

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, October 24, 2024. The meeting was held in person. The meeting was called to order by PACOG Chairman, Mark Aliff at 12:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present were:

Doug Proal -Pueblo West	Zach Swearingen -County Commissioner
Eppie Greigo- County Commissioner	Mark Aliff- City Council
William Thiebaut -Dist. 60	Harry Hochstetler-Colorado City
Chris DeLuca-Dist. 70	Danya Esgar -Pueblo County
Brett Boston -City Council	Dennis Flores-City Council
Roger Gomez -City Council	

Members Absent:

Mike Cafasso-Board of Water Works	Sarah Martinez -City Council
Regina Mastri – City Council	Ed Gutierrez-Salt Creek Sanitation
Joseph Latino -City Council	Heather Graham – Mayor City of Pueblo

.Also Present Were:

Sarah Skinner -Pueblo County	Eva Cosyleon PACOG MPO
Bryan Wallace-PMB	Sarah Skinner-Pueblo County
Laura Leyba, ADA committee	Antonio Huerta-Sen Hickenlooper’s office
Don Bruestle PACOG TAC	Taylor Leyva- Sen Hickenlooper’s office
Sabina Geniso, Pueblo County	Carmen Howard-Pueblo County
Hanah Haurert-PACOG MPO	Carla Sikes-PACOG attorney
Terry hart-Transportation Commissioner	Brittany Hanson - CDOT
Chad Wolgram-PDPHE	Jacob Kershner-CDOT
Laurel Jones-CDOT	Scott Cowan-PDPHE
Ben Valdez-Pueblo Transit	

PACOG Chair, Mark Aliff called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sen. Hickenlooper had two staff members in attendance . Mr. Antonio Huerta and Ms. Taylor Leyva. Mr. Hueta asked to speak under the public comment period. He gave an update on Sen Hickenlooper’s office and the town hall held last week. He stated there were about 90 people in attendance at the town hall, the topics consisted of the cost of living, cost of housing and the cost of regular necessities, and the energy transition issues in the area. They stated that the residents in Sen Hickenlooper’s area that need help with federal issues can call upon both, Ms. Leyva, and Mr. Huerta. They are located here in Pueblo and can help. They left their contact information with Wendy Pettit, the PACOG recording Secretary and it is posted here in the minutes. Taylor 719-632-6706 and Antonio 719-323-3807

Roll call was taken, and it was determined there was a quorum present at the meeting.

Regular Items:

1 Chairperson's Report:

- 1) Lunch Appreciation: Mr. Aliff thanked the Pueblo West Metro District for the catered lunch.

2 Manager's Report: Ms. Carmen Howard covered the consent items on the agenda.

1. Minutes of September 22, 2024, Meeting
2. Treasurer's Report : Receive and File August 2024 Financial Reports
3. ADA minutes for September 2024
4. PACOG Next Meeting date: December 12, 2024
- 5 A Resolution making two PACOG budget adjustments to the adopted 2024 Budget document for fiscal year 2024

The consent agenda was presented, and it was approved with a motion from Mr. Hochstetler and seconded by Mr. Boston.

Ms. Howard then turned the next agenda item over to Ms. Eva Cosyleon, the PACOG MPO director. She had four resolutions to be approved on the MPO consent agenda after a presentation on the Bridge performance measures. CDOT's Mr. Jacob Kershner gave a brief presentation on the performance target adjustments needed mid-term.

On October 1, 2022, CDOT established targets for 2023 and 2025. Halfway through the 4-year performance period, FHWA allows DOTs to assess their progress and adjust targets if necessary. At this time, CDOT is only adjusting the 4-year target for bridges in good condition.

The original adoption was that 36% of the National Highway System Bridges, by Deck Area would be classified in Good Condition, the adjustment now goes to 38.5% to be in good condition. The increase is due to the fact the adopted target midyear assessment is in excess of the adopted target, and the bridge condition statewide it is now at 37.3%. To change the target, CDOT asks that the PACOG Board support the state target adjustment for bridges in good condition and take formal action as a consent item with a Resolution to support the increase

At the end of the presentation Councilor Gomez asked a question regarding how he could review the bridge information conditions by county to see the good verses the poor conditions of the facilities in Pueblo County and around the state. Mr. Kershner replied to

Mr. Gomez that the performance dashboard on CDOT website has all of the current and historical information referred to in this item.

The site is as follows:

[Data & Dashboards — Colorado Department of Transportation](#)

After the presentation, the adoption of the following MPO consent items were accepted by the PACOG Board. The motion was made by Mr. Boston with a second by Mr. Flores.

MPO Consent Items:

- a) A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE FY2025 PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (PACOG) RURAL PLANNING GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000 FROM THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION*
- b) A RESOLUTION OF THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (PACOG) TO SET TARGETS BY SUPPORTING THE REVISED 4-YEAR (2025) TARGETS ESTABLISHED BY THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CDOT) FOR THE BRIDGE CONDITION MEASURES (PM 2) PER 23 U.S.C. 150*
Revised Bridge Conditions:
Percent of National Highway System Bridges in Good Condition- 38.5%;
- c) A RESOLUTION ASSIGNING FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION BRIDGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM (COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISCRETIONARY FUNDING POOL) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$760,000 AND FASTER BRIDGE ENTERPRISE FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$190,000 FOR THE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF COLORADO HIGHWAY 96 BRIDGES K-18-BT AND K-18-AD*

Fund Source	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
DIS (Federal)	\$0	\$760,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$760,000
SSR (State)	\$0	\$190,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$190,000
Total	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$950,000

- d) A RESOLUTION AMENDING AND READOPTING THE BYLAWS OF THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT

3. Next on the agenda was the presentation from Teresa Conner, a contractor the works with the EPA. She has been working with RESPEC, our water quality engineering team. The current federal authorization bill has funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to look at failing septic systems and the lack of wastewater infrastructure in communities and the Baxter Road area was an area of concern for wastewater needs in our area. The funding from this program has been utilized to have an initial look at the needs in the area under the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap program. This program provides no-cost technical assistance to communities with failing septic systems or without wastewater infrastructure. Ms. Connor went on to say that her group takes a look at the issues and at no cost to the community then prepares the preliminary engineering report needed to be able to apply for federal funds to obtain funds to develop solutions that fix or replace the issues found in the neighborhoods.

Ms. Connor was able to compile a large team of experts for the look in Pueblo County. The EPA region 8 office participated, as well as the EPA HQ region, the Colorado Rural Water Association, Southwest Financial Center, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque helped with public engagement efforts, and Carmen Howard, director of planning and development helped get the elected officials and County and City personnel to the table for a well-rounded discussion for the needs of the area. Ms. Connor is the former utility director of the City of Ft. Collins. She worked for Fort Collins for 34 years before taking the position with ERG two years ago.

A phase one approach was done. The phase one look covers discovery of the issues in their entirety and defines a project in which to move to phase two. Phase two determines if a Solutions Plan or Preliminary Engineering Report is needed to move forward for funding. The phase one process is being finished up for Blende & St. Charles Mesa Sanitation Districts, the Baxter Road Area and the King Dunn subdivision areas.

The Baxter Road area was analyzed using the **USDA NRCS Soil Survey**. It was determined that the Soil conditions are "very limited" for septic tank absorption. Lot size and building age were also looked at as well. The lot sizes are small, the infrastructure in the area had its first building permit in the 1950's until the 1980's, so the infrastructure is aging, there are also many mobile homes in the area. The investigation found the average homes were built or placed in 1972 and they are on less than a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lot.

Ms. Connor went on to say that the most important issues about septic systems are its construction, only flushing the items that should go down into the system, no harsh chemicals, and proper maintenance is important. At some point almost all septic systems will fail even with proper maintenance.

