Meeting;

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- Treasurer's Report (receive and file July 2022 Financial Report);
- A Resolution Appropriating Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) from the Pueblo Area Council of Governments' 2022 Budget as Matching Funds for the Grant Application of the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce to the Colorado Tourism Office for Tourism Recovery Marketing Funds; and
- A Resolution Adopting the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment for Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2022 and 2023 for the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) as the Designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Pueblo Urban Area in Compliance with 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303, 23 CFR 450 and 500, and 49 CFR 613; and Authorizing and Directing the City of Pueblo in Accordance with the PACOG and City of Pueblo Delegation Agreement dated September 23, 2021 to Administer and Implement this UPWP in Accordance with all Applicable Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Atencio stated Salt Creek Sanitation District will be providing lunch at next month's meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

A) EPAC Minutes/Statement Report

Ms. Howard reported in the PACOG members' packets are the minutes of the August 4, 2022 Environmental Policy Advisory Committee meeting. This being an information item, no formal action was required.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Richard Zamora, CDOT Region 2 Director, reported Regions 1 and 4, Denver and Northeastern Colorado, respectively, presented their 10-Year Transportation Project lists to the State Transportation Commission last week. It is hoped that the updated 10-Year Transportation Plan will be adopted by the State Transportation Commission at its September meeting.

Mr. Zamora stated there was discussion during the Transportation Commission meeting regarding recruitment and retention, which have been difficult to hire and retain people, particularly with government agencies. CDOT's maintenance workers are the lowest paid workers, noting CDOT is struggling getting these workers. In the Aspen area, there is one person covering the entire highway, which is supposed to be a 13-person program. He stated they are looking at raising salaries to hire people, as well as looking into providing employee housing for those in remote areas.

Mr. Zamora stated yesterday was kickoff week for CDOT's Strategic Safety Transportation Plan. He stated various agencies from the State were brought together, as well as NITSA, to try and figure out a way to address the ongoing safety problems happening throughout the State. He stated during the COVID-19 pandemic people were driving fast and there was a severe uptick in the

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number of wrecks, as well as fatalities. CDOT is trying to find a way to reverse that trend. They are working on the organizational structure to the Plan. He stated they should be coming to their planning partners, including PACOG, to involve them in this process. He stated the problems that are seen in the Pueblo area could be different than those in another area of the State. There should be more information coming out soon about the Plan, noting CDOT would like PACOG's participation in this effort.

Mr. Flores asked Mr. Zamora if he knew when the old Hangar Restaurant building was going to be razed, noting he has received several complaints from citizens with respect to the building being occupied by the homeless and boarded up/graffitied, as well as it being one of the first things you see coming off the highway. Mr. Zamora replied it will be taken down as soon as possible, noting CDOT has run into some problems with contracting problems and asbestos. He stated he would find out and let the PACOG members know.

STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) UPDATE

Mr. Chris Wiseman, PACOG's representative to the State Transportation Advisory Committee, reported he would send the summary to the PACOG members. He stated they talked about the Safe Streets grant. The bill was passed by Senator Hinrichsen. He stated that he testified in favor of this bill.

Mr. Wiseman stated there is no word on the RAISE grant. The Legislature is still going through some technical rulemaking on greenhouse gas reduction throughout the State.

Mr. Wiseman stated there is an Environmental Justice and Equity branch at CDOT. The branch has a civil rights and business resource center. Some existing initiatives and opportunities include emerging small businesses to connect to DOT and CDOT, ECM mentor programs, etc. He stated he would send out the summary to the PACOG members, which will include contact information.

STATUS ON FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL DISTRICT

Mr. Dennis Flores, PACOG's representative to the Front Range Passenger Rail District, reported this particular entity was a commission, and on July 1, 2022, it became a district. Everything which has been happening has been to formulate a new entity (i.e., checking account, insurance). He stated their meetings are held the day after the PACOG meeting. A retreat will be held so the group can meet, noting there are 16 District members. The retreat should be held at the end of September. He stated the bylaws have not been done. He stated there should be more substance to report to PACOG at its next meeting.

