

## TRAC Minutes

December 04, 2025

- Reminder: ReadAI is not allowed to join CDOT meetings, only Gemini, if needed
- Office of Innovative Mobility -
  - What impacts have you experienced from the staff additions? Is there anything still lacking that we should look into?
  - David Averill - what time frame are you asking about in experience? Timeline for award to contract is a good thing to look at on the changes - has seen a positive change in this over the past few years, but not necessarily in the last few months. In the last year, there's been some improvement in timelines, depending on complexity of project, but I have the benefit of knowing who to contact for what, and some people don't necessarily have that.
  - Julie Howe - On the grants team, our new staff has very recently started, so hopefully once they are onboarded and the main POC, the changes will be more obvious - the pre-award team will be location based similar to the pre-award team, which will hopefully make an impact
  - Jonathan Flint - Congrats on the new staff - addition of new people is great and he has noticed how quickly problems have been resolved - for suggestions on improvements, has there any been any thought on breaking down the size of an organization, where some staff works with more big organizations and some work with more small organizations, since size of orgs can impact the things they are doing and questions they might have
  - Danny Katz - if you're adding more staff, that means you're doing more. Do you think that DTR is getting more from other sides of CDOT, like from the comms team - there are a lot of great transit stories across the state, so can we use the increase in communication of what transit is doing out to the public
  - Paul, in his standup meeting with CDOT leaders, noticed that everyone had a connection to transit and rail, especially rail since that's such a hot ticket item. There's a culture shift in people's view of transit and rail
  - Alex Kaulfin - what Paul said is reflected in the staff, with increases in rail. This says something externally, showing how the rail projects are becoming more relevant and ramping up, since you're setting up a staff structure with more rail capacity and the other teams that are getting an increase in staff
  - Ann - some agencies have had trouble with contracting, and DTR doesn't have contracting people
  - Paul: contracting is with CPCs, who are also working on updating their staff structure to get more help on that
  - David - There's great that CDOT has so much horsepower, as the programs are increasing, this growth is necessary with it. How is your staff doing?
  - Julie - I have seen that our staff has great momentum on moving forward and being able to look at bottlenecks that they experience and working on those issues and recognizing the help that they need.
- Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE)
  - As the role and mission of CTE grows through implementation of SB24-230, what additional information would you like to see to improve program transparency and accountability?
  - The NOFA response requirements for the FY26 SB24-230 formula program were created quickly and somewhat unique. How easy/meaningful were the response

requirements and how could we improve them for FY27 and subsequent rounds? The CTE is leading a legislatively mandated study on Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) best practices. What topics or issues would you like to see covered under this study?

- Michael Davies - RTD hears a lot from the first question - the formula funding limited funds for RTD for this year but then will - we need more discussion in public outreach to hear people's thoughts and input and to make a transparent answer to people of why CTE board made the decisions they did
- Is there a published formula that people could look at to see how much money agencies are getting? That would be useful to people who aren't sure.
- David Averill - It might be interesting to approach studies on RTA's in the context of which they exist. Look at existing RTA's- each of them are so different and exist in such a different context, and studying that can provide insight on what would be needed or how RTA's can stand up more strongly. There is also a need for a legislative brief on (last one in 2018) on the use of RTA's, with changes in taxing details
- Ann - We are looking to get legislative updates for RTA's, as rural areas don't have the funding available to get a ballot initiative passed to get RTA's more feasible in those areas. What are the benefits of having an RTA and what can we do to enable rural parts of the states to receive those benefits.
- Danny Katz - It's always helpful for people doing a study like the RTA study, look at the options available, looking at funding that is available, looking at math algorithms to what kind of money could be raised
- Gary Beedy - In regard to Eastern - revenue produced would need to be very high and we don't have the tourism that other parts of the state has to get the funding we would need to operate an RTA.
- Jonathan Flint - for RTAs, there is a big lack of understanding what it takes to run an RTA, and while the funding can be tempting, it's important that information and awareness is made available to people on what the end product would look like. This round of CTE NOFAs went pretty well, but we will see more easily a year out what could be improved on, what went well and what didn't
- Paul - Agree, and we need to work on getting better at reporting to get that kind of data that we can use going forward
- Ann - Craig and I have talked about the smaller agencies that didn't apply, and how can we give them more assistance in getting them ready to apply in the future.

- Planning and Operations Branch
  - What are your thoughts on the importance of Bustang's services across Colorado, and how has Bustang's recent expansion changed your views? How has Bustang's recent expansion changed your views?

- Danny Katz - Talking to people on the ground, Bustang has a positive feedback. A challenge is that a lot of people don't know that Bustang exists. A lot more people would ride it if they saw it and were aware of it, This could help in getting Bustang more funding. Maybe people in TRAC around the state could do more with promoting Bustang for their area. Could we do a retreat or a meeting to brainstorm ways to fill the funding gap.
- David Johnson - The West Line has wildly changed his expectations for what Bustang could do. And the increase to 10-15 trips per day has made it so much more reliable where people who have cars are choosing to take the bus. I would like to see ways to increase the reliability, which can get costly, but makes a major difference in perception. Things like BRT lines or things that can help get Bustang out of mixed traffic.
- Ben - we are working with our engineering regions to get those kinds of changes, like allowing the North Line to travel in the express lanes, increasing stops and still reducing the travel times for people, which is awesome.
- David Averill - you might not see it in ridership, but remember that these kinds of services are essential for the people who use Bustang, which he hears about a lot in the San Miguel area.
- The funding gap for Bustang is becoming an apparent problem, as the end of the fiscal year will be an end to the funds from SB-1, and this is why we need to be looking into these ways that Bustang can find new sources of funds - need about \$30 mil for operating and capital
  - Jonathan Flint - With the growth of Colorado, we can't build/update the roads at that same pace, and we need to be discussing mode shifts to get more cars off the road - RFTA has had to build out
  - Gary Beedy - Is fare helpful in the funding?
  - Ben - Farebox recovery for FY25 and first quarter of FY26 was about 20% - this is pretty high for most transit agencies, especially on the North Line, but has experienced a dip recently from previous years due to the expansion of services
  - Michael Davies - SB-24-184 of car rental fees that CTIO board will receive - is any of this funding going toward Bustang?
  - Paul - No, the rail projects are going to take all of that funding.
- Passenger Rail Branch
  - Do you feel you have enough information about Front Range Passenger Rail, Joint Service, or Mountain Rail to be informed about its progress? How do you see Joint Service, Front Range passenger Rail, or Mountain rail projects benefitting your agency/organization? What additional information would help in providing information that you might not currently have
    - Danny Katz - Front Range Passenger Rail in Denver transit - there is a lot of focus on the Joint Service, that the whole FRPR kind of gets drowned out and unclear where FRPR is at as a whole

- Ann - Some CASTA members say that as station areas get more narrowed down, people aren't really sure where we're at currently, and how the public can provide input on this area
- Jonathan Flint - I hear this question a lot: how much is it going to cost to operate? How much is it going to cost to ride? How long will it take to get from point a to b?
- Maux - For Mountain Rail, we have the answers to some of the questions, but definitely will be investigating these questions more intensively going forward, but have a better idea of these things for the first phases of operation
- Gary Beedy - For FRPR going on freight lines, we are also trying to get freight onto rail and off of highways, so will there be a continued effort to get freight onto rail in addition to passengers, and is this being investigated in planning for FRPR?
- Transit and Mobility Programs Branch
  - How will the new guidance on Advanced Order Authority affect agencies?
    - David Averill - Advanced Order Authority - what is the difference between this and what we have been doing?
    - Julie - You can order this bus, you cannot accept/receive the bus without a contract
    - David - we don't really know what the results of this will be until we start doing it, and will depend on how quickly these contracts get out
    - Jonathan Flint - this is a great thing, because we're down to the two leading bus manufacturers are taking much longer between ordering and receiving the large buses, so ordering asap is becoming more important