There are 3 options when the septic system fails, repair and or replace, connect to the community sewer, or build a community or cluster treatment system. Fixing clogged pipes or septic tanks can be costly. Costs can range from a few thousand dollars to repair a system to tens of thousand dollars to replace a system. If there are poor soils, a high groundwater table or other conditions, the septic system may need to be upgraded to advanced treatment. Setbacks from wells and existing infrastructure is critical. Replacing drain fields on small lots in the Baxter Road area will be very, very difficult.

Ms. Conner went over funding options for the work needed. The Baxter Road area is not eligible for the USDA's rural development program, those funds go to rural areas and the

Baxter Road area is in a developed area. The other sources of funds could be the USDA community development program and CDPHE also has a fund called the Clean Water State Revolving fund. These funds are sources for connecting to community sewer systems. These types of repairs take time.

The time frame for the repair depends on the repair needed or that is the solution to the problem. To repair and replace a septic system the time frame could be from 1 to 3 years, to connect to existing sewer line the time could be from 3 to 5 and to build new infrastructure it could take as long as 5 to 7 years to complete.

The next steps for the Pueblo Area issues are an analysis of alternatives and funding options to extend sewer from City of Pueblo's system to the Baxter Road area. Does PACOG support moving to Phase 2 for analysis of alternatives and funding options to extend sewer from City of Pueblo's system to the Baxter Road area? Funding programs may consider the funding an applicant as Pueblo County or a Sanitation District. There would be funding for the repairs to the area through the CDPHE clean water revolving fund program or the USDA Community Development Program. The PACOG Board was asked for verbal vote of support to move into phase two, to do analysis, form alternatives, and give a direction to see what funding would most likely apply to the needs of the area for permanent repair. The Board agreed to move into phase two.

CDOT Transportation Information

- A) Mr. Terry Hart, the Transportation Commissioner (TC) for the PACOG area gave an update from the October 2024 transportation commission meeting. Over the last couple of months, the focus was on budget activities, realigning revenues with project needs, the TC went through the steps of the 2050 planning process, and they were given a presentation on the development and outcome of the Policy Directive 14 process that drives the goals, policies, and the long-range transportation planning process for the allocation of all transportation funds to the 10 year plan and the Statewide 4 year plan to fund projects. Mr. Hart referred to the presentation given on the bridges today, and he stated the bridge and tunnel enterprises are working on finance packaging to put the critical need projects on the ground, the other transportation enterprises are also being looked at for funding amounts being transferred to CDOT and looking to see that the funds are being spent on statutorily required activities. The TC was given a legislative report on bills and transportation issues that is going to the legislative session. Front range passenger rail development was covered with the TC. The transit system operations and growth of the system was also covered with the TC. Mr. Hart went on to say The Blue Mesa bridges were open, and the TC was briefed on the repairs made. The TC went on a field trip over to Grand Junction on I-70 to look at ongoing projects and on the trip, they saw an emergency of a semi-driver with a health issue that lost consciousness and the truck continued to go downhill taking out the guard rail as it headed east. The only way to stop the truck was for someone to get on the truck and get in the cab and stop it. A CDOT worker

managed to stop the truck and get medical care for the driver. Mr. Hart thanked CDOT for their efforts in the situation.

B) State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) given by Wendy Pettit

STAC Election of Officers was held. The new officers are as follows:

Gary Beedy (Eastern TPR) was elected as STAC Chair.
Holly Williams (PPACG) was elected as STAC vice chair.

Heather Sloop resigned from STAC and will resign from the Northwest TPR Regional Planning Commission as Chair.

STAC celebrated Vince Rogalski's 20 years serving as STAC chair. Vince will continue to serve on the STAC representing Gunnison Valley TPR.

Legislative Report:

Proposal on Rest Area proposal is underway and is being sent to the Capital.

Transportation Legislative Review Committee (TLRC) that drafted six bills and decided to move forward with five of them.

1) Bill would make several changes to motor vehicle registration policy and state driver's license credentials and establishes vehicular document piracy as a new civil infraction.