MPO STAFF REPORT

A) FY 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program--Administrative Notification of Roll Forward Project Funding or TIP/STIP Policy Amendment(s) in the MPO and TPR Area(s)

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the administrative notification is for I-25 and Exit 104 Improvements. The funds were originally programmed in Fiscal Year 2025, but CDOT can move the funding up to Fiscal Year 2023 for the design phase of the project. The total project fund amendment is \$400,000.

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

B) RAISE Grant

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the City of Pueblo has been awarded a RAISE grant for \$16.8 million. The main project name is the West Pueblo Connector. Within this grant will be several different projects. A PowerPoint presentation was provided. Pueblo's westside has always been disconnected from downtown. Staff wanted to make sure to incorporate the westside. There have been many studies done over the years and those studies were incorporated into this grant. It is a design and build of two roundabouts. It is the design and construction of the extension of Spaulding Avenue which will become Sun Mountain from 31st Street to 24th Street. There will be a planning study and design of the 24th Street bridge and downtown corridor. This grant will also provide funds improve and update 70 Transit stops. She stated there is mixed use development in the final approvals. The Neighbor Works Program is working with Civitas, a consultant group in Denver. The plans are being finalized. She stated this will incorporate the actual construction of the new road and the roundabouts. She stated an overview of the project was provided to the Federal government as to why the connection was so important. She stated they wanted to show the extension of Joe Martinez Boulevard and how it will be connecting into the westside, as well as downtown. She stated the connection to Spaulding Avenue will become Sun Mountain from 31st to 24th Street. The other portion is the actual planning and design of the 24th Street bridge and the study of a possible corridor connecting to downtown. She stated, at the current time, the main corridor to the westside is the 18th Street bridge, which is steep and narrow, noting it is difficult for a handicapped person to cross over the bridge. She stated the bridge leaves a lot of blind spots for bicyclists. The 24th Street bridge would offer a better connection for individuals going east and west and going south connecting to downtown. This grant will provide for a consultant to help with identifying whether these are the best corridors. The reason 24th Street was chosen was because the City owns right-of-way, which would allow for a bridge to go over that section of the railroad track.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the westside transit accessibility improvements would cover 70 bus stops and would allow ADA access to the bus stops, as well as fixing the curb access. Shelters would also be erected at the bus stops.

Ms. Cosyleon stated another access to the westside is 29th Street. There are problems at the 29th Street at-grade railroad such as the sidewalk ending before getting to the railroad tracks. If you are a pedestrian, you would have to contend with traffic if you are going over the railroad tracks. This is another reason why having the 24th Street bridge is pivotal to getting to the neighborhood. This would allow for the incorporation of bike lanes and a wider sidewalk to accommodate all ages and abilities.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the main north-south corridor is on Pueblo Boulevard. The speed limit is 55 mph, noting it is a vulnerable path for pedestrians and bicyclists. She stated allowing a north-south corridor on Sun Mountain Boulevard will create a better and safer atmosphere, as well as easier access to downtown once the new bridge is done.

Ms. Cosyleon stated the 18th Street bridge is steep. If you are bicyclist, you have a blind spot going up and down it. With pedestrians, if you are having mobility issues, this would be difficult to go up.

Ms. Cosyleon stated it is anticipated that an IGA will be done with the federal government. She stated this will be a nice corridor for the westside community.

