

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, November 13, 2014, at the Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, 101 West 10th Street, 1st Floor Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Roger Lowe, Chairman, at 12:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Ed Brown
Dennis Flores
Nick Gradisar
Ted Lopez
Roger Lowe

Buffie McFadyen
Tony Montoya
Steve Nawrocki
Sal Pace
Lewis Quigley

Those members absent were:

Michael Colucci
Terry Hart
Eva Montoya

Ami Nawrocki
Chris Nicoll

Also present were:

Joan Armstrong
Scott Hobson

Louella Salazar
Greg Styduhar

CONSENT ITEMS:

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

Chairman Lowe asked if there were any other additions or amendments to the Consent Items or if any of the members or audience would like any of the items removed or discussed that are on the Consent agenda.

It was moved by Buffie McFadyen, seconded by Tony Montoya, and passed unanimously to approve the three Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of October 23, 2014 meeting;
- A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Allocate Highway Safety Improvement Project Funds in the Amount of \$132,000 for the I-25 and 1st Street HES Project and \$1,000,000 for the US 50 32nd Lane, Cottonwood, 34th Lane Project, and Bridge On-System Funds in the Amount of \$1,100,000 for the Bonforte

Bridge over SH 47 Project, and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendment; and

- A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Allocate FY 2015-2017 Transportation Alternative Program Funds for the Continuation of the Pueblo West Trail System in the Amount of \$515,205 for West Spaulding to McCulloch West Boulevard, \$653,010 Industrial North to Platteville, and \$642,210 SDS North Park Trail, and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendment.

REGULAR ITEMS:

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

(A) Certificate of Appreciation to Sandy Daff, Outgoing City Council Member

Chairman Lowe presented a certificate of appreciation to Sandy Daff, the outgoing City Council member. Since Ms. Daff was not in attendance, Chairman Lowe gave the certificate of appreciation to Mr. Steve Nawrocki, City Council President, who said he would make sure she would get it.

(B) Recognition of Laurie E. Clark for 12 Years on the Transportation Advisory Committee

Chairman Lowe presented a plaque to Laurie E. Clark in recognition of her 12 years of community service on the Transportation Advisory Committee. Ms. Clark thanked staff and PACOG.

(C) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Lowe thanked the City Council for providing lunch at today's meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

There was no Manager's Report.

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO ALLOCATE FUNDING FOR THE I-25 AT ILEX PROJECT FUNDED WITH REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,960,000, AND DIRECTING THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DIVISION TO EXECUTE SAID AMENDMENT

Mr. Scott Hobson, MPO Administrator, reported this is an amendment to the FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) related to the I-25 at Ilex project, which CDOT is working diligently to have rewarded so construction can begin in 2015. The resolution, which was submitted in the PACOG packet, did not have the dollar amount depicted in it. The reason for this was the opening for the bids occurred this morning. The dollar amount was provided of the additional funds that need to be programmed into the TIP for this project. A new resolution was distributed at the PACOG meeting and the dollar amount identified in the resolution is \$8,960,000. This amount will be added as additional funds to the Regional Priority Program (RPP) into the TIP, which will be added

to the \$62.4 million that is already included in the TIP for this project. This includes the improvements for the Ilex Bridge to 1st Street. The project is part of the RAMP funds, FASTER safety funds, and now RPP funds are in the project. It also includes the rehabilitation of the seven bridges that are south of Ilex. This resolution will add the additional funds to our TIP and will allow CDOT Region 2 to submit this to the State Transportation Commission next week so it can award the contract.

Mr. Joe DeHeart, CDOT, stated the State Transportation Commission meets next week. The best and final offer process was beneficial. Through scope reductions, CDOT ended up having a price come in about \$4 million less than what was originally submitted by Flatiron Construction. This savings still delivers the acceleration and deceleration lanes, the aesthetics, the streets and crossings underneath the interstate, etc. The scope of work is still of high quality, but now at a cheaper price. He stated it will now be up to the State Transportation Commission to fund the additional money. He stated they are hoping to see a Notice to Proceed with the Contractor probably at the end of January. Construction should begin when the weather breaks.

