

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 08/20/2013

ATTENDANCE

Time: **01:30 PM to 03:16 PM**

Baumgardner

Place: Gallogy Events Center

Buck

This Meeting was called to order by
Representative Tyler

Coram

Everett

Fischer

Jones

King

This Report was prepared by
Jonathan Senft

Kraft-Tharp

Lawrence

Lee

Mitsch Bush

Moreno

Peniston

Primavera

Scott

Todd

Heath

Tyler

X = Present, E = Excused, A = Absent, * = Present after roll call

Bills Addressed:	Action Taken:
TLRC Field Hearing Colorado Springs	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only

01:30 PM -- TLRC Field Hearing Colorado Springs

Representative Tyler, chair, called the meeting to order. No roll call was taken. The members of the committee introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their district representation and committee membership. Committee staff also introduced themselves. Representative Tyler encouraged the panelists to describe their transportation priorities.

01:34 PM

Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Chancellor of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, introduced herself and welcomed the committee and panelists to the campus.

01:36 PM

Commissioner Les Gruen, Colorado Transportation Commissioner and Tom Wrona, Regional Transportation Director, Region 2, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) introduced themselves to the committee. Representative Tyler introduced Representative Janak Joshi, State Representative for House District 16. Mr. Wrona discussed his concerns about increased traffic on roads servicing Fort Carson. He also expressed concern about road degradation and repairs resulting from the Waldo Canyon fire, which occurred in the Colorado Springs area in June 2012. Mr. Wrona said his three leading priorities are the reconstruction of the I-25 interchange at Cimarron Street in Colorado Springs; repairs to I-25 at Fillmore Street; and connecting to Powers Boulevard to I-25. Mr. Wrona said that repairs at Cimarron Street, west of I-25 in Colorado Springs, are estimated at \$250 million. He also discussed repairs to State Highway 115 in Fremont County, which is heavily used for prison traffic, and will cost an estimated \$50 million. Mr. Wrona also discussed other necessary repairs, such as new passing lanes and expanded shoulders on certain roads.

01:40 PM

Senator King asked about repairs to US 24, which was damaged in the Black Forest fire. He asked how much the state has spent on runoff repairs. Mr. Wrona answered that CDOT received some funding shortly after the fire, but that the road requires ongoing maintenance, and flooding still occurs in large rain events. Mr. Wrona said that after the fire, CDOT immediately received \$5 million to create debris sediment traps. He said private contractors are assisting CDOT this summer because of workload associated with drainage and burned-ground coverage. He said the burned-ground coverage has created mud slides, and that CDOT maintenance crews are learning how to plow mud instead of snow.

Representative Tyler recognized former State Senator Keith King, who was present in the audience.

01:51 PM

Mr. Wrona continued discussing the damage that resulted from the area fires. He said that CDOT is currently assessing water flow solutions that will not damage current infrastructure, but stressed the importance of containing debris. He stated that US 24 is a key business route, and in times of heavy rain, the road contains and moves water like an aqueduct. He added that CDOT has installed monitoring systems along the route to assess water levels, and is looking for solutions to prevent water flows from damaging nearby roads.

Commissioner Gruen stated that about \$6.5 million has been spent for repairs connected to the Black Forest fire, and an additional \$500,000 has been spent to continue grants for wildlife management. Commissioner Gruen also thanked Kurt Morrison, CDOT Legislative Liaison, for performing at a high level. Commissioner Gruen noted the cooperative nature of the current commission, expressed concern about recent reductions within the CDOT annual budget, and gave appreciation to CDOT for doing well in light of strained resources.

01:58 PM

Commissioner Gruen expressed support for CDOT's plan to move to an asset-based cash management system. He said that the new system makes CDOT more nimble in financing construction projects, leads to greater economic development, and makes transportation financing more efficient.

Representative Lawrence asked for more information on the repairs resulting from the Waldo Canyon fire. She asked about the coordination between the U.S. National Forest Service and CDOT. Commissioner Gruen responded that a task force exists between the two entities, and that the task force is currently working through the issues.

02:01 PM

Colorado Springs City Councilmembers Joel Miller and Keith King, and Ms. Kathleen Krager, Transportation Manager, City of Colorado Springs, introduced themselves to the committee. Councilmember King stressed the priority of the I-25 interchange at Cimarron Street, noting that it is very dangerous. Councilmember Miller concurred, and provided similar comments regarding the I-25 interchange at Fillmore Street. He said that other priorities include State Highway 21, and the completion of US 51 to connect to I-25. He thanked stakeholders for the widening of I-25 through the Colorado Springs area.

02:05 PM

Ms. Krager discussed the allocation of funds to the Pikes Peak region. She explained that the city has a memorandum of understanding with CDOT to receive 9.5 percent of available funds, using the CDOT definition of available funds. She continued that the city estimates that it receives only 7 percent of these funds, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$188 million. She said that these funds would have allowed her to fund her top three transportation projects: the I-25 interchange at Cimarron Street; the I-25 interchange at Fillmore Street; and the intersection of Old Ranch Road and Powers Boulevard.