Mr. Flores asked if there was an engineer's estimate on how much the bridge is going to cost. Ms. Cosyleon replied when the research was being done, there was an actual hand drawn design of the bridge. She stated the cost will depend on the width and span of the bridge. She stated the RAISE grant will help in the design of the bridge. It is hoped that funds can be secured for the construction of it. Mr. Flores asked if it is dependent on the safety issues on the 29th Street railroad crossing, and whether the crossing would be shutdown. Ms. Cosyleon responded they might leave it open. She stated there are a couple of grants from the federal government that identify different things. There is one grant which specifically targets at-grade railroads. She stated she was not sure if the City would be applying for this grant. There might be avenues where, if the 24th Street connection is built, there might be different ways it can be accessed, thus allowing for the closure of the 29th Street railroad. Mr. Flores asked about 11th Street, noting there is a short distance with the street behind the old Sears building. He asked why this would not be a better accommodation. Ms. Cosyleon replied it is farther than it looks. The railroad track veers off to the right and there are railroad yards. This property is owned by the State. She stated some of the engineers felt this would be the best place for a connection because it would be shorter and be able to connect to 8th Street. After the consultant does their study, they might be able to find something. There might be contingencies because there is right-of-way on 24th Street. The cost of purchasing the land from the railroad and State could also be costly. Mr. Flores stated the 18th Street bridge is not a bridge but a viaduct, noting he felt it was done as a viaduct to save money.

Mr. Martinez Ortega stated there will be pushback from folks living around 24th Street. They don't want a bridge or traffic. They have concerns about high traffic, garbage, and people being in their immediate vicinity, noting these are residents who have lived in the area for a long time. Ms. Cosyleon stated the consultant study will encompass a community engagement. The health department is redoing the community revitalization plan, which was done in 2004. After the study is done, it might be found that 11th Street could be expanded. She felt there is no room on the 18th Street bridge; however, she is not the engineer.

Chairman Atencio asked if 24th at Pueblo Boulevard will connect to Joe Martinez Boulevard. Ms. Cosyleon replied yes. Chairman Atencio inquired if the idea is to connect 24th Street to Elizabeth Street. Ms. Cosyleon answered there is a northside historical group that was not happy. At one point, one of the plans connected 29th Street all the way to I-25, noting they did not like it. The reason for conceptually putting the 24th Street connection going over the railroad bridge and stopping just west of the conservation easement and south to Francisco Street is to avoid going through the historic neighborhood. She felt there would always be friction with different neighborhoods. Chairman Atencio stated 24th Street west to Elizabeth would have to be widened.

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

C) MPO Manager Update

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported the MPO Manager interviews were conducted on August 23rd.

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

D) Other Transportation Matters

Ms. Eva Cosyleon, MPO Planner, reported another federal grant, which is becoming available and will be due on September 14th, is the Safe Streets for All grant, noting it entails two types. One is a

safety action planning grant where you apply and get a consultant or do it inhouse. A safety action plan would have to be done. At the current time, the region does not have a safety action plan. The other grant type is an implementation grant. You can apply for an implementation grant for capital funding or construction funding. Since there is no safety action plan, you cannot apply for the implementation grant. The City is going to pursue the safety action plan grant for the region. This gives us an opportunity to apply next year for an implementation grant. The City will be requesting \$852,000, which will require a 20% match. The City will be allocating half of the 20%. She stated she is requesting PACOG contribute the other half or 10%, which is \$85,200. She stated if they should get the grant, she will be coming back to PACOG and asking for a TIP amendment. This match would be coming from money leftover from the MMOF funds, noting there is \$478,000 left over. She stated the safety action plan would look at different areas that have safety hazards. There will be priority projects developed.

Ms. Cosyleon reported CDOT will be giving the community \$200,000 in additional funding for greenhouse gas traffic demand modeling. She noted the UPWP will need to be amended to include the new funding, which means it would be brought before PACOG at a future meeting.

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

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

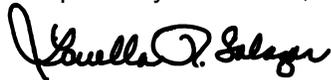
FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further regular business before PACOG, Chairman Atencio adjourned the meeting at 12:46 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, September 22, 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 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 one appointment to the Community Services Advisory Commission (CSAC) and one appointment to the Pueblo Regional Building Department's

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Mechanical Board of Appeals. The following persons were selected by the BOCC and City Council for CSAC and Mechanical Board of Appeals:

- Community Services Advisory Commission - Sandra Sherrer
- Mechanical Board of Appeals - Patrick Grubb (Journeyman) with a term expiring July 1, 2024

These individuals will need to be ratified by the respective entities at future meetings.