



**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2011
1:00-4:00 PM
Region 6 Conference Room**

Members Present	Yes	No	Members Present	Yes	No
Tom Allen	x		Matthew O'Neill	x	
Gary Beedy	x		Michael Penny		x
Terri A. Binder	x		Ann Rajewski	x	
Craig Blewitt		*	Peter J. Rickershauser	x	
Richard Hartman	x		James Souby	x	
Todd Hollenbeck	x		Michael E. Timlin	x	
Jonathan Hutchison		x	Bill VanMeter	x	
David Johnson	x		Scott Weeks	x	
Douglas Lehnen	x				

Others Present

Jeanne Erickson, Transportation Commissioner, District II-Jefferson, Broomfield

*Dave Menter, substitute as observer for Craig Blewitt

Herman Stockinger, Director Government Relations

Division of Transit and Rail: Mark Imhoff, Wendy Wallach, Tom Mauser, Robin Foote

I. Call to order

Ann Rajewski called to order the regular meeting of the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) at 1:15pm on April 8, 2011, in the Region 6 Conference Room. The video conferencing locations at Pueblo, Glenwood Springs, Greeley, and Alamosa were not utilized this month.

Ann opened the meeting with public announcements:

- CASTA Spring Conference May 10-13, 2011, Pueblo, CO. The keynote speaker is Peter M. Rogoff, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration. Those interested in attending the conference, hearing the Administrator or touring the Transportation Technology Center should see Ann.
- Union Pacific Heritage Train Ride July 21, 2011, from Cheyenne, WY to Denver, CO. This is a free event for family and friends and includes a bus ride to Cheyenne, a "dead-head" train ride, and lunch. Richard Hartman will send out invitations and formal details in early June.
- Union Station Spring Meeting (March 2011). Jim Souby provided an update on the Union Station staying as a hub as well as preserving it as a historical site.
- Move Colorado is sponsoring a symposium on mileage-based fees, June 13-14, 2011, Breckenridge, CO. It's cosponsored by the Transportation Research Board and Texas Transportation Institute. Terry Binder provided an update on this meeting, which will focus on funding and the reduction in gas tax.

Mark Imhoff introduced special guest Jeanne Erickson, Transportation Commissioner, District II-Jefferson/Broomfield; Herman Stockinger, Director Government Relations; and Robin Foote, Program Assistant who replaced Jenni Fogel as the DTR Program Assistant.

Mark could not get the HQ video room today but has requested that room for future TRAC meetings and stressed the importance of TRAC members indicating in advance if they need a video connection, since DTR must pay for their use if they're reserved and put on line. The HQ Auditorium has been reserved for all future TRAC monthly meetings with the exception of November, and will be used unless the video room is used.

II. Agenda items

- a) Vision Recap: Ann recommended moving this item to next month. Robin will prepare a separate document to include the Purpose, Vision Statement, and Vision Values for the member to review and approve.
- b) STAC update: Todd Hollenbeck was asked to provide a Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) update to the TRAC every month. Todd provided an overview of the STAC, first distributing the STAC Bylaws as a handout. The STAC is made up of representatives and alternates from each of the 15 Transportation Planning Regions in the state. Vince Rogalski from Gunnison is the STAC chair and Wayne Williams from Colorado Springs is Vice Chair. The STAC is advisory to staff and to the Transportation Commission. STAC provides advice to CDOT on the needs of the transportation system in CO and reviews and comments on all regional and statewide transportation plans submitted by the transportation planning regions or CDOT. Mark shared that the STAC membership is geographic, so STAC members provide a different perspective from around the state. STAC members are mostly elected officials. The STAC meetings are held the second Friday, before the TRAC meetings; therefore, any major issues that are discussed at the STAC meeting will be immediately shared at the TRAC meeting.
- c) CDOT Decision Making-Policy and Budget: Herman Stockinger, Director Government Relations, provided a PowerPoint presentation on CDOT's financial outlook of federal and state funding and its shortfalls; and how policy is influenced by Congress, Governor/Legislature, Transportation Commission, and the Executive Management Team. He pointed out that the legislature largely does not set CDOT's budget, because CDOT's funding comes from the state and federal gas taxes, not from the state's General Fund. The presentation followed with Q&As:

Q1. How do you interact with the legislature?

A1. Each department has a liaison. Melissa Nelson is the CDOT lobbyist; she is designated to monitor legislation. The Joint Budget Committee meets in November-December, at which time legislators and Transportation Commissioners have the opportunity to suggest bills. The Joint House and Senate Transportation Committee meet after the Joint Budget Committee. At that time, experts may be brought in to discuss bills.

Q2. Where is the gas tax collected?

A2. The gas tax is collected at the distributor level not at the pump. Federal gas tax goes to the federal government. The Federal government is allowed to take a percentage of funds off the top and returns a minimum of 95 percent of those funds back to the state. The amount of gas tax revenue that Colorado would normally get back is at the low end, close to the 95% minimum. However, a significant portion of FTA funding comes from the gas tax, and for years RTD has been receiving significant discretionary funds for its

light rail system through Full Funding Grant Agreements with the FTA. With the addition of those funds Colorado gets a much higher and more favorable return on its gas tax.

Q3. Has CDOT gone to the governor or the Senate to index the gas tax?

A3. No. The process would be for CDOT to go to the governor to ask for the index first, not to the legislature. Even if approved there, it would have to be put to a vote of the people. Mickey Ferrell, federal liaison, promotes Colorado transportation in Washington, DC. Mickey has a very good relationship with Colorado's congressional delegation and can speak on issues that are important to Colorado. Jeanne Erickson, Transportation Commissioner, agreed that Colorado has a strong relationship at the national level and has been helped as a result of CASTA's leadership. Mark Imhoff concurred that Colorado has a strong presence in DC from both public and private entities; i.e., SW Corridor, SE Business Partnership, and TREX, to lobby for loans.

Q4. To what extent will statutory regulations help or hurt?

A4. Jeanne Erickson stated we would need to change the way federal funds are given and to allow more flexibility. Currently it doesn't work because members in congress have individual programs they promote. Herman Stockinger suggested reducing the number of funding categories from 100 to 10; this would allow the flexibility to move funds from different categories.

d) Introduction and Overview of the Transit and Intermodal Committee: Guest Speaker Jeanne Erickson provided an overview of the Transportation Commission, pointing out that Transportation Commissioners are appointed by the governor and must be confirmed by the State Senate, and serve 4-year staggered terms. They are paid \$75 per day plus expenses. The Transportation Commission meets the third Thursday of every month and conducts informational workshops and committee hearings the previous day. She pointed out that FASTER created new opportunities at CDOT, with a bridge enterprise, transit funding and the important High Performance Transportation Enterprise, as well as new oversight.

Jeanne anticipates the Transportation Commission to be on board with TRAC; however, a collaborative process needs to be developed. Jeanne asked, "Does everyone understand when something has changed?" For example, 10,000 new jobs are targeted for Loveland, which will impact North I-25. The Transportation Commission is concerned about the impact these jobs will have on the transportation system.

Internal and external programming of funds needs to be more consistent. CDOT staff and citizens must hear realistic ideas beyond just highways. The Transportation Commission expects to see a lot of collaboration with High Performance Transportation Enterprise. Local governments need good planning processes and need to apply for more local funding.

Jeanne recommended TRAC interact with the Transit and Intermodal Committee, because of the committee's deep interest in transit. The Committee, which meets the Wednesdays before Commission meetings, is well attended. It consists of herself as chair and Commissioners Steve Parker, Bill Kaufman and Trey Rogers. She recommended that staff notify transit operators of the Committee meetings. She indicated the Committee is interested in the determining the basis for new services and the processes for allocating and distributing dollars, saying "times have changed."

Commissioner Erickson said there are “new eyes” on funds and funding decisions, that RTD now has an interest, that new planning processes are needed, and that TRAC oversight is a key to success.

Mark asked if the Transportation Commission was interested in high-speed rail. Mark would like to advance projects; however, current projects do not qualify because the projects are not far along enough yet.

TRAC members indicated they were okay with receiving important Transit and Intermodal Committee emails but not email blasts regarding the State Rail Plan, saying they should be included on the agenda mailing for T and I committee and will get updates about the State Rail Plan through the web site.

- e) Interregional Connectivity Study: Wendy Wallach provided a PowerPoint presentation on the High-Speed InterCity Passenger Rail Planning application that was awarded \$1 million from the Federal Railroad Administration, with a required CDOT match of \$1 million. Some of the challenges are obtaining accurate ridership estimates and not compete with FasTracks; finding suitable technology for east-west corridor; and obligating funds and funding for implementation.

Mark asked the group if they considered how to connect Denver International Airport with the rest of the state. A new survey and updating modeling information would help us make determinations about where the rail would go. The Division of Transit and Rail has a small budget, which prevents creating a ridership model. Mark suggested we may need to share resources and involve the Metropolitan Planning Organizations; they may have funds to share. Wendy suggested this discussion take place at the Steering Committee level.

III. Agenda items for next month

- a) Long Term: CDOT Policy: Bike Ways for Rail Ways; updates on the 3 DTR studies underway (consider the studies when you think of policies)
- b) Guidelines: grant module
- c) How to Prioritize Projects
- d) Collaborate with Members from Other Transportation Agencies
- e) Impact of Different Funding Issues
- f) Review and Approve TRAC Purpose, Vision Statement, Vision Values

IV. Adjournment

Ann adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Robin Foote

Minutes approved by: Wendy Wallach and Tom Mauser