Ms. McFadyen asked if they still need to go to the best price with Flatiron Construction or do we not know who the contractor is. Mr. DeHeart replied they do know it is Flatiron. The best and final offer process wasn't a true negotiation. It was looking at the work itself and the scope reduction of work they want to accomplish. The price which was given was completely independent. Ms. McFadyen asked if there is any reason to believe that the State Transportation Commission won't approve the additional funding. Mr. Hobson replied that Transportation Commissioner Bill Thiebaut would probably have a better answer, but staff has been led to believe that there was a range of \$9 million to \$11 million and this bid is underneath that. He felt it was very unlikely that the State Transportation Commission would not approve moving forward with the project with the price and range provided. Staff is within the suggested range, and felt positively that the State Transportation Commission would approve this. Ms. McFadyen asked if receiving the advanced RPP funds would impact us negatively in getting Highway 50 done. Mr. Hobson responded there is the potential with the use of RPP funds that by adding the additional funds into I-25 that means that funds that are programmed into future years will not be as readily available to go to U.S. 50, noting that is the downside of adding the additional RPP funds. He stated another phase could have probably been done on a portion of U.S. 50, but there has been so much work and effort done on I-25 that this has been identified by PACOG and the community as the priority project that we have been waiting for a long time to do. It could have some impact on RPP funds that could be made available for other corridors within Pueblo. Ms. McFadyen stated that I-25 is the priority and needs to be done, noting it is a safety issue. She stated her concern is because we waited so long for I-25 to get done that she would like to express that we cannot wait another 15 years, not even five years, to get it done. She noted the congestion problem on Highway 50 east and west between Pueblo West and Pueblo can potentially be as dangerous in the next few years as what we have experienced on I-25. Highway 50 is the 15th most congested corridor in the entire State. She stated it shouldn't be one or the other, noting she wants both. She stated she wanted CDOT staff to know that when they are in a meeting and somebody wants to know what Pueblo thinks that they should say, it should be "Pueblo still wants both". Mr. DeHeart stated it is currently out for advertisement and in a few weeks they should find out whether they are in good shape or need additional money for Highway 50. Mr. Quigley stated he agreed with Ms. McFadyen's statement. He asked CDOT to keep in mind that if you make repairs at both ends of the project and you do nothing in the middle that it creates

more traffic problems. He felt we need to get both projects done. Mr. Montoya asked if anything has been done in terms of strategy to make sure that Highway 50 could be done. Mr. Hobson answered there is RAMP funding on Highway 50 to add a third lane eastbound, noting this is in the process of being approved. The westbound third lane currently does not have funding in place. This was part of the TIGER grant through CDOT which was not awarded. He stated there is under \$800,000 in the Long Range Transportation Plan. He stated the RPP funds are not necessarily going to be a source that will provide a bulk of the money for either I-25 or U.S. 50. He stated that RPP funds can fill in gaps, but not be a main funding source for these projects. Ms. Ajin Hu, CDOT, stated that the Highway 50 eastbound advertisement will be opening up. The project has \$10 million in FASTER funding. Everything is dependent on the bids. With respect to the third westbound lane, there are two things being done, which are an environmental assessment and a preliminary design. She stated an application has been submitted for FASTER money this week, and hopefully we will get the money for the westbound lane.

Ms. McFadyen stated Pueblo was a big benefactor in the RPP funding and Colorado Springs was not happy. Mr. Hobson stated Pueblo did okay. He stated Colorado Springs wanted to have routes that are listed under the National Highway System included in the overall funding formula. At the beginning of this year, all MPOs re-identified which roadways would be part of the National Highway System. In the late 1960s, in Colorado Springs, roadways which were part of the State or Federal Highway System were taken off. Typically, the only way you can do this is when local entities are willing to accept the operation and maintenance of the highways. Now they are not considered part of the on-system--State or Federal highway system. Colorado Springs wants to go back and guarantee an allocation formula that accounted for their off-system roadways and that did not occur. This is why Pueblo benefitted more than Colorado Springs. Overall, Colorado Springs did change the formula to account for population, and that hurt Pueblo and Grand Junction.

Mr. Flores inquired if the State Transportation Commission allows someone from Pueblo to provide testimony. Mr. Hobson responded we have done that in the past. Typically, the testimony is done at the workshop which is held the day before their formal meeting. This has to be coordinated through the Transportation Commissioners, and our local Transportation Commission, Bill Thiebaut, should be asked if this is something he feels would be beneficial. Mr. DeHeart stated that Karen Rowe, the CDOT Region 2 Director, has spent time talking with the Transportation Commission about Ilex and the process we have been going through. He stated she also spoke with the RAMP Governance Committee, noting they are the committee who gives the head nod that Ilex is a good thing to spend money on. He stated whether we are guaranteed to get the approval, they won't know until November 20th. Ms. McFadyen stated that it has been a misnomer to some in our community that money is available, noting they have had to fight tooth and nails to get our piece of the pie. She stated she is only trying to emphasize that Pueblo wants both of the projects to get done.

Mr. Hobson stated one of the reasons that the RPP funds are being used is that those funds do not require any local match. If staff would have tried to increase the funding for RAMP funds, there would have been a local match, noting this is the reason we did the devolution of roads and provided local cash match into the projects. We stayed away from that because we did not feel we have the resources to be able to increase our cash commitment to RAMP. He stated for the record he would like PACOG to know that this

resolution was reviewed by the local Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), noting they were made aware that CDOT would be reviewing the revised bid on Flatiron Construction. TAC voted to recommend approval of the resolution to PACOG.

Mr. Pace asked what happened to the Joe Martinez Boulevard extension out of Pueblo West. Ms. McFadyen stated PACOG would have to identify it as a priority. She stated it shouldn't be taken off the table, but at this time we need to finish these other projects first. Mr. Hobson added the Joe Martinez and West Pueblo Connector into Downtown Pueblo were identified in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as its amendment. He stated funding is not specifically identified for that project in the fiscally constrained portion of that Plan. That corridor is also identified in the U.S. 50 West PEL study which was completed in 2012. This study gives timeframes when improvements would need to be made not only to the Joe Martinez connection but the other extension of Pueblo Boulevard and other section and lane additions identified in certain years. If those improvements are not completed in those timeframes, then they identify what the effect is on U.S. 50 west into Downtown Pueblo. Mr. Nawrocki asked if he knew the cost. Mr. Hobson replied it is in the PEL study. He stated it is a sizeable amount, noting it is a little over three miles in distance from Purcell Boulevard to Pueblo Boulevard. Mr. Quigley stated as an observation we should connect to what is the fastest and not what is the shortest.

It was moved by Ed Brown, seconded by Buffie McFadyen, and passed unanimously to approve "A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Allocate Funding for the I-25 at Ilex Project Funded with Regional Priority Project Funds in the Amount of \$8,960,000, and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendment".

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER/CDOT REGION 2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chairman Lowe reported there were no comments from Mr. Bill Thiebaut, the Region 2 Transportation Commissioner, noting the Transportation Commission doesn't meet until next week. There were no comments from CDOT staff.

PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH CENTRAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR BROADBAND STUDY FOR THE REGION

Mr. Chris Markuson, Director of County Economic Development and the Geographic Information Systems, reported at a previous PACOG meeting there was a presentation done by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) regarding broadband infrastructure and deficiencies in Pueblo County. He stated he has been talking with DOLA and we are looking at examples of what does it mean when DOLA is suggesting to look at broadband. He stated the Northwest Council of Governments (NWCOG) did a study in December 2013. He stated DOLA wishes for the State as whole to have information about broadband. Federal dollars are taken and are allocated to areas that need additional improvement in broadband infrastructure so that everybody regardless of being at home or at work can have access to high speed internet. Getting those dollars in the hands of the broadband providers and/or the local communities that need those requires a little bit of planning. DOLA's efforts are asking communities, specifically councils of governments, to come up with a plan and identify some of the issues that are affecting the inadequacy of broadband in their community. He stated there are a couple of options which can be pursued in getting this plan created. The plan is typically done

by a consultant. The first option would be is for PACOG to commission a study be done by a consultant to look at our deficiencies and our assets. The study would be provided as evidence to DOLA for future funding and to direct Federal dollars in our direction. The other option would be is for PACOG to partner with another COG adjacent to us. This would be done at a larger geographic scale. He stated that he, as well as DOLA, liked the second option. The first reason would be is that the information in a broadband study would be the same whether it's in Pueblo County or all or portions of Southeastern Colorado. There are things that are at play, there is infrastructure that does not exist yet, there are physical barriers which cause these things to happen, and here is where we think we need to put additional dollars. He stated by partnering with another COG that the match requirement to go after DOLA grant funding is less on PACOG's shoulders. Mr. Lee Merkel, the local DOLA representative, Denver DOLA staff, and Ms. Priscilla Fraser from the South Central Council of Governments (SCCOG) met to discuss this. They felt that the best option is for the SCCOG and PACOG to partner together and do one study. SCCOG covers Las Animas and Huerfano counties. A study would cost approximately \$100,000 according to DOLA, and the match would be 20% or \$20,000. DOLA's suggestion is that PACOG and SCCOG share that cost and half would come from both entities at \$10,000 each.

Mr. Markuson stated the broadband studies have three overarching goals: (1) increase broadband capacity, (2) improve broadband reliability, and (3) lower broadband costs. The main overarching elements of these plans focus on a variety of things. One is that it doesn't cost any money which are policy efforts. It creates and looks at reducing barriers to installing broadband within the region. This could be State legislation, which could be pushed by the COGs at a State-wide level to assist Southeastern Colorado. It could mean easing some restrictions in doing some advanced long-term land use policy planning that allows broadband infrastructure to be installed in a way that is meaningful. A knowledge effort piece is the second piece in basically identifying the asset. This information would then be disseminated back to the State and Federal governments, but also working with broadband providers in figuring out what their impediments are to operating good quality and affordable broadband. A third piece is coordination. The coordination could be between public projects such as highways, new roadways, or leaving a trench open so that a third party can install broadband infrastructure. There could be private partnerships done at some point between telecommunication providers and local government. The last piece is deployment efforts. The deployment efforts would identify what do we, as a COG or other agencies, need to procure and what can we lease out to third parties or allow the State to provide. He requested PACOG's direction in pursuing a regional study with SCCOG and consider a request for \$10,000 as a match to pursue the grant funding. He stated SCCOG has already written the grant, and has already been approved to include PACOG, noting the dollar figure has not been decided because they are waiting on whether or not PACOG is interested in a partnership. Mr. Merkel indicated if PACOG should collaborate with SCCOG then the dollar figure would go up from DOLA and the study needs to be done. Mr. Pace asked if he was looking at direction from PACOG. Mr. Markuson replied he is looking for direction from PACOG if they want to enter into an agreement between PACOG and SCCOG, and does PACOG have funding available to use as leverage for that match. He stated if PACOG does not have the funding if the PACOG member entities have dollars to collectively pool to make this study happen. Mr. Pace felt the study sounded great, but he did not know if there was funding available. Mr. Nawrocki asked how much money PACOG would have to contribute. Mr. Markuson replied \$10,000. Mr. Montoya asked if he looked at any of the counties to the east of Pueblo County, noting there are

two colleges in the area. Mr. Markuson replied this was discussed. There are a couple of things that go into consideration on who we partner with. There is an entity to the east, which is called SECOM (a spinoff company of Southeast Power), who were authorized to install fiber optic lines on their power infrastructure throughout Southeastern Colorado. They provide some infrastructure in Pueblo County also, but they don't in Huerfano and Las Animas counties. The Lower Valley is better served than Pueblo in a lot of regards because of their work. They do provide fiber optic connectivity to the community colleges in La Junta as well as Lamar. He stated where staff is at in terms of being able to accomplish something or to leverage money is important. He stated he didn't think that the current COGs to the east of Pueblo are in the same situation as we would be with them.

