

**DRAFT STAC Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2011**

Location: CDOT Headquarters Auditorium
Date/Time: June 10, 2011 9:00 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.
Chairman: Vince Rogalski
Attendance: Sign-in sheets were distributed to note attendance at the meeting.

| Agenda Items/Presenters/ Affiliations | Presentation Highlights | Actions |
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| Introductions | <i>Everyone in the room gave self-introductions.</i> | No action taken |
| May Meeting Minutes | <i>May minutes were approved.</i> | Minutes approved |
| Transportation Commission (TC) Report – Vince Rogalski | <p>Vince related the following about the May TC meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC is changing Wednesday workshops to the afternoon. High Performance Transportation Enterprise will meet Wednesday mornings. • General agreement has been reached that the East I-70 viaduct alignment will largely follow the current one, with the relocation of Swansea Elementary and Purina Foods up in the air depending on whether the alignment will go to the north or south. • Bonding program money is beginning a specific performance index, to make sure Bridge Enterprise projects funded with the bonding money are on schedule. • The TC gave CDOT the OK to apply for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) discretionary grants for projects that are planned anyway— Highways for Life, Innovative Bridge Research and Employment Program, and others. The application deadline was June 3. • The Safety Committee is talking about improving highway safety and employee safety by trying to make sure motorists are less distracted. • The TC Transit and Intermodal Committee is discussing the Interregional Connectivity study that pertains to connecting rail. Another study about connecting bus routes may occur later. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) discretionary grants were discussed, and the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) also talked about it last week. • CDOT and the Governor’s Energy Office has started an initiative for energy-smart transportation using funds from the Rockefeller Foundation and U.S. Department of Transportation, with several goals, including obtaining more money for certain projects and setting up a framework for improving the planning process. Some planning process improvements may include evaluating transportation projects for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy consumption reduction and economic growth. This was discussed after the regular TC meeting. <p>Trent Bushner commented that CDOT’s involvement in energy-smart transportation may be redundant, since other groups are working on the issue. Jennifer Finch responded that the intent is to not duplicate current efforts, but to provide a transportation perspective with other partners such as the Regional Air Quality Council and to help CDOT respond to the FASTER legislation that lists GHG reduction as one of the planning factors. Barbara Kirkmeyer added that the state is pushing natural gas as part of that overall effort.</p> <p>Diane Mitsch Bush said one way to reduce duplication of efforts is to break down the silos among transportation, human services, energy, and housing.</p> <p>Vince Rogalski speculated that a transit emphasis may be one approach to moving more people using less energy.</p> | |
| <p>Federal & State Legislative Update- Mickey Ferrell and Melissa Nelson</p> | <p>Mickey Ferrell said the FY 2011 federal budget finally passed, six months late. The national debt ceiling has not yet been raised. He said he was invited to accompany the Colorado Contractors Association on a recent trip to Washington, DC to discuss the federal transportation reauthorization bill.</p> <p>In Congress, the House of Representatives is pursuing a six-year plan in which expenditures must equal revenues, with a \$850M total reduction over the six years predicted for the State of Colorado. The Senate would extend the reauthorization over six years. It’s possible that doing so will result in a</p> | |

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| | <p>dramatic reduction beginning with FY 2013. Sen. Barbara Boxer, Senate Transportation Committee chair, is suggesting a two-year bill. The situation for transit funds is looking bleaker than for highways as a percentage funding reduction. No one wants to raise revenues or cut expenditures and there's not enough money to continue the status quo. The important date is September 30, when the current extension bills will expire.</p> <p>At the end of FY 2012, the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) will have a \$4 billion balance. That balance will become a \$57.2 billion deficit at the end of FY 2017 if revenues are not increased. No one is saying anything about increasing revenue from raising the federal gas tax or other methods, but rather about reducing spending.</p> <p>The FY 2012 budget currently doesn't provide for transportation funding. Any serious consideration about transportation funding likely won't take place until the next presidential election. CDOT has a way forward in pushing for a two-year reauthorization bill with CDOT staff, metropolitan planning organizations, Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA), Regional Transportation District (RTD), counties, cities, contractors and others.</p> <p>Diane Mitsch Bush noted that it seems that transportation is not on the radar of state or federal legislators, and asked how that might be changed. Sustainable transportation funding is directly tied to job creation, which some state and federal legislators say is important to them. Mickey said a \$14 trillion national debt, China's threat to divest in the U.S. economy, health care, and other issues are understandably taking precedence over transportation. Mickey said the Colorado congressional delegation understands the importance of transportation, but other concerns receive more attention.</p> <p>Steve Rudy asked about the relationship between the transportation reauthorization principles CDOT worked out with its planning partners and the two-year reauthorization bill proposal. Mickey said the transportation principles, particularly the financial principles about increasing transportation revenues, still stand.</p> | |
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Gary Beedy noted the conflict between the goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thereby decreasing fuel usage, and the need for increased transportation funding. Funding transit and bike paths out of the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) may need to be re-examined, since the HTF originally was intended for highways. Mickey noted that one of the principles is that Congress should use methods other than a gas tax increase to fund transportation. Ideas broached have included container fees; increased driver license or vehicle registration fees; or a national sales tax. Mickey said Colorado is the second lowest state in transportation funds for highways, which is why the "minimum guarantee" is so important.

FHWA announced the discretionary grant program on May 5, with a June 3 application deadline. Due to a variety of circumstances, the CDOT Regions had seven days to get their project ideas to the TC. CDOT needs to be better prepared for very quick turnarounds in the future, such as compilation of possible worthy projects at the CDOT Region level. The CDOT application was amended to include two Public Lands projects from Rocky Mountain National Park.

Bradley Hight of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe asked about how the Public Lands projects were chosen, noting that the Indian reservations have huge transportation needs. He said he was embarrassed when he showed the reservation highways to the lieutenant governor recently.

Five Transportation, Community and System Preservation (TCSP) projects were submitted and then Mickey ranked them: the twin tunnels project on I-70 was ranked the highest, followed by projects from Denver, Boulder, Lakewood, and Castle Rock after a very quick review of each application.

On the state legislative side, Melissa Nelson noted that transportation also is not a high priority when compared to higher education, K-12 education, and health care. Looking back at the legislative year, she said that transportation basically did very well. One challenge is that just necessary transportation projects are so expensive, in some cases exceeding the total budgets for some state agencies. The state legislature's stance is that it has addressed

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| | <p>transportation funding problems with the FASTER bill in 2009 and is reluctant to do too much more.</p> <p>FASTER remains unchanged after several attempts to revise it. In addition, HB 1264, which allows off-road vehicles on public roads under certain circumstances, was defeated. CDOT has created the super-load permits, and when the federal freeze is lifted, the state legislature will look again at long vehicle combinations which would require the state to work with locals on appropriate routes. HB 1115 would increase retainage fee percentages and time frames for all public works contracts, not just transportation. It failed also. She said Rep. Glenn Vaad, state House transportation committee chair, frequently protects CDOT's current project selection process in the Legislature, and cautions his colleagues about getting involved in that.</p> <p>Any increase in transportation fees more than likely will need to go to the voters. Gary Beedy said local people seem to be willing to pay for a service. In his county, for example, a \$20 surcharge levied to all those living outside the county who register their vehicles in his county is generally accepted. The difficulty, Melissa said, is getting the state legislators to act on the assumption that people are willing to pay for services.</p> <p><i>Handouts:</i> <i>House vs. Senate Reauthorization – Apportionments to Colorado</i> <i>CDOT – FHWA Discretionary Programs – Fiscal Year 2011</i></p> | |
| <p>Interregional Connectivity Study – Wendy Wallach, Rail Program Manager</p> | <p>CDOT and RTD applied for a \$1 million grant in 2009 to look at how a high-speed rail alignment would work with RTD's FasTracks rail and light rail, and the funds were obligated in the last two weeks. The interregional study's primary purpose is to serve as a planning document and to provide preliminary recommendations for High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail alignments, technologies, and station locations in the Denver metro region that will maximize ridership for the proposed RTD FasTracks systems and future High Speed Rail service. The study will take a more detailed look at ridership than the other studies, such as the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority study of two proposed (RMRA) routes along I-70 from DIA to Eagle and on I-25 from Fort Collins to Pueblo. The RMRA study determined that the two</p> | |

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| | <p>routes together are "feasible".</p> <p>Portions of the study will run concurrently with the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) feasibility study, which should begin in late summer 2011. STAC members will be asked who should serve on the various study committees at a later time. The intent is not to duplicate work of other studies but to complement and build upon them.</p> <p>The study is expected to start in June 2011 and be complete in November 2012. The study teams for technologies and ridership will coordinate on a number of tasks. The Federal Railroad Administration will work closely with CDOT on the study recommendations, and funding for implementation is an unknown.</p> <p>Trent Bushner asked about the technologies that will be considered and how financially self-sustaining they might be. He also noted that the I-25 and I-70 corridors probably are going to attract very different clientele: business people on I-25 and tourists and skiers on I-70.</p> <p>Craig Casper asked how the connectivity study will address the rail system outside the Denver metro area. Mark Imhoff said RTD's main concern is from DIA to downtown to make sure there aren't duplicated lines. Craig also asked if there is currently a high speed rail in mountains anywhere in the world and commented that Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is not supportive of new rail alignments. In response to the question from Craig about high speed rail in mountains, Wendy responded it depends on how "high-speed rail" is defined. One mountain high-speed rail is operating in Tibet.</p> <p>Based on her work on the RMRA board, Diane Mitsch Bush said the main criterion is that people need to get to their destinations by rail faster than in their vehicles. Without speed, passenger rail cannot be financially feasible. Switzerland, Germany, Spain, China, and Japan have high-speed rail.</p> <p>Cliff Davidson noted that the North I-25 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) allows for rail, but not high-speed rail until 50 years out. Cliff said it seems</p> | |
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| | <p>that CDOT doesn't favor high-speed rail on I-25 north of Denver.</p> <p>Mark Imhoff said CDOT is taking a look at transportation modes and needs throughout the state, which will eventually require different rail alignments, as well as buses.</p> <p>Wendy said the Railroad Relocation for Colorado Communities study has been placed on hold until the State Rail Plan, AGS, and rail interregional connectivity studies were done. No decisions have been made yet.</p> <p>Steve Rudy said that DRCOG's concern is that demand and revenue estimations haven't taken into account the financial, societal, and environmental issues involved in building rail facilities through the Denver metro area. He also asked Wendy when she has met with DRCOG stakeholders. Mark Imhoff said that he has met with the DRCOG executive director.</p> <p><i>Handout:</i> <i>Colorado Interregional Connectivity Study PowerPoint</i></p> | |
| <p>FTA Discretionary Grant Criteria Update – Tom Mauser/Mark Imhoff, Division of Transit and Rail (DTR)</p> | <p>Tom Mauser thanked Sandi Kohrs for facilitating the discussion last month about the FTA Discretionary Grant Criteria while he and Mark Imhoff were attending the annual CASTA spring conference in Pueblo. The discretionary grants for Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facility funding are a direct result of the earmarking process not being an avenue for funding any more. Now the funds go to FTA, and rural local transit agencies apply for the funding through DTR. The MPOs usually apply directly to FTA, although they have the option of applying through DTR. Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is the only MPO that will apply for funding through DTR.</p> <p>FTA wants CDOT to prioritize the various discretionary grant applications. In discussions with other groups (STAC, TRAC, TC Transit and Intermodal Committee, transit agencies, and CASTA), DTR heard a preference for broad criteria but an understanding that metrics are appropriate for bus replacements. The groups don't want DTR to lower its expectations but want DTR to consider the nature of the transit system and community; want to use</p> | |

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| | <p>“special considerations” for FTA program priorities and community support; emphasize financial sustainability, capital planning, and business plans; and exclude equipment purchase (garage lifts, radios, etc.) because other funding sources, such as the state FASTER, are available for them.</p> <p>For <u>bus replacement</u> applications, 7 possible points would be awarded for mileage and usage and 3 for special considerations; for <u>expansion buses</u>, 7 would be awarded for demonstrated need and business case for expansion and special considerations and 3 for special considerations; and for <u>facilities</u>, 4 for readiness and demonstrated timetable, 4 for project purpose, cost savings and efficiency, and 2 for special considerations. Emphasis will be given to replacing buses over new capacity buses unless it conflicts with stated FTA priorities for particular grants. CDOT will submit a limited number of prioritized projects, but not all. DTR will be hiring a Transit Infrastructure Specialist who will manage a database of needed projects, update prioritized list, and assist locals in developing lists and projects.</p> <p>Projects not funded by FTA would become candidates for FASTER funding, with applicants not having to do much more than update their FTA requests as needed. In that way, the FTA discretionary grant applications will flow to FASTER and other FTA applications.</p> | |
| <p>TRAC/Division of Transit and Rail Update – Mark Imhoff</p> | <p>The TRAC last month focused its meeting on the FTA discretionary grant criteria. DTR is focused on the three rail plans: Interregional Connectivity, State Rail Plan, and AGS.</p> <p>In discussing rail plans, Barbara Kirkmeyer commented that a railroad crossing inventory is necessary, not only in Upper Front Range and Region 4 but across the state. Johnny Olson said one railroad doesn’t believe it has a problem with crossing guards staying down for a long time, even when trains are not in sight. Cliff Davidson said railroads don’t seem to respond to small towns. Barbara Kirkmeyer commented, too, that some local agency projects are being delayed because of the difficulty of obtaining permission from the railroads to have projects cross the tracks. Mark Imhoff suggested that DTR give an update on railroad crossing initiatives next month.</p> | |

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| Other Business | Vince Rogalski announced that Jennifer Finch will be retiring from her position as director of the CDOT Division of Transportation Development and presented a resolution thanking her for her leadership. Passage of the resolution was received enthusiastically. (This STAC meeting was Jennifer's last one.) | <i>A motion passed approving the resolution thanking Jennifer Finch for her service to DTD.</i> |
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