2) Funding Vulnerable Road User Protection authorizes local governments to implement vehicle registration fees to fund vulnerable road user protection strategies.

3) Railroad Investigative Report Confidentiality repeals the confidentiality requirement for investigative reports of railroads that are conducted by the PUC.

4) Paratransit Services imposes new duties on entities providing paratransit services in the state and establishes a paratransit task force that CDOT would administer. UFR asked about CDOT incorporating in development of the statewide transit plan. More coordination with OIM to come.

5) Increased Transportation Mode Choice to Reduce Emissions lays out a process for CDOT, MPOs and larger transit agencies to set mode shift goals. CDOT would undertake mode shift assessments and then set goals and undertake a rulemaking process to set those goals. Applies to CDOT, MPOs, local governments, along with transit agencies would be eligible if they provide services to a population of 100,000 people or more.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update – given by Melodie Clayton

Key takeaways from Safety Plan workshops included recommendations as follows;

- Safety as a priority
- Enhanced Driver's Education Programs
- Increased funding for safety improvements
- Grant navigation support
- Comprehensive educational campaigns
- Expansion of partnerships

STAC asked for information on how to be more competitive to get the HSIP grants for their communities.

2050 Statewide Plan Update (Informational Update) - Jeff Sudmeier, Chief Financial Officer

- STAC members were concerned about the target of 10% of strategic funds going towards multimodal and transit improvements vs. highway capacity improvements. Some members felt this was especially unrealistic for rural communities and growing areas of the state.
- STAC members were concerned about the increase in funds going to Enterprises and the diminishing funds for the 10-year Plan projects and how this might affect their ability to effectively plan and prioritize their project lists.
- STAC members wanted more transparency with the decision-making processes within CDOT enterprises and wanted more opportunities for participation and input on their decision making in terms of how funds are invested.
- STAC members generally wanted to see as much fund expenditure flexibility as possible and were concerned with the restricted funding uses of the Colorado Enterprises established.

- C) Update from CDOT*** -Laurel Jones gave the CDOT update on RPP and the projects underway in the PACOG area. She went on to say the RPP funding that is planned to be allocated to the PACOG area will occur in fiscal year 2029 and is estimated to be \$1.8 million dollars for I-25 safety improvements. The final allocation will be solidified at the Joint TPR meeting held after the first of the year either in January or February 2025. Ms. Jones referred to the CDOT project update that is included in the packet for more details, she asked if there were questions and none were brought forward, she also mentioned the bridge feasibility projects are now part of the list after the TIP amendment.

MPO Staff Report
(Eva Cosyleon, MPO Manager)

- 1. Community Health Assessment (CHA) Presentation* - Akemi Trujillo – Pueblo County Department Public Health and Environment**

Ms. Trujillo began her presentation on the Community Health Assessment (CHA). She is the public health planner at the Pueblo Health Dept. She went over the state mandated process that happens every five years, she said the CHA involves data collection, research and identifies the biggest health needs of an area. This assessment was done with all of the health systems in the community for the first time. The Pueblo Health Dept along with, UC Health, Common Spirit, Pueblo Community Health Center, CSU Pueblo, and Health Solutions all participated together to obtain the information. They began the process in September 2023 and concluded in June 2024. With presentations on the findings at the end of the process. They included the populations of our community that are usually left out. They focused on aging populations, the Spanish speaking populations, individuals experiencing unstable housing, the youth of the area, and the persons in the community living with disabilities. After that data was collected and analyzed it was determined that mental health and risky behaviors/substance abuse were the 2 major concerns in our community. The information from this process will be incorporated into the Community Health Improvement Plan and will be used over the next three years to bring stakeholders together. The information will be used to develop a plan to improve mental health issues and to help with substance abuse and move the needle in appositive direction. If anyone wants to join the process Ms. Trujillo has a QR code in her presentation to get information to join the effort. The presentation is in the PACOG packet for the QR code and further review. Council Gomez asked about the noise pollution in his district. Does the health department look at the noise levels in the area? He also asked about the storm water upgrades to PVC. He wanted to know why the pipe sizes were not increased and now since they are undersized in the replacement efforts, what are the costs associated with upgrading the pipes again? Ms. Trujillo said they do have the stormwater and noise issues on their radar, under their environmental assessments, but today's presentation in on the health assessments. Councilor Flores asked about the mental health of the children in the community due to the COVID effects. Most teachers feel there is a gap that the kids in the community have due to the two years that were lost because of COVID. Ms. Trujillo stated the age group that has the largest need if the high school age kids. He asked for a copy of the study they did on the kids and COVID. She said she would get it to him. He asked about the relationship between substance abuse and homelessness. The CHA looked at this data and a focus was not made on why the unstable housing condition exists. The CHA looked at the solutions to get information around the issues of unstable housing. Commissioner Swearingen asked for access to the reports on performance and how the funding was spent and the outcomes of the funding of the projects. Chair Aliff stated there is no outpatient facilities for mental health, treatment is not here in Colorado. Mental health care needs to be done with a combined effort and come together to make it work and develop a plan and implement the care of the findings.