Mr. Styduhar asked what the timeframe on submission of the grant with SCCOG is. Mr. Markuson replied the grant has already been completed and submitted to DOLA, so the timing is "immediately". He stated when PACOG would have to come with the match is when convenient, but before a contractor is hired. What SCCOG needs, as the main recipient of the grant, is for PACOG to designate someone to come up with the items that need to be studied in Pueblo County. They will be very complimentary to what SCCOG is doing may be with a few additional provisions. The intent is that the study will begin when funds are released in 2015 by DOLA. The study which the NWCOG did took 4-6 months to complete. He estimated if we were to allocate funding in 2014 that the funding for the grant would be released in FY 2015 and that the study would be undertaken as early as March. Mr. Styduhar asked if it would work for his purposes if PACOG addressed this issue at its December 4th meeting knowing by that time what the budget is and supplying them with a proposed resolution. Mr. Markuson replied that would work. He stated what SCCOG is looking for at the present time is a verbal "thumbs up" and the authority to start working with forming up the contract between the two COGs. When they actually need the money depends upon the timeframe for contracting with the consultant. He stated it has to be secured before the dollars from DOLA can be released as the match. DOLA has said they would work with us.

Mr. Nawrocki asked if there are strengths with having PACOG partner with SCCOG. Mr. Markuson replied that receipt of the grant, in his opinion, is a foregone conclusion if PACOG can come up with the matching dollar requirements. If PACOG wanted to do its own grant, you would submit the form and get a green light to go. The biggest benefit to us as PACOG is half the matching cost. He stated there is nothing that says that we would or would not receive a grant either way.

It was moved by Nick Gradisar and seconded by Sal Pace to approve the partnership with the South Central Council of Governments and that staff bring back a resolution at the next meeting with respect to the appropriation of funds. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Nawrocki asked what would happen if PACOG doesn't have the discretionary money in its budget. Mr. Gradisar, the chair of the PACOG Budget Committee, stated he was informed that PACOG has the money in its budget. Mr. Flores asked if when the grant was written if Pueblo County was considered in it, or is it a general grant application. Mr. Markuson replied it is a general grant application. He stated Mr. Merkel indicated that DOLA would be more inclined to pay for one study than two.

After discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

MPO STAFF REPORT

(A) Administrative Amendment

Mr. Scott Hobson, MPO Administrator, reported there is one administrative amendment which includes the rollover of funds in the amount of \$1.5 million, which were previously included in the TIP for the U.S. 50 and 32nd Lane and Cottonwood and 34th Lane project. He noted a resolution was approved by PACOG today authorizing an additional \$1 million for the project, for a total of \$2.5 million for the project. The project is located on U.S. 50 East of Pueblo between Baxter Road and 36th Lane.

This being an administrative amendment, no formal action was taken.

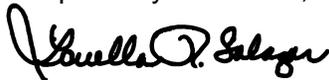
FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Pace stated he would like to suggest that Mr. Styduhar brief PACOG on regional transportation authorities, with respect to local funding mechanisms to fund roads. Second, he would like Mr. Hobson to share with PACOG a couple of years' budget expenditures on transportation and how the money is spent and how the staff dollars are expended. Third, he would like to give a short briefing on the status of the implementation of the TIGER grant for the Southwest Chief.

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, December 4, 2014, and is to be held at the Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, 101 West 10th Street, 1st Floor Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,



Louella R. Salazar
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS