

# South Central TPR (SCTPR) Meeting #3

## Notes

**Date/Time:** February 20th 2025; 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

### **Attendance:**

- **RPC Members:**
  - Huerfano County
  - Las Animas County
  - City of Trinidad
  - City of Walsenburg
  - Town of Aguilar
  - Town of Branson
  - Town of Starkville

### **Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting commenced at approximately 9:04 am.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

The Agenda was approved unanimously.

### **Election of Officers**

#### **TPR RPC Chair:**

- Las Animas County Commissioner Felix Lopez nominated Commissioner Mitch Wardell, who was voted in unanimously.

#### **TPR RPC Vice Chair:**

- Las Animas County Commissioner Felix Lopez nominated Councilman Williamson, who was voted in unanimously.

### **Adoption of Revised SCTPR-RPC By-Laws**

- Las Animas County Commissioner Lopez asked for clarification on Article 5, regarding the meeting locations and the option for virtual meetings. Proposed rewording of this Article is that meetings are strongly encouraged to be attended in-person, but there will always be a virtual meeting option. The chair will determine the in-person meeting location. The bylaws were approved unanimously with the recommended amendments to Article 5 as discussed above.

- Motion to maintain STAC representative as Brian Blasi and alternate as the Chair position, which was passed unanimously.
- Jessica Olguin is recommended as the Transit Representative until a new Transportation Director is hired.

## **Colorado Transportation Commission Update**

- None.

## **Colorado Department of Transportation Updates**

### **• Legislative Update**

- CDOT supports SB 25-069, regarding Tire Chain Traction Control Device Permits, SB 25-161 regarding transit reform, and SB 25-030 regarding increased transportation mode choice. More information on current bills found within the meeting materials.
- CDOT will present a statewide mode choice review to the Transportation Commission for adoption.
- Crystal Armendiaz will be sending out email updates on a regular basis and there is a legislative update included in the STAC packet as an additional resource.
- Las Animas County Commissioner Lopez asked about HB 25-1046, which is the bill that increases the allowable number of TPRs that was defeated/postponed. Commissioner Lopez wishes to stay updated about the status of this movement, as he has concerns about losing a vote due to SCTPR and SETPR merging. Director Darius Pakbaz stated there does not seem to be an appetite to revisit this bill.

### **• Headquarters Updates**

- The Transportation Commission is meeting today.
- At the most recent STAC meeting, the Vision 2035 was reviewed and approved, although there were some concerns that the Vision 2035 does not accurately reflect some rural areas and if it aligns with legislation.
- The Statewide Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan development is moving forward.
- Commissioner Lopez asked about SB 260 and the money has been expended so far. While there is a report online, the budget is still being finalized. It was recommended to attend the March STAC meeting where the budget will be discussed. In addition, the enterprises publish annual reports on their websites detailing their budgets and financial activities..

### **• Highway Project Updates**

- The N17 AD bridge in Walsenburg on I-25 is complete.
- SH 69 project is in a winter shutdown and will be finished in spring.
- There will be two large overlays on I-25 coming soon.

- The I-25 C widening project in Walsenburg is in design, along with the I-25 Exit 14 Project in Trinidad. These will be shared when final designs are done.
- In regards to the I-25 C project timeline, work should be starting before the end of the year, although it is dependent on some right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions and utility work.
- See packet materials for additional information from Region 2 regarding project updates.
- **Local Agency Project Updates**
  - None.
- **Maintenance Updates**
  - There has been lots of snow to deal with.
- **Transit Project Updates**
  - Outrider ridership from Trinidad is going strong and the route is deemed successful with no immediate plans of expansion at this point.
  - Bustang is funded for the most part by FASTER fees, and fare recapture is around 15-20%.
  - Concerns about the sustainability of the program were raised, especially with lower ridership. For the time being, we are committed to the service despite the significant operating costs. It is working to establish a platform for the future Front Range Passenger Rail. Additionally, there is federal formula funding available to fund this route if need be. Work is constantly being done to ensure that the routes provided are as sustainable as possible.
  - There was discussion on how to make the Trinidad Bustang stop more visible, such as potentially moving it to in front of City Hall. This proposal is currently moving through design.
- **2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**
  - Projects in the 10-Year Plan are essentially assured some level of funding, and those in the 4 Year STIP are guaranteed funding.
  - Strategic funding directed by PD14 and projects identified in the 10-Year Plan. Other funding programs fall under the TPR vision/goals, and are identified in the TPR Priorities.
  - Representatives were comfortable with the final proposed vision and focus areas, there were no comments.
  - There were also no comments on the Draft Proposed Goals at this point, but the opportunity for public comments was emphasized. The Draft Plan will come in April, with public comments available May to July.
  - Concerns were raised with the potential of AI integration into the assessment of projects and criteria, as it may not replicate the expert knowledge of a human. CDOT does not currently utilize AI for this, and has no plans on integrating AI into this process in the near future.

- Representatives expressed desire to choose projects that serve a wider range of people, ensuring more impact on more people, thus there was a proposal to remove item G and reallocate the funding to SCCOG Trinidad Transit Maintenance Facility, item R. Item R has been identified as a high priority item for Trinidad.
- It was clarified that the intention of this meeting is not yet to allocate specific funding to specific projects, but instead to merely prioritize projects.
- It was decided that projects that have been identified as funded should stay on the list, and moved down towards the bottom.
- Project 1493 was recommended to be brought into the top 20.
- It was decided to leave project 1039 (item A) as a high priority project because it is already in progress.
- Raton Pass has been having issues with rockslides, and while item B involves wildlife mitigation in Raton pass, there is a desire to include rockfall mitigation within this. The description of this project could be modified and it would stay as a priority. There is limited rockfall funding available across the state, and this will be looked into as an alternative. Another alternative is to create a rockfall mitigation project in this area and add it to the priority list as a separate project.
- Project 1037 (item C) is also in construction, so we can replace this project's position with project 3012 and move item C down to the bottom of the list.
- Project 1520 (item E) will no longer include a roundabout, so the description can be modified, but it is in design and should likely stay on the list.
- Project 1044 (item G) can be moved all the way to the bottom of the list.
- Project 1510 (item H) has not had much conversation, but has been identified as a higher risk area and is high scoring and should stay as a priority. The scope of the project needs to be specified to mention shoulder widening occurring in selected areas identified as higher risk. Adding mentions to freight and safety will clear up the intent of the project.
- Project 1272 (item K) is underfunded, but an alternative is to purchase an existing facility rather than undertake a new build project to save money. Either way, this remains a priority for the TPR.
- Project 1045 (item M) can move down to the bottom of the list as it is funded.
- Project 1269 (item N) was previously funded and ready to break ground but was voted down. Potentially adding a feasibility study to project description will help this project go through. This project will also tie into the future Front Range Passenger Rail project, and so it should stay on the list, in the middle.
- Project 1041 (item P) may be partially redundant, as part of this route is operated by SCCOG from Trinidad to Pueblo. The only section that is missing is Walsenburg to Alamosa, so we could change the description to specify that aspect, or remove it because a lot of the area is already serviced. This is not identified as a super high priority and will be moved to the appendix.
- Project 1038 (item Q) is taken care of through on demand service, and can be moved down to the appendix. However, if it is already funded, it can go right at the bottom as there is potential for it to be completed before the draft is finished.

- Project 1270 (item R) is partially funded and will be staying on.
- Project 1508 (item S) is unallocated and will be moved to the appendix.
- This leaves 9 openings to add projects.
- **Potential additions:** 1493, 1511, 3006, 3008, 13 (modify description to include access and extending acceleration/deceleration lanes), separate Raton Pass rockfall/wildlife project into two projects?, 3009 and 3010?, 2620, 2619, 2623/1512,

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

### **Next TPR Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for April 24th at 9:00am.