

## MINUTES

### PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APRIL 26, 2012

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, April 26, 2012, in the Pueblo County Conference Room, 1001 North Santa Fe Avenue. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Steve Nawrocki, Chairman, at 12:15 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Michael Colucci  
John Cordova  
Sandy Daff  
Nick Gradisar  
Ted Lopez

Roger Lowe  
Jerry Martin  
Steve Nawrocki  
Anthony Nuñez

Those members absent were:

Jeff Chostner  
Michael Connolly  
Leroy Garcia

Eva Montoya  
Chris Nicoll

Also present were:

Tom Florczak  
Scott Hobson  
Dan Kogovsek  
Rob Leverington

Jerry Pacheco  
Louella Salazar  
Julie Ann Woods

#### **CONSENT ITEMS:**

Ms. Julie Ann Woods, PACOG Manager, reported there were four items listed on the agenda under the Consent Items. She summarized the four Consent Items for PACOG.

Chairman Nawrocki 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 from the Consent agenda. There was no opposition to the Consent agenda as presented.

It was moved by Anthony Nuñez, seconded by Roger Lowe, and passed unanimously to approve the four Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of March 22, 2012 meeting;
- Treasurer's Report (Receive and file February and March 2012 Financial Reports);
- A Resolution Approving the FY 2012 Pueblo Area Council of Governments' Delegation Agreement for Regional Land Use Planning and Administration, and Authorizing the Chairperson of PACOG to Execute Same; and
- A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Allocate Additional \$700,000 in FY 2012 State Regional Priority Funds for Bridge Deck Repairs at I-25 and 29<sup>TH</sup> Street and

Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendments to the Plan.

**REGULAR ITEMS:**

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

(A) Lunch Appreciation

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

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

(A) Brief Update on Pueblo Regional Development Plan

Ms. Julie Ann Woods, PACOG Manager, reported the City, County, and Pueblo West Metropolitan District have been meeting on a regular basis regarding the update to the Pueblo Regional Development Plan, which is a 10-year old document. One of the changes they have been discussing is rather than the Plan covering the entire County that it focus on a metropolitan area plan which centers on growth, development, and sustainability around the metropolitan area and doing more subarea plans for the outlying areas such as Rye, Beulah, Avondale, etc. They are focusing on sustainability and smart growth and linking land use to transportation because they want to make sure that those are integrated into the Plan. They have started gathering baseline information from the 2010 Census. They will track out Census tracts pertinent to a metropolitan area. They have been using the Department of Local Affairs' (DOLA) projections as a starting point for their future policies and discussion. Those projections are calling for 11,300 new households in 2020. The question is where the community wants to see that growth and development occur in this area, noting this is for the metropolitan area not for the entire County. There will be a number of people involved in the public process, noting they will be using different processes depending on where they are making the presentation in order to get citizen participation. They are working on a budget and hoping there may be funds available through CDOT for a focused metropolitan area land use and transportation plan update. They are also looking at energy funds for the subarea plans. It is anticipated a consultant may have to be hired to help, but they are going to use staff where they can to keep the cost down. It is staff's intent to bring this to PACOG in May and get more direction from PACOG.

(B) 208 Water Quality Management Plan

Ms. Woods reported as directed by PACOG they have met with the consultant and reviewed the Plan in a lot more detail. Discussions have occurred between the Pueblo West Metropolitan District and PACOG attorneys. PACOG staff sat down with Pueblo West staff to try and determine where they have some common ground. There has been some suggested language and changes going back and forth by e-mails, noting it hasn't been honed in and put into something they can all agree with. Among the suggested change is Pueblo West and Colorado City becoming management agencies instead of operating agencies. They are also making corrections to the Plan, noting there were errors which were overlooked and clarified. It is anticipated a redlined document will be provided to PACOG at its May meeting. A public hearing will be scheduled at PACOG's June meeting.

Mr. Martin thanked Ms. Woods for inviting the Pueblo West Metropolitan District to the staff meetings.

#### MPO STAFF REPORT

Mr. Scott Hobson, Assistant City Manager with the Planning and Development Department and MPO staff, reported there are three administrative notifications for transportation projects. The first project is modifications at State Highway 96 (Thatcher Avenue) and State Highway 45 (Pueblo Boulevard). The project totals \$300,000, which is a combination of Federal and State funds, which would add turn lanes at the intersection of Thatcher Avenue and Pueblo Boulevard. The second project is the rollover of Phase II funds of the DOT Road to the Pueblo Chemical Depot. These funds are Defense Access Road (DAR) discretionary funds in the amount of \$590,679. These funds are remaining from the Phase II portion of the project and will be rolled over to Phase III, which are improvements to the access road. The third project is the I-25/U.S. Highway 50/State Highway 47 Interchange slab repairs. This project is already in process. This is \$2 million of both Federal and State funds to primarily upgrade the surface treatment for the ramps on I-25.

#### TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Mr. Gilbert Ortiz, Sr., Region 10 CDOT Commissioner, reported Pueblo needs to make a decision on whether it is going to stay with I-25 the way it is. The Governor's main focus is on the I-70 and I-25 corridors and CDOT Director Hunt has the same focus. There are some big projects up north. In order for Pueblo to get some work done here, we will have to approve what is on the board now, or otherwise scrap it.

Mr. Tom Wrona, Region 2 CDOT Director, stated Commissioner Ortiz brings up a good point. Pueblo has a good opportunity now to get started with the I-25 improvements necessary through the Pueblo area. The one step we need to get past is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and getting it approved. If we can get the support of PACOG, the Board of County Commissioners, and City Council to get behind the preferred alternative then there is a real opportunity. The Governor, Transportation Commission, and the CDOT are all behind our main corridors, with the limited funding, which are the I-25 and I-70 corridors. The Commission is very receptive to allowing us to advance some of our outer year funds. We have an unspent cash balance which is pretty high at this time and equals what a normal year of their CDOT budget, which is \$1 billion. We are talking about advancing projects which are two to three to four years out that have been programmed to get them done sooner. The timing is right to get behind this project and not miss out on this opportunity. Mr. Ortiz added there are bridges on the list which will be coming off. Mr. Wrona replied yes, noting the first project would be next summer to replace the Ilex bridges, but this also requires that we have approval of the EIS first. Chairman Nawrocki stated we would not be approving this piecemeal. Mr. Wrona responded this is correct. He stated CDOT is not asking for a vote of support at this point, but wanted to let the elected officials know it is important. Mr. Ortiz stated it is important to do it as quick as we can so when the money comes up. Mr. Wrona stated those projects that already have their environmental documents complete and are in position for the funding will get that money.

Chairman Nawrocki stated that at Monday's City Council work session there were two Councilpersons who had questions about the preferred I-25 plan through Pueblo. Ms. Daff stated she supports this project; however, she wished CDOT would have negotiated

with the railroad. She stated she knows the dollar impact for each of the alternatives are basically the same, but the impact to the Eilers neighborhood is much greater because CDOT is not willing to take a look at that railroad. She stated after the EIS comes out there is still opportunity for public comments. She stated she knows CDOT has done the "dog and pony" show and has been to all the neighborhood meetings going back eight years. She stated she is hearing from residents that CDOT did not listen to the citizens. Mr. Ortiz responded dealing with railroads is difficult. We can deal all we want but they are not going to move. If we want to advance, we have to work around the railroad which is there, and if we don't, the I-25 project won't go. The railroads have more rights. The railroad might agree to move it, but it will have to be where they want it and the cost would be greater to the project. When dealing with a railroad, you have to deal with their attorneys, who aren't easy to deal with. He stated CDOT bought some land in Denver and the railroad wasn't even using it, and it was hard to deal with them. This particular railroad line in Pueblo is used and is in front of Evraz. Mr. Wrona stated it is not only the dollar impact, but it's the time associated with getting the approvals, the contracts, and the work done. The railroads move very slowly. It puts one in a very difficult position if you are counting on a funding stream at a particular time, and then having to be delayed for many years. Ms. Daff stated she knows there are concessions and some of the homes on Mesa going over the bridge can be saved if we change the arc of the bridge. The other problem was access to St. Mary's Church. The reality is that the neighborhood doesn't want a huge park. They see the condition of some of the parks now. She added they didn't request a huge park. Mr. Wrona answered he understands. The increase of the park site wasn't a trade off for the houses which would be lost. It was because land became available in that area when the new lines became drawn and it allowed for the park to be expanded. It is unfortunate you have to impact businesses and homes whenever you undertake a highway expansion project. He stated CDOT had a success with the COSMIX project through Colorado Springs, noting the residents along this area would get an 80%+ satisfactory rating from these individuals. Most parties ended up with housing that was even better than what they had to start with. Ms. Daff stated the folks in Pueblo would be paid for homes of like size and like number of rooms and the homes are small, so they would not have the opportunity to upgrade. They may have poor credit and may not be able to purchase a home, so that would put them back in the rental market. She stated it would be spinoff effect. She stated she would hope CDOT would counsel with a local housing agency that can do some credit counseling upfront and help these folks get credit so they can be able to buy another home. Mr. Wrona replied if there isn't equal housing available in the community, then they would get better. It has to be equal to or better. Many times they wind up with an upgrade of what they have existing as far as the number of rooms, etc. CDOT's right-of-way section which deals with the purchase of property and relocation are a wonderful resource and staff. He stated he would like the folks from the neighborhood to meet with them, either one-on-one or a small group. He stated hopefully the new I-25 will be something we can all be proud of and will be an improvement of what we have today, and meet the community's needs and State Transportation Department's needs of moving people's goods and services. Ms. Daff stated she would be happy to help arrange the meetings in the neighborhood. Mr. Florczak stated the people in the neighborhood should know it is important that they not jump the gun because if they should move or take some action before they are given official notice of intent to acquire, they are just out of luck. They need to be patient and work through the process.

