

**DRAFT STAC Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2011**

Location: CDOT Headquarters Auditorium
Date/Time: March 11, 2011 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Chairman: Vince Rogalski
Attendance: Sign-in sheets were distributed to note attendance at the meeting.

Agenda Items/Presenters/ Affiliations	Presentation Highlights	Actions
Introductions	<i>Everyone in the room gave self-introductions.</i>	No action taken
February Meeting Minutes	<i>February minutes were approved.</i>	Minutes approved
Transportation Commission Report- Vince Rogalski	<p>Vince briefly reported on last month's Transportation Commission (TC) meeting. Topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A welcome to the new CDOT executive director, Don Hunt; • An update to CDOT efforts to streamline its contracting processes; • Approval of the release of the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan Amendment for a 30-day comment period; and • Approval of the Congressional Notebook for presentation to the Colorado congressional delegation this month. <p>In response to a comment from Vince on a report to the TC on CDOT's attempts to streamline its contracting processes, Barbara Kirkmeyer reported that Region 4 has been told to hold off on sending contracts to CDOT Headquarters for processing because of the backlog.</p> <p>As part of his report, Vince mentioned that among the March 15-18 TC topics will be a Colorado Bridge Enterprise workshop and an update on the tunnel visioning alternatives on I-70. He suggested both as topics for next month's STAC meeting.</p>	No action taken

<p>Federal & State Legislative Update- Mickey Ferrell</p>	<p>State Update (Mickey Ferrell) – Reporting for Melissa Nelson, Mickey said all the bills that CDOT supported passed but one.</p> <p>Federal Update (Mickey Ferrell) – A serious logjam is building in Congress on the FY 2011 budgeting process and on other important matters. It’s not clear what’s going to happen with reauthorization. Based on what he heard in Washington, D.C. the previous week, Mickey said he is not optimistic about transportation reauthorization and how it will be funded. If not passed by September 2011, a transportation authorization bill is probably off the table until after the next presidential election. A very narrow window of opportunity is left. Some decisions need to be made about whether the reauthorization bill should be two years or six years. A two-year bill could at least provide a little stability until after the election. In any case, a 20 percent reduction in federal funding is looming. CDOT staff talked to the Colorado congressional delegation about the difficulty of stops and starts in federal transportation. If increased gas taxes are off the table, as the Obama Administration contends, other sources of funding (such as a container fee to pay for freight needs) need to be considered.</p> <p>The national debt and curbing federal spending are the main concerns in Congress, not transportation. The main preoccupation with those in Congress without a particular interest in transportation is to stop General Fund transfers to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Congressional committees with responsibility for transportation understand the importance of providing a stable source of funding for transportation, but currently there’s no motivation to change.</p> <p>Commissioners Trent Bushner and Jim Austin: Both commented on their attendance at the National Association of Counties conference in Washington, D.C. March 5-9. Local government representatives were able to get across the message that federal oversight of federal funding programs is “tying the hands of the locals,” Trent said. Trent said local governments need to send a message to Washington, D.C. that a stable source of funding is needed for transportation. That stable source of funding is not likely to be a gas tax increase due to the number of hybrids and electric cars on the road and federal standards that are increasing the energy efficiency of vehicles. Jim said he was</p>	<p>No action taken</p>
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	<p>unable to get an answer from anyone while in Washington, D.C. about why a gas tax increase is off the table.</p> <p>Commissioner Diane Mitsch Bush: Discussions about future transportation funding issues seem to stop with charging people on a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) basis. While technicalities of a VMT approach are being worked out, it would be well to explore a variety of funding sources, as Mickey mentioned.</p> <p>John Cater of the Colorado Division of Federal Highway Administration: In an era of little money for transportation, it may be time to streamline federal highway regulations. STAC members should comment on the regulations.</p>	
<p>2035 Statewide Transportation Plan Amendment Update – Michelle Scheuerman</p>	<p>As of March 9, CDOT staff received seven official public comments and two inquiries. So far, the comments will not require any significant changes to the document. Issues covered in the comments included: rural and urban funding disparity; equity issues between Western Slope and the Front Range; snow and ice removal costs and efficiencies; electronic passes that assist with peak period travel, such as E-470 EZ pass; a suggestion that CDOT seek ways to improve reporting performance activities to ensure tax dollars are spent effectively; use of US 285 as an alternative to I-70; and a complement that the plan amendment does an exemplary job of grasping the needs of the state. Staff is working on responses to all comments received. The deadline for commenting on the plan amendment is March 21. The amendment will go to the Transportation Commission in April for adoption.</p> <p>Vince Rogalski: Some people are confused about the difference between a plan amendment and changes in projects. One person asked, "How can we update our projects?"</p> <p>Michelle Scheuerman: The website will be updated to make it clear that an amendment is not the time to update projects.</p>	<p>No action taken</p>

<p>Draft 2012 Budget Update – Ben Stein</p>	<p>Before discussing the budget, Ben Stein asked STAC members to review federal TIP/STIP regulations to make them more streamlined and provide any comments to him. The TIP/STIP process is intended to give the public a chance to review and comment on projects and for the state and metro planning organizations to have fiscally constrained project plans. While in Washington the week of March 7-11, DOT staffers were asked to submit suggestions for regulatory changes for the next transportation authorization bill. Sandi Kohrs said staff would send a link to STAC members so they can easily access what they are supposed to review and how. Comments on planning regulations can be sent to Michelle Scheuerman.</p> <p>Jennifer Finch: STAC members can make comments individually or have their comments consolidated with those of CDOT staff.</p> <p>Ben Stein: The draft FY 2012 budget was built on assumptions that there will be no new federal revenues for transportation in the next authorization bill, funding levels will be about the same as in the past, and SAFETEA-LU formulas for various programs will remain. CDOT will have a \$14,759,861 reduction in federal revenues in FY 2012 over FY 2011. Mickey Ferrell thinks that OFMB projections on federal revenues are “slightly optimistic”. The Legislative Council and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting will have their new forecasts of state revenues on March 20. For the time being, OFMB is aware that the revenue model for FASTER safety revenues was too optimistic and that revenues are down more than expected.</p> <p>Commissioner Trent Bushner: Did OFMB factor in the price of gas in making the projections?</p> <p>Ben Stein: Although we may have problems with the HTF because of gas prices, we believe it will be a temporary political crisis. . .and oil will go back to its normal range. . .If not, we will need to incorporate the effect of gas prices in our projections.</p> <p>Commissioner Diane Mitsch Bush: What happens if we see changes in SAFETEA-LU formulas?</p>	<p>No action taken</p>
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Mickey Ferrell: If minimum guarantee funds cannot be sustained and revenues are reduced, we are going to see a downward shift. . .It's one of the key indicators we're watching.

Ben Stein: We're trying to be reasonable. . .We're mostly assuming the past is a predictor of the future. The budget is being adjusted for declines in federal funds. I'm assuming the Transportation Commission will want to make more cuts in new construction than in maintenance and that cuts will come from Regional Project Priorities (RPP) and Surface Treatment.

Vince Rogalski: RPP money levels of \$10M were maintained in the budget to give the Regions money to design projects. Does the STAC want to make any suggestions about the FY 2012 budget?

Steve Rudy: I appreciate Ben's perspective of not being too conservative with projections because when they are, Metropolitan Planning Organizations have to play catch-up in spending additional funds. . .The Transportation Commission would be wise to think about a FY 2012 budget at something like this level. The budget is a reasonable approach.

Commissioner Trent Bushner: CDOT should take the approach that many farmers do: In lean times, put off capital expenses.

Ben Stein: Much of CDOT's equipment is already run 160-170 percent past normal operating periods.

Steve Rudy: DRCOG will not ask CDOT to backfill the gap in federal funding with state funds, including metro planning.

Cliff Davidson: North Front Range MPO has a lot of carryover money due to expectations that reductions were coming and won't be affected that severely in FY 2012. What is the basis for the projection that the FTA portion of CPG will drop more than the FWHA portion?

	<p>Will Ware of OFMB: FTA funding dropped due to projected declines in the HTF and because FTA had some General Fund money in its portion of CPG.</p> <p>Jennifer Finch: Reductions in CPG [Consolidated Planning Grant] levels affect the smaller MPOs, Grand Valley and Pueblo, the most. The MPOs should mention those repercussions at the March workshop rather than wait until April, since it has been an issue in the past.</p> <p>Cliff Davidson: My biggest concern about the FY 2012 budget is the \$2.4M decrease in Surface Transportation Program – Metro funds. It will mean North Front Range MPO will have less money to give to local entities for building projects.</p> <p>Tim Harris: An analysis of how the drop in metro planning funds will affect the MPOs, particularly Pueblo Area Council of Governments, should be provided.</p> <p>Ben Stein: OFMB will provide that information.</p> <p>The Transportation Commission will have its workshop on the FY 2012 budget at its March 17 meeting, and approval of the budget will follow in April. STAC can make a recommendation on the FY 2012 budget next month.</p> <p><i>Handouts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Draft FY 2012 Budget Comparison, March 16, 2011</i> • <i>Draft FY 2012 Revenue Comparison, March 16, 2011</i> • <i>Comments for FHWA on TIP/STIP Federal Regulation Changes for Reauthorization</i> • 	
<p>Draft 2012-2017 STIP – Jamie Collins</p>	<p><i>Copies of the draft 2012-2017 STIP were distributed to STAC members just before the meeting.</i></p> <p>The STIP is current as of Feb. 28, and will be updated later. STAC members are asked not to discuss the draft STIPs with others until the Transportation Commission releases it for a 45-day public review and comment period on March 17. March 17 is when the document will be available online. The</p>	<p>Action – STAC recommended that the Transportation Commission release the draft STIP for</p>

	<p>Transportation Commission is to adopt the 2012-2017 STIP on May 19 and the STIP will become effective July 1. The STIP has been improved in several areas. The total cost of a project is given, including the actual funding during the 2008-2013 STIP years. Maps of project locations are interactive if the STIP is viewed online. A long list of "illustrative" projects for the major SAFETEA-LU programs will stay "illustrative" until and if funding sources are identified later.</p> <p>Ben Stein: I want to thank the OFMB staff, regional and DTD planners for the enormous amount of work it took to assemble the draft STIP.</p> <p><i>Motion: STAC recommends that the Transportation Commission release the draft STIP for review at its next meeting on March 17.</i></p> <p><i>Handout: The Draft FY 2012-2017 STIP</i></p>	<p>review at its next meeting on March 17</p>
<p>Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) Update – Todd Hollenbeck</p>	<p>At its Feb. 28 meeting, the TRAC worked on a purpose statement, elected a chair and vice chair, and brainstormed about early action items, decision items, and policies at its last meeting. The purpose statement for the TRAC is "To partner with DTR in developing, advising and promoting the Division's vision, policies, and priorities."</p> <p>Ann Rajewski (of the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies) is the chair and Michael Penny (of the I-70 Coalition) is the vice chair. TRAC agreed to meet regularly after the STAC meetings.</p>	<p>No action taken</p>
<p>Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) Update – Mark Imhoff</p>	<p>The DTR has been working with the TRAC on the logistics for the way the group will shape and form policies. The list of early action items that the TRAC compiled at its last meeting will be organized to present to the TRAC after the STAC meeting.</p> <p><u>Planning</u>: The Federal Railroad Administration has reviewed the interregional connectivity study work plan and CDOT will have comments back early next week. The AGS (advanced guideway system) study for the West I-70 Corridor followed this study. DTR is working to get the</p>	<p>No action taken</p>

	<p>funds obligated for the study.</p> <p><u>Grants:</u> DTR is working with Audit and Ben Stein to better manage and streamline the contracting and reimbursement processes, as well as preparing for the potential next wave of FTA competitive grants.</p> <p><u>Staffing:</u> A new grant manager will begin work April 1 and another by the middle of April.</p> <p>Pete Fraser: On the Division’s reimbursement process, is that fully staffed?</p> <p>Mark Imhoff: We’re adding a new person to the DTD Business Office to handle transit exclusively, doubling the staff that processes the reimbursement forms, which should help.</p> <p>A short discussion took place about the effects of higher gas prices on the demand for transit and alternative modes.</p> <p>Cliff Davidson: North Front Range MPO vans are filling up and new routes are being planned. Vanpooling is “very sensitive” to gas prices.</p> <p>“Pete” Fraser: We’re seeing organizations turning to publicly funded service to fill the gaps in their own programs. . .The approximate three-month delay in reimbursements, when gas prices are climbing, is affecting the ability of transit agencies to respond to higher demand.</p> <p>Diane Mitsch Bush: There’s one van in Routt County and people want more.</p> <p>Vince Rogalski: The Regional Transit Authority has one route from Gunnison to Crested Butte. It used to be free, but people are being charged \$2 a ride now, but it may go back to being free this summer.</p>	
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Other Business	<p><u>I-70 Corridor West Update:</u> Tony DeVito, Region 1 RTD, said he'll be going to the Transportation Commission next week to follow up on results of extensive recent work. One is a "hybrid" way of handling traffic at peak times being explored that would involve use of shoulder lanes and improvements to one 800-foot tunnel (but not Eisenhower). In addition, the final Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement for I-70 West is out for final review and the Record of Decision is expected in May 2011.</p> <p><u>I-70 Viaduct:</u> Reza Akhavan, Region 6 RTD, said the Swansea 27-member group is "leaning toward" sticking with the current alignment. Now the group has to decide if the highway should go to the south or north of the present alignment. Either direction will involve the removal of some structures.</p>	No action taken
	<i>The meeting ended at 11:10 a.m.</i>	