

Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization

Policy Committee Meeting

March 24, 2021

Virtual Zoom meeting 4:00 PM



Attendance:

Voting Members:

Patrick Collins
Ralph Tarango
Troy Thompson

Cheyenne City Mayor
WYDOT, District Engineer
Laramie Co. Commissioner

Non-Voting Members:

Wes Bay
Charles Bloom
Dave Bumann
Wes Bybee

City Engineering
City Planning & Development
County Public Works
WYDOT District Construction
Engineer
FHWA Wyoming
WYDOT Planning and Rail Liaison
WYDOT Planning
City Public Works
FHWA
WYDOT State Planning Engineer

Staff:

Jillian Harris
Tom Mason
Nancy Olson
Christopher Yaney

MPO Senior Planner
MPO Director
MPO Office Manager
MPO Planning Tech

Guests:

Spencer Dodge
Aaron Wilson

CDOT /Colorado Passenger Rail

Meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Commissioner Thompson

1) Introductions

Commissioner Thompson asked Mr. Mason to make introductions.

2) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Commissioner Thompson called for nominations. Mayor Collins nominated Commissioner Thompson to be chair. Mr. Tarango seconded. Motion passed.

Commissioner Thompson nominated Mayor Collins to be Vice Chair, Mr. Tarango seconded. Motion passed.

3) Approval of the December 16, 2020 minutes

Commissioner Thompson asked for a motion to approve the December minutes. Mayor Collins was not in attendance but made the motion. Mr. Tarango was in attendance and seconded. Minutes were approved as printed.

4) **Presentation from the Colorado Front Range Rail Commission by Spencer Dodge, CDOT**
Spencer Dodge contact info: spencer.dodge@state.co.us

Mr. Dodge gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the planning and development work in Colorado on the Southwest Chief and Front Range Rail advances. Discussion topics included the Background, the Vision, the Alternatives Evaluation, Governance Options, Stakeholder and Agency Involvement, and Next Steps. He said that the Commission has spent the last two years working on rail alignment alternatives.

The CDOT Commission is called the **Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission**. It was created in 2017 and was charged with continuing to support and enhance SW Chief and facilitate the development and operation of Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR). Previous studies were the basis of the preliminary analysis. Since legislation limits the FRPR from Pueblo to Ft. Collins, the Commission wants to connect FRPR to the national Amtrak Rail Network, i.e., SW Chief and California Zephyr.

Vision: Developing passenger rail that serves Front Range communities from Pueblo to Ft. Collins is a critical component of Colorado's future. Front Range Passenger Rail will provide a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation option for travel between major population centers along the Front Range and create a backbone of connecting and expanding rail and transit options in the state and region.

Evaluation of Alternatives included the Fatal Flaw Analysis (Level 1), the Comparative Analysis (Level 2) and then BNSF Freight Rail Corridor alignment, the North I-25 EIS Commuter Rail update alignment and the I-25 (E-470) Alignment. The comparison of alternatives included Operational, Contextual, Financial and Political & Public Interest.

Deliverable and accomplishments were listed. There currently exists a Preliminary Alternatives Analysis, Screening Criteria, Travel Demand Forecasting (CDOT), Preliminary Engineering and Design Criteria, Cost Estimates, Stakeholder Engagements, Pre-NEPA Activities, Governance Memo and a Funding and Financing Memo. The Long Range Vision includes: 180 miles of dedicated double track; Nine primary stations; 24 round trips weekdays and 18 on weekends; Up to 2.2 million annual ridership; Max Speeds: 90 -110 mph; Travel Time; 2.5 – 3 hrs. (end to end); Conceptual Capital Cost: \$14.2 - \$47.8 billion.

Governance options are to move from a Commission to a Public Rail Authority, which will allow the authority to plan, design, fund, finance, build, operate and maintain a FRPR system.

Stakeholder/Agency Involvement included four rounds of meetings with the three areas from Nov. 2019 to Nov. 2020, as well as an entire corridor coalition in Dec. 2019 with the next meeting the 1st quarter of 2021. Many agencies are included.

Next steps include advancing the initial stage into implementation. Two-to-six roundtrips a day and they might partner with Amtrak and RTD.

Amtrak was proposing within a 400-mile radius of Denver to get capital funding to get passenger rail service off the ground and eventually up to Cheyenne and then down to Albuquerque. This did not pass the Colorado legislative session.

Commissioner Thompson wanted to know how the MPO can stay in the loop. Mr. Mason follows the meetings and will keep the Policy Committee informed. Also, Dan Kline (WYDOT) and Dale Steenburgen of the Chamber have been engaged. Mr. Dodge will come when and where he is wanted to present.

5) **Certification of a Budget Amendment to the *FY '21 Unified Planning Work Program***

Mr. Mason showed the budget amendment that was previously given to the Committee by e-mail. It adds a new project the E. Pershing Blvd. Corridor Plan from U.S. 30 to Christensen. The budget amendment also includes the actual contract amount for the Walterscheid Plan. There was \$4,200 addition that was carried over from the previous fiscal year. The total budget for this fiscal year is \$1,127,014.00. Mayor Collins moved to approve the amendment, and Mr. Tarango seconded. Motion passed.

6) ***Citizens' Advisory Committee Membership approval.***

A list of current members was put on the screen. Ms. Olson stated that the members listed have all expressed a desire to stay on with the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee. They have been with the MPO from two to 12+ years and are very engaged. There is a new applicant, Kellie Johnson, who likes to be involved with her community. She works at the Library and has served on other civic groups. Ms. Olson asked the committee to approve the current members and Ms. Johnson as a new addition to the committee.

Mayor Collins asked how we solicit members. Ms. Olson said the CAC membership is on the MPO and County websites home pages. The MPO requests the Mayor's office for any applications from individuals that might be interested in serving. Mr. Mason has asked some people from the community to. Mostly new membership comes from word of mouth.

Mr. Collins moved to approve the list, and Mr. Tarango seconded. The motion passed.

7) **Approval of the Updated MPO *Public Participation Plan (PPP)***

Mr. Mason put the plan on the screen and reported. Ms. Olson has been keeping the PPP updated and since the pandemic forced all our public engagement to be virtual, we included a section on what we did for virtual engagement in COVID times. After we sent the document to Scott Frey from FHWA for review, he gave us some pointers to include specific practices and commitments in the Plan. We did that and now it is ready for adoption by the Policy Committee. Mr. Tarango moved, and Mr. Collins seconded. Motion passed.

8) **Update on the Proposed Modifications to the *2019 Existing Functional Classification Map and MPO Planning Boundary***

Mr. Mason showed the map and said he is not looking for an action today. He said that since we have finished the Master Transportation Plan, now is the appropriate time to review and revise the Existing

Functional Classification Map. First the MPO, City, and County staff made suggested changes. Then it was given to the Technical Committee to review, and they have done so. The Tech Committee will vote to recommend approval by the Policy Committee at their next meeting. It will come back to the Policy Committee for adoption along with the urban boundary changes. Tom said the MPO Planning Boundary has been pushed out on the north and northeast part of town where growth is happening.

Commissioner Thompson asked for Mr. Mason's thoughts on contracting the southeast portion. Mr. Mason said this is an area which is mostly oil wells. He will investigate that.

Mr. Cawley asked how the boundary expansion is affecting the changes in the overall road classification mileage. Mr. Mason said they have not done the analysis on urban lane miles vs. rural lane miles. Usually, this is done by WYDOT.

9) **Discussion on Annual *Crash Reports***

Mr. Mason introduced Chris Yaney, who reported on the new and updated yearly crash reports. When Mr. Yaney joined the MPO, the 2017 report was nearly completed, and he finished it along with developing the 2018 and 2019 reports. The reports are up on the MPO website to view and study. He looked at the crash analysis for cost of injuries and in 2019, the cost increased significantly. Injuries trended downwards in general but experienced an increase in 2019. The roundabout on Pershing and Converse still has the most crashes of any one location, but the highest number of crashes at signalized intersections were at Dell Range/Ridge and Dell Range/Converse. Mr. Yaney showed a couple of performance measure charts. Total crashes over four years are on a downward trend and fall below the MPO's target. Motorcycle crashes are also on a downward trend and below targets. He also looked at young drivers and drivers older than 65. Both showed downward trends in fatal and serious injuries but upward on total crashes. This might be an area we want to work on soon. All the performance measures are pretty good, except for crashes involving bicycles and drivers. This is an indication for more "share the road" education. Mr. Yaney with help from Ms. Corso created a heat map of all the crashes in the Cheyenne area, which is available on the MPO website. Finally, he pointed out that the number of severe crashes at the Pershing roundabout is very low.

10) **Update on MPO Planning Projects**

a) ***East Park Greenway and Drainage Plan***

Ms. Harris reported that this plan kicked off last fall. This is a unique plan because the MPO does not typically do drainage plans. Because of the increasing development in east Cheyenne, it is important to connect and expand the Greenway and drainage has to be looked at to do that. Summit Engineering was hired. The location is where the proposed East Community Park will be on the southwest corner of Pershing and Whitney. The consultants will look at relocating drainage under the UPRR tracks to connect the Greenway through the historical tunnel to the Laramie County Conservation Open Space in the LEADS Business Park. Mayor Collins asked if we are getting cooperation with the UPRR. He asked because they are looking for help from the city with building a new building and he would be looking to assist this plan if the opportunity presents itself.