Mr. Nuñez asked if we had any kind of window. He stated he owned a business on Santa Fe Avenue and sold it. He stated discussion on the I-25 project has been ongoing

for 20 years. Those he has spoken to are on "pins and needles" on when it is going to happen. He stated it would be fair to know if it is going to be in the near future or do we have another 20 years down the road. He stated the people in the Eilers neighborhood are anxious and want to make a good deal, and want to know if they will have to move. Mr. Ortiz replied they don't know if the money is going to be available. He stated they may decide to put it someplace else. He stated may be they could get a timeline of which ones go first. He stated a lot of these projects have to do with safety. You want to put the ones you can first and then do the hard ones. He felt it would be important to know which neighborhoods are going to be done first. Ms. Daff noted the EIS mentions phasing, but it is probably not in the detail they want. Mr. Wrona stated there is some proposed phasing listed. He stated a certain phasing could be determined, but it could all be tied to safety. Part of the project might change in priority based upon that. He stated he wish he could give a good schedule as to how they will proceed. He stated Pueblo needs to get itself in position so that we can say we are ready to go.

Mr. Cordova stated he is a member of the State Transportation Advisory Committee and there is always discussion from folks up north that they want more. He stated he would encourage Pueblo to jump on this and do whatever it can. He stated the plans for the I-25 alignment have been in the making for many years. He stated the EIS has taken forever, and felt it was baffling when you look at how COSMIX and TREX were done so quickly. Mr. Wrona replied there is a combination of things involved. Pueblo is dealing with a lot of different issues such historic properties and Evraz. Evraz causes problems because of its potentially hazardous materials. The effort of trying to get a large community around a particular solution and agree on that is a time-consuming process. CDOT has had a lot of community outreach, noting the number of meetings is approaching 100 over the last 10 years. They are following a process which is referred to as context sensitive. The community is involved very closely in the decision-making process. It adds more time, but hopefully you get better community buy-in.

Mr. Gradisar asked what the estimated completion time for the EIS is. Mr. Wrona responded at the end of this calendar year or very early 2013. Mr. Gradisar questioned if it would be after that point in time that CDOT would be looking for approvals from the various entities and if there is money we could apply and get it. Mr. Wrona replied CDOT would like to have their support throughout the way. He stated it was disheartening at the last public meeting on the environmental document that there weren't elected officials to speak up in support of the project. He stated they had a lot of naysayers and most comments were negative instead of positive. These were mostly from individuals who were affected directly or are now seeing the "X" marks the spot on their property. A lot of times this is what it takes. He stated hopefully people will realize it is in the community's best interest and CDOT is going to conduct fair dealings with the property owners in order to make the necessary improvements. Mr. Cordova stated when he worked for CDOT he never saw a time when CDOT wasn't fair with people who were affected.

Mr. Ortiz stated he was also involved in the Colorado Springs COSMIX project. He stated he attended a lot of the meetings since his office was two blocks away. He felt CDOT treated those people very well and they were happy. They bought them out. He stated the people whose homes will be bought out in the Eilers neighborhood should be very satisfied if they meet with CDOT and discuss some of the issues. He stressed it is important that Pueblo get ready to take advantage of this opportunity. Ms. Daff asked if they have gone to the partners and asked them to get on board. Mr. Ortiz replied yes.

He stated CDOT has been meeting the last three to four years with different community people and there have been a lot of different questions thrown at them, which they have been able to answer. CDOT has a great team. He stated he was here asking for everyone's support.

Mr. Wrona stated there is a possibility that an early action item could be to purchase properties in advance of the work with the funding that becomes available early on. Knowing some of the impacts, it would be prudent to do some early purchases in that neighborhood. It may turn out that the number one priority is rebuilding I-25 through the downtown area, but knowing the concerns in the Eilers community possibly some of the early money could be used to purchase some of those properties. This would take away some of the uncertainty.

Mr. Gradisar stated he would like to see a presentation on the preferred alternative and put it up for a vote. He stated he has seen variations of the plan, but he didn't know what the preferred alternative is. Mr. Wrona stated they could do that.

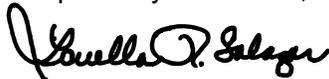
Chairman Nawrocki asked what the timeline in trying to get approval from the City and County and PACOG is. Mr. Wrona replied they will be having another public hearing on what they call the final EIS and it would be appropriate to have PACOG's support before then. It should be done this fall.

Mr. Lowe asked what they are going to do with all the asbestos in those old homes. Mr. Wrona replied there is Federal and State regulations for dealing with asbestos abatement and strict procedures you have to follow when you deal with the demolition that involves those products. CDOT knows the properties contain that material. Mr. Ortiz stated he would like to get this all done before the fall.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before PACOG, the meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Louella R. Salazar  
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS