

MINUTES

PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

A meeting of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments was held on Thursday, September 27, 2012, in the Pueblo Regional Building Department's Conference Room at 830 North Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Steve Nawrocki, Chairman, at 12:16 p.m.

Chairman Nawrocki introduced Ms. Joan Armstrong, the new Interim Director of the County Planning Department and, as such, is the new Interim PACOG Manager. He stated Ms. Julie Ann Woods is now the new Director of the City Community Development Department.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Jeff Chostner
Michael Colucci
Michael Connolly
John Cordova
Sandy Daff
Nick Gradisar
Ted Lopez

Roger Lowe
Eva Montoya
Ami Nawrocki
Steve Nawrocki
Anthony Nuñez
Lewis Quigley

Those members absent were:

Leroy Garcia
Chris Kaufman

Chris Nicoll

Also present were:

Joan Armstrong
Tom Florczak
Scott Hobson
Dan Kogovsek

Jim Munch
Gilbert Ortiz
Louella Salazar
Greg Styduhar

CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Joan Armstrong, Interim PACOG Manager, reported there were six items listed on the agenda under the Consent Items. She summarized the six Consent Items for PACOG.

Chairman Nawrocki asked if there were any other additions or amendments to the Consent Items or if any of the members or audience would like any of the items removed from the Consent agenda.

Ms. Ami Nawrocki asked if the ranking of the priorities under Consent Item 5 could be explained, specifically Priority 3, the Multimodal Improvements--Goodnight/Cleveland Corridor and Elizabeth/Greenwood Corridor. She stated the Elizabeth/Greenwood Corridor

is within her City Council District and she has been asked questions from her constituents regarding the project. Ms. Armstrong requested Mr. Scott Hobson, MPO Administrator, provide the information. Mr. Hobson stated Ms. Pepper Whittlef, the City's Traffic Engineer, submitted the Goodnight/Cleveland and Elizabeth/Greenwood Corridor application. He stated all four grant applications were filed by the City of Pueblo for this 2013 round of the CDOT Enhancement Grant applications. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which is a committee, appointed by PACOG, reviewed all four of the applications and ranked and scored each of them based on a criterion which has been used by them for the last two years. This resolution is based on the scores of the ranking of TAC.

Ms. Whittlef stated this particular project works to establish bike lanes on two specific corridors. The first one is a corridor from City Park traveling along Goodnight Avenue down to Cleveland Avenue to Dutch Clark Stadium. There are some other pedestrian improvements associated with this project. The second piece of the project looks at establishing bike lanes on Elizabeth from Highway 50 south to 1st Street and on Greenwood from 1st Street all the way to 25th Street and back onto Elizabeth. This particular project also has some pedestrian improvements along the 20th Street corridor and specifically at 20th and West Street, given the relocation of a lot of the Somerlid students that are now at Freed Elementary School. Ms. Nawrocki stated her neighborhood did not understand why the two projects were lumped together. She stated she understood the sameness of the projects, but not the neighborhood affect. She stated she was also wondering when their neighborhood would have another opportunity to apply to get the project on or if there is anything which can be done in the interim to solve the traffic and speed problems on Elizabeth. Ms. Whittlef replied the reason the two projects were lumped together is because both neighborhoods wanted a project and she has the ability to use the City's traffic maintenance crews as in-kind labor and, therefore, no cash match is necessary. With the lumping of the two projects together, she could make the dollars go further with the maintenance crew and get more lane miles per bike lanes. The next Transportation Enhancement grant time will be in about two years. There are opportunities to look at smaller sized projects in each neighborhood. The problem is there isn't a funding mechanism so they would have to find that, but it is doable.

Chairman Nawrocki stated there is a very active neighborhood association, the Old Historical North Side Organization, which includes 65 active people. This neighborhood organization represents from 13th Street on the north side to 24th/29th Street and from West Street over to Santa Fe. He stated traffic and speeding have been ongoing problems on Greenwood and Elizabeth because they are one-way streets and they are looked at as being the fastest way to get to and from downtown for people coming from the north side and possibly Pueblo West. The neighborhood association has been trying to address these issues for seven years. Unfortunately, the City is in a pinch financially and cannot take action above and beyond what grants they might have. He empathized with the people in the area.

After discussion, it was moved by John Cordova, seconded by Eva Montoya, and passed unanimously to approve the six Consent Items listed below:

- Minutes of August 23, 2012 meeting;
- Treasurer's Report (Receive and file August 2012 Financial Report);

- A Resolution Amending Resolution No. 2005-018 Relating to a Quorum of the Environmental Policy Advisory Committee;
- A Resolution Amending the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Allocate \$150,000 from FY 2013 FASTER Safety Funding for the Ilex Bridge Project, and \$1,150,000 from 2013 FASTER Bridge Enterprise Funding for the Design of Replacement Bridges at I-25 and Northern Avenue and I-25 and Indiana Avenue, and Directing the Urban Transportation Planning Division to Execute Said Amendment;
- A Resolution Assigning Priorities for Fiscal Year 2012 Transportation Enhancement Program Grant Applications from the Pueblo Transportation Planning Region and Authorizing the Transmittal of These Priorities to CDOT Region 2 Officials to follow during the Selection Process for Projects; and
- A Resolution Approving Amendment No. 2 to the Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Unified Planning Work Program for the Pueblo Metropolitan Planning Organization to Include Specified Tasks and Funding Related to Additional 2013 Consolidated Planning Grant Funds.

REGULAR ITEMS:

PUBLIC HEARING ON WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

At its June 28, 2012 public hearing, the Pueblo Area Council of Governments continued the public hearing regarding the adoption of its Water Quality Management Plan to September 27, 2012. Staff is requesting this hearing be continued by PACOG to its October 25, 2012 public hearing in order to allow mediation to occur. Please note the original notice of the public hearing was published in the Pueblo Chieftain on May 26, 2012.

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE "PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS' 2012 (PACOG) WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN"

Mr. Jeff Woeber, Planner II, Pueblo County Planning and Development Department, reported the draft of the Plan was first presented to PACOG in August 2011. In October 2011, the Plan was adopted by PACOG with Pueblo West Metropolitan District as a water quality management agency. The resolution of approval contained conditions regarding Pueblo West's management agency status. Pueblo West voiced concerns regarding these conditions and asked that the vote be reconsidered. In December 2011, a revised Plan was presented to PACOG, this time with Pueblo West remaining an operating agency rather than a management agency. The Plan was approved by PACOG at that time. The Plan was then presented to the State Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) for review and scheduled for a WQCC hearing. In February 2012, the WQCC held the hearing to consider adoption of the Plan and, at the hearing, Pueblo West expressed opposition to their not being designated a management agency. The WQCC tabled the matter asking that PACOG and Pueblo West attempt to resolve the issue and then reschedule the hearing. PACOG directed staff to work with Pueblo West to see if a compromise could be reached regarding Pueblo West being designated as a management agency. The main issue is there is a policy statement for