02:09 PM

Ms. Krager discussed the one percent local sales tax for transportation in Colorado Springs. She also discussed the Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority (PPRTA) and the Mountain Metro, a regional bus transit system.

02:11 PM

Commissioner Norm Steen, Teller County Commissioner, introduced himself to the committee. He said his priorities are improvements to the Cimarron and Fillmore interchanges on I-25, where he noted several traffic fatalities. He responded to Senator King's earlier question regarding fire damage to US 24. He discussed the work done by the Coalition of the Upper South Platte, which has performed flood mitigation work totaling nearly \$31 million. Commissioner Steen expressed concerns with the difficulties local governments have in making expenditures more efficient.

02:23 PM

Ms. Lisa Czelatko, First Alternate to the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee, introduced herself to the committee. She explained her experiences listening to stakeholders, and concluded that the public is mostly concerned with day-to-day travel needs, such as how long it will take to commute to work, as opposed to funding issues. She noted the difficulties surrounding local tax increases, and the public's concern about whether projects will be completed as promised. She said she has also heard strong interest from young professionals and the elderly about the implementation of multi-modal transport systems. She also echoed the need for improvements to US 24.

02:27 PM

Mr. Craig Casper, Transportation Director for the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), introduced himself to the committee. He discussed the reduction in overall CDOT funding, and how it has impacted PPACG. He said that some transportation projects have been scaled back with this reduction, and noted underfunding of almost \$2 billion on regional projects. He said that projects are ready to begin, but need additional funding.

02:29 PM

Mr. Robert MacDonald, Executive Director for PPACG and the PPRTA, introduced himself to the committee. He said the PPACG was in agreement to begin certain projects when the next \$2 billion in funding is available. He discussed local transportation sales taxes, particularly PPACG's involvement in the organization of 10 years of local tax for capital projects. He lauded recent improvements at the Fort Carson interchange on I-25 at Academy Boulevard, where at one time soldiers were late for duty because of traffic problems. He discussed federal funding opportunities, such as the Defense Access Roads program.

02:37 PM

Representative Tyler discussed the ability of local governments to secure local taxes for transportation, as well as secure state funding. He asked Mr. MacDonald how local governments decide to spend local tax revenues. Mr. MacDonald replied that organizations rely on the cooperation and participation of local governments to set priorities. Commissioner Steen noted the success of community groups such as IMPACT 64, and their contribution to how local government transportation revenue is spent. He added that he prefers decisions to be made at the local level.

The following members of the public testified:

02:44 PM -- Mr. Robert Giacolono, representing himself as a member of the public, introduced himself to the committee and thanked CDOT for recent improvements to I-25 around Colorado Springs. He expressed concerns about the safety of the Cimarron interchange, and stated that most stakeholders agree that this is a major transportation issue within the area. He discussed his concerns about the Fillmore interchange, saying the on-ramp is too short. He said that State Highway 83, which parallels I-25 to the east, has a unique problem because it appears that commercial vehicles are using the stretch to avoid weigh stations along I-25.

02:49 PM -- Mr. Dan Stewart, representing himself as a public citizen, introduced himself to the committee. Mr. Stewart provided background on himself, and stated that he is the former chair of the Colorado Transportation Commission. He commented on a report written in 1996 describing Colorado's transportation priorities, and noted that nearly 20 years later, many of the projects outlined in the report still needed to be completed. He also cited another report written in 2008, noting the same uninitiated projects. He said that solutions are difficult because the funding pie needs to be larger, and described budgetary shortfalls from the time these reports were written to the present. He said the projects cost more money now than when the reports were written.

Representative Kraft-Tharp asked for more information about the plans for Powers Boulevard mentioned in the 1996 report. Mr. Kurt Morrison responded that CDOT will follow up with the information. Senator Heath agreed that the committee should look at the reports and determine any solutions to Mr. Stewart's concerns. Mr. Stewart suggested that legislators keep the conversation regarding transportation funding non-partisan.

02:58 PM -- Ron Teck, Intergovernmental Officer for El Paso County, introduced himself and stated that he is speaking as a representative of El Paso County. He said that the challenges for the TLRC have not changed over the years, but that the funding deficits have gotten deeper, and more money is therefore needed for transportation. He lauded regional efforts, such as the PPRTA, and suggested the same cooperation needs to take place at the state level. He concluded that Colorado requires a consistent and reliable funding stream and there is often year-over-year uncertainty.

03:09 PM -- Mr. Alan Greer, representing Geocycle, a waste tire processing company, introduced himself to the committee. He said that his factory in Colorado is currently operating at 50 percent capacity because of the lack of waste tire material input. He noted several enforcement concerns within the state's waste tire program. He said that some retailers are not collecting the \$1.50 per tire fee that they are required to collect, and noted several illegal tire dumps. He suggested that if the retailer fee is more reliably enforced, then funds will be available to police the illegal dumps.

03:15 PM

The committee adjourned.