b) ***Converse Plan***

Ms. Harris gave the update. The MPO hired Ayres Associates late last year to do a corridor study for Converse from just north of the Dell Range intersection to the proposed Carlson intersection. This plan will right-size the corridor in anticipation of the development going on in Section 20. It will address multimodal transportation regarding transit and greenway connectivity. The first public meeting was on March 3rd, held virtually. There was a good turnout to solicit public input on challenges of the corridor and what the public would like to see long term. A high-level traffic analysis was prepared and discussed because traffic volumes will increase significantly in the future. Transit will be consulted to make sure their service can continue along the corridor. Multi-modal transportation can continue to increase due to residences and schools on the east and commercial uses, like restaurants and shopping on the west, but Converse acts as a barrier between these areas.

c) ***Walterscheid Blvd. Plan***

Ms. Harris said Benchmark Engineering was hired to complete this Plan which will evaluate Walterscheid from Deming Dr. to College Dr., looking at upgrading it to a major collector with better connectivity. The consultants will be looking at solving drainage issues on the corridor and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. This is a unique project because the centerline serves as the jurisdictional boundary, and it is unclear which entity responds to issues on the corridor such as drainage or traffic incidents. A secondary goal of this project is to work out jurisdictional boundaries and agreements. The first public meeting for this project will be in the summer.

d) ***East Pershing Plan***

Mr. Mason told the committee that the project's RFP will be advertised for consultant proposals tomorrow. The corridor project limits include E. Lincolnway to the Christensen Rd. intersection. This is one of the last major corridors that has not been planned and it will look at what will be needed to handle future growth.

e) ***Transit Development Plan***

Mr. Mason said Ms. Harris is currently working on this scope of work. From the Connect 2045 Master Transportation Plan, it was recommended to update the CTP Transit Development Plan. The last one was done over 5 years ago. As the need grows and changes in the community occur, we need to look at our transit program to see how it might evolve. Mayor Collins said he has heard that it takes too long to get anywhere, and will there be more direct routes? Ms. Harris said that everything is on the table for consideration and the program not only wants to serve the shift worker, but the choice rider as well. The plan will look at service area and service frequency, fare structure and maybe a new location for the transit center hub.

11) Update on current and upcoming local construction projects

a) ***City of Cheyenne***

Mr. Bay reported for City Engineering. The 26th St. storm sewer project is going through Council and will be started on the 19th of April. The signal project for 24th at Carey and Pioneer was started but had to be pushed back a month due to the signal at Logan and Pershing getting hit. The 10ft. pathway at Lions Park along Carey to Central is getting ready to go out to bid and hopefully get constructed this year. The US 30 underpass for the Greenway will get a pump station replacement, and the final set of plans and will go out to bid soon and get installed this summer. Pavement management program: E.

12th & Meadow Drive mill and overlay is out to bid. Misc. concrete work will start soon. Nationway work will not happen this year. Misc. crack seal is scheduled for the fall. Commissioner Thompson asked about chip seals in past, will that continue? Mr. Bay said not necessarily because it is not always appropriate in urban locations.

b) **Laramie County**

Mr. Bumann reported that they are still cleaning up from the blizzard. It has not resulted in much flooding. They are preparing the bid packages for the 20+ miles of chip seal around the county. The mill and overlays are scheduled for later in the summer of 2021.

c) **WYDOT**

Mr. Bybee gave the WYDOT construction update. Crews are currently finishing bridge rehab projects on the Interstates. I-180 / South Greeley Highway (SGH) has five locations of bridge rehab including the pedestrian overpass. Horse Creek bridge is getting a total deck replacement and will be closed for a time. The County Club/I-25 structure is getting minor repairs. Southbound I-25 at Terry Ranch Rd. on the UPRR structure will have some lane closures. The Crow Creek structure on W. Lincolnway will have new approach slabs, deck repairs, ADA improvements, curb and gutter and lane closures will affect traffic. SGH and Allison Rd. bridge repairs will have some lane closures. Signal replacements are scheduled for 8th Ave. at Central and Warren and at Lincolnway and Evans. A mill and overlay for College Dr. from Pershing to UPRR bridge is scheduled with concrete intersection repair, ADA upgrades, sidewalk and curb and gutter as needed.

Mayor Collins asked if there was any way to get the rip rap to go all the way to the bridge deck and not have a flat area for homeless to use for their camps. Mr. Bybee said that may require a new design by the bridge people and Mr. Tarango said the project is already let.

Big projects for 2022 will be the Parsley Blvd. bridge replacement and Whitney/ Dell Range intersection realignment and service roads connecting to Christensen.

d) **Others** - none

12) **Other Business**

Mr. Mason said at the June meeting, the main action would be on the Existing Functional Classification, MPO Boundary Map as well as approving the Transportation Improvement Program. MPO staff will be working to get all the projects listed.

Next Meeting June 30, 2021