



# COLORADO

## Department of Transportation

Division of Transit & Rail

**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 5, 2021  
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Google Meets**

Member	Organization	Yes	No	Member	Organization	Yes	No
David Averill	SMART	x		Danny Katz	CoPIRG	x	
Craig Blewitt	Mountain Metro Transit	x		Alana Miller	City of Denver	x	
Sarah Curtis	All Points Transit		x	Ann Rajewski	CASTA	x	
Jonathan Flint	Steamboat Springs Transit	x		Vince Rogalski	Gunnison Valley TPR / STAC	x	
Matthew Helfant	DRCOG	x		Jim Souby	ColoRail		x
Lauren Isaac	Easy Mile, Inc.		x	Bill Van Meter	RTD	x	
Dave Johnson	RFTA	x		Wilson, Eva	Town of Avon	x	
Will Jones	City of Greeley	x					

Others Present	CDOT Present
Kenneth Mooney	Aaron Willis (CDOT) Amber Blake (CDOT) Andy Karsian (CDOT) Audrey Dakan (CDOT) Bob Wilson (CDOT) Brandon Najdovski (CDOT) Brodie Ayers (CDOT) Catherine Kosse (CDOT) Dervis Cemal Akcicek (CDOT)-Recorder Geoffrey Guthrie (CDOT) Glenn Krause (CDOT) Jan Rowe (CDOT) Jeff Prillwitz (CDOT) Kyle French (CDOT) Michael King (CDOT) Michael Snow (CDOT) Mike Timlin (CDOT) Peter Hadley (CDOT) Qing Lin (CDOT) Shilpa Kulkarni (CDOT)

## 1. Introductions/Meeting Overview/Welcome – Ann Rajewski

Ann Rajewski called the meeting to order at 11.04 pm, welcoming everyone to the meeting, asking for a roll call in the chat.

## 2. Round Table – Ann Rajewski

- Craig Blewitt: All 4 of the battery buses arrived. 2022 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mountain Metro Transit.
- Jonathan Flint: Ongoing challenges with hiring frontline employees and drivers is still an issue.
- Danny Katz: Support for Safer Main Streets from interviews with local governments. Governor is proposing money for electric school buses. Maybe there is an opportunity to take some of those dollars to put into operations.

## 3. Federal and State Legislative Update – Andy Karsian

- Governor released the latest budget to go to the legislature. Priorities fall in line with what we have been talking about. Operating dollars need will be advocated for.
- There may be a bill that circles back to e-trip rulemaking.
- TLRC moved a draft an Idaho stop bill. It would be expanded to be statewide.

## 4. Transit Enterprise – Amber Blake

Amber Blake read out the names of the governing board members.

- The board will be run from OIM and DTR. First meeting is in December 2021.
- Additional resources on GHG and EV plan and guide for ZE vehicle will be shared in the future.

Q: Danny Katz: When will the dollars will be coming in? A: Amber Blake: Money is coming from the fees. First tranche would be next year.

## 5. 10-year Plan Update – Amber Blake (Attachment)

Q: David Averill: When is the next opportunity to update? Can we add new projects later on? A: Amber Blake: We do not know yet. We will be updating the statewide transit plan and statewide transportation plan. We need to create a new process to continually update that list, keep a rolling list that constantly updated the list.

- David Averill: Having a rolling project list for future updated would be great.
- Ann Rajewski: To encourage transit agencies about operating and capital planning, a good collection of operating projects was collected by FHU during statewide planning process. It is not a part of the published plan on CDOT's webpage. It is valuable for CDOT and agencies. At a certain point, we need to pay drivers to drive the vehicle, it is costing more and more every day. If we could make that list available to be used by advocates asking for funding and agencies who say it is a funding for operating. There are really valuable projects in the operating realm.
- Amber Blake: A master list of operating, expansion, capital list is needed. We will have those conversations internally and decide how to gather that information to keep a current list.

Q: Danny Katz: Is there a TPR/MPO meeting time list? A: Amber Blake: We will get that info to Danny.

- Geoffrey Guthrie (in the chat): During these upcoming MPO & TPR discussions, I speculate there might be some project horse trading due to already-experienced materials cost increases... there is also talk of Rural Paving \$\$\$ possibly being negatively affected by including transit operating costs. Things for our transit partners to think about before upcoming TPR/MPO workshops.
- David Johnson (in the chat): Agreed on the first point, Pvt. Guthrie. RFTA is \$15 million over budget on its \$60 million facility project that is in the Year 1-4 plan--and our cost escalations are not as bad as others, in terms of % and \$ cost.

- Geoffrey Guthrie: Everybody understand there is going to be a fiscally constrained number, if you insert on the transit side, some other project will be affected.
- Ann Rajewski: We need to have a list of stuff to be ready to be funded if there is money available, if too constrained, new projects won't be funded, we need to have a list if the funding came along.
- Amber Blake: Two different plans. We have additional funding sources. We need to have unconstrained needs-based list.
- Ann Rajewski: Both pieces should be available.
- Michael Snow (in the chat): An extensive Transit Capital Development Program was compiled in 2018. It contained over \$1B in unmet capital needs.
- Alana Miller: I think it's helpful when considering tradeoffs to see total dollars going to different buckets -- how much are we spending on highways overall compared to transit or maintenance in the plan. If we are thinking about fiscally constrained, is it a tradeoff between transit and paving?
- Danny Katz (in the chat): Unmet operating needs need to be lifted up too!
- Craig Blewitt (in the chat): I agree with these points.

## 6. MMOF – Amber Blake (Attachment)

- Matthew Helfant: The urban areas have already agreed to shift resources to rural areas. We cannot justify lower than 81 percent. Urban areas represent 87 percent the total population. Both revenue miles and unlinked trips need to consider, and jobs need to be considered, with the addition of GHG rules as a component of MMOF under SB 260 where most GHG emissions generated. We should not reduce the share of urban areas where population and jobs are the most.

Q: Craig Blewitt: Is there a recommendation to reduce 81 percent? A: Ann Rajewski: Subcommittee's 81 and 19 percent was supported by the documentation. It was not a big discussion.

Q: Will Jones: Why were the consideration for disabled and 65+ removed from urban weighting criteria? A: Amber Blake: We did not call out the differences in DI to the subcommittee. Low income and disabled were included in the previous criteria.

- Ann Rajewski: Focus of the urban folks in the subcommittee was GHG emission rules. Rural folks did not emphasize that, their focus is providing transit for people need the most. Some of the people on the subcommittee had not dealt a lot with transit and did not understand the metrics. This felt like the best connection for them to make that decision.
- Amber Blake: Glad that the rule asked us to bring to the TRAC for experts to weigh in.
- Michael Snow: Just to clarify, we need to understand because the formula splits urban and rural first, you can change the weighting on the rural it will not change the urban and vice versa, when you make adjustments, you only shift things within urban and rural independent from each other.
- Ann Rajewski: What is valuable about changing the weight within rural and urban helps acknowledge the value of the transit to the community, and the differences between urban and rural agencies.
- Will Jones: It is weird to not have anything for disabled and 65 plus community.
- Ann Rajewski: That is reasonable, but people are focused on GHG bill. The purpose was to create a pot that would create a broader impact on transit. GHG mitigation pot is very focused on GHG emissions pieces. Increase in senior population across the state happens faster than other states. It is something whether rural or urban, you are dealing with that kind of demand more and more. From a statewide perspective.
- David Averill: It is not perfect, but it is good enough. Why can't we use 2020 census data? I encourage the use of that. We saw a massive movement of households during the pandemic. At some point the criteria needs to be updated to reflect what is happening in the state. Accidents reports are misreported. There is probably reporting

bias urban and rural. It is not a huge criteria, if it is not that accurate maybe it should not have that big of a weight. Housing cost burden was a part of decision making before and now it is not?