2. CDOT Region 2 request(s) the following amendment projects into the FY 2025 – 2028 Pueblo Area Council of Governments Transportation Improvement Program (PACOG TIP)*

Action Required: Informational

- a. **TIP Amend 2024.003.01 Administrative Amendment**
Project Name: I25A Median Barrier Project

STIP Number: SR27002.079

Project Location and Description: I25A Median improvements ~ Mile Posts (MP) 105-115

Fund Source(s): FSA – FASTER Safety Program

Fund Source	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
FSA– State (FAS)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,600,000	\$0	\$ 3,600,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,600,000	\$0	\$ 3,600,000

Notes: Programs constructions funds for this project.

b. **TIP Amend 2024.052 Administrative Amendment**

Project Name: I25C & US160A Intersection Improvements

STIP Number: SR26646.999 - Traffic Signal Pool

Project Location and Description: Full replacement of existing signals at I-25C (Main) & US 160A (7th) in Walsenburg and CO 45 (Pueblo Blvd) & Lake Ave (Pueblo).

Fund Source(s): SGA - Signal Asset Management

Fund Source	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
SGA – Federal (STBG)	\$0	\$0	\$ 579,530	\$0	\$0	\$ 579,530
SGA – State (SHF)	\$0	\$0	\$120,470	\$0	\$0	\$120,470
Total	\$0	\$0	\$700,000	\$0	\$0	\$700,000

Notes: Programs constructions funds for this project. This project includes work in PACOG and South Central TPR. This funding is for the PACOG portion of the project. Total project cost is \$1,400,000.

3. Other Transportation Matters

Action Requested: Discussion if necessary

* Denotes additional materials are attached.

** Denotes material to be distributed at PACOG Meeting.

REGULAR ITEMS Cont.

5. Ballot Votes for Board vacancies:

A) Pueblo Human Relations Commission
Action Required: Approve by ballot vote

B) Community Services Advisory Commission (CSAC)
Action Required: Approve by ballot vote

C) Building Board of Appeals

Action Required: Approve by ballot vote

6. Next New Business was called for with no new items brought forward.

7. Future agenda items: Councilor Gomez brought up the fact the Chieftain subscriptions are way down, and there needs to be a way to disseminate government issues. Commissioner Swearingen also stated that there is a problem getting information from county actions out to the public. He stated there should be a joint conversation to brainstorm on how to get local government issues out to the public.

ADJOURNMENT of the regular meeting was made by Mr. Aliff at 1:33pm (WJP)

***The next meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments is to be held on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at the PUEBLO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
101 WEST 10TH STREET, FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM the meeting will be held in-person and virtually via Zoom.***

**INDIVIDUALS REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTIFY PACOG
AT (719) 553-2259 AT LEAST TWO (2) WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.**

* Denotes additional materials are attached.

** Denotes material to be distributed at PACOG Meeting