- Michael Snow: Rural formula previously weighted on housing cost burden not on jobs. DI community is determined by low-income minority and housing cost burden. It is a factor within DI criteria.
- David Averill: Transit agencies are asked to extend the service just for job access for people who relocated during the pandemic.
- Michael Snow: The included data weights are well tracked and collected.
- Craig Blewitt: These are the right criteria, I think. Hopefully crashes data reporting will get better. But these criteria look good because the data is available. I think 81-19 is good. We may need to process and adjust when the new info becomes available. We see growth in 65 plus in El Paso County. I support where the formula is headed but needs to be tweaked as we go on.
- Ann Rajewski: We have the capacity to tweak as the new data becomes available.
- Michael Snow (in the chat): The formula can be reassessed and adjusted as subsequent years of funding are considered for distribution.
- Danny Katz: I will go with the transit experts on this. Part of the goal here is to run transit in urban areas that reduces GHG emission with increased ridership. There is weight in getting people on the buses. Bike and pedestrian crashes highlight where people are moving without a car. Bike and pedestrian crashes especially in Denver highlight the arterial high injury networks. The buses would help reduce GHG emissions.
- Jonathan Flint: I hope rural and urban can cooperate. Major need is medical transportation. From rural to urban area medical transportation. It is the fastest growth of need for disadvantage populations.
- Danny Katz: We could recommend using of state dollars for that. Bustang can help alleviate that need.
- Craig Blewitt: Can we try eliminating unlinked trips and put that 10 percent to disable and 65 and older in urban areas? (Referring to the MMOF formula spreadsheet).
- Will Jones: Average of revenue miles and unlink trips.
- Michael Snow: Making unlinked trips and revenue miles 5 percent and put the rest into disabled and 65 plus.
- Danny Katz: Some years will get small money that agencies cannot do anything with it.
- Michael Snow: In that case the agencies can do a multiyear decision.
- Danny Katz: Can the agencies do anything with the small amount of money? Use it for operating instead of accumulating the money over the years to do capital projects?
- Michael Snow: Yes, that can do that.
- Ann Rajewski: If the rural agencies can ask for 3 years' worth of funding that would be great.
- Michael Snow: A TPR and MPO can make decision on how to utilize their funding. CDOT cannot contract that funding until each year's funding is authorized by the legislature. TPR can make the decision and say we are going to have x amount money every year.
- Anne Rajewski: The funding will, supported by a fee, so you cannot say how much you are going to collect.
- Michael Snow: We can display not just the total projection, but the total that is guaranteed and the portion that would come from the fees.
- Danny Katz (in the chat): It would make it harder for the legislature to NOT allocate it if it is funding an operation that was counting on multi-year vs. a small annual capital expense.
- Craig Blewitt (in the chat): I agree with that too.
- Alan Miller (in the chat): Makes sense Danny.
- Ann Rajewski: Do want to tweak the formula or support it? Or we want to encourage a midterm reassessment when the new population numbers come in?
- David Averill: Update when the new numbers become available from Census and NTD.

- Ann Rajewski: I wonder if our recommendation goes further. We would also request that CDOT staff could make a clear path for agencies. Lay out what it would look like for TPRs for the multiyear funding.
- Craig Blewitt: This should focus on operating as much as possible. I think ever since I have been involved in transit, we tended to have capital funding, not operating, and that's been the missing piece.
- Ann Rajewski: This is a living document, when the new Census numbers come, we would add a statement on how the funding is used and give information to TPR that the funding can be used for operations.
- Matthew Helfant: Do you mean the leaving STAC recommendation numbers the same?
- Ann Rajewski: Yes. We like the formula, but we like to add additional perimeters and suggestions.
- Will Jones: I support that.
- Amber Blake (reiterates all that was said by the members): This is a living document and will be updated when the Census data is verified and released combined with NTD. CDOT staff will communicate with TPRs how MMOF funding is eligible for transit operating projects.
- Ann Rajewski: CDOT should give an example how 3-year funding will be used to the TPRs.
- Danny Katz: Communicate the minimum amount of money a year that they will get.
- Will Jones: It could be tied to GHG emission reductions for rural operating.
- Ann Rajewski: I would disagree, in rural parts it is hard to connect to GHG. In rural parts of the state, I would not want to encourage them to have GHG mitigation as their focus. Focus on access piece in the rural areas and operations funding that has been needed for a long time.
- Matthew Helfant: What if we add language that is saying the committee is highly recommending that this funding should be used for operating?
- Craig Blewitt: This is the first funding I am aware of that could be used for operating. That flexibility is huge. It is a new opportunity for this funding source.
- Jonathan Flint: A lot of different projects that focus on GHG or one program or another. Maybe leaving this wide open as possible may be a real good benefit, not only for operation but also for others that are needed.
- Ann Rajewski (summarizes): We are going to sue the subcommittee's recommendation for the formula. We are going to add a piece that says this is a living document to be adjusted with Census and NTD when new data becomes available. We are going to add piece to encourage the agencies and TPRs to use the money for operating to the extent possible.

Ann Rajewski took a vote. Will Jones is the only opposed.

- Will Jones: I would like to see more support for disabled and elderly populations

## 7. Snowstang & Pegasus Update – Amber Blake (attachment)

Q: Danny Katz: When is the kick off day for Pegasus? A: Amber Blake: December 11 is the tentative date.

Q: Danny Katz: Is this year-round? A: Mike Timlin: Yes. Fridays, Sundays, Saturdays, and holiday Mondays to start.

Q: Danny Katz: Will there be a rack for skis? A: Mike Timlin: Yes, it will have a container to carry snowboards and skis and bike racks on the front. We finalized our spot yesterday in Denver. It is just ahead of RTD stop right off 17<sup>th</sup> and Wewatta Street.

## 8. Adjourn – Ann Rajewski

The meeting was adjourned at 1.07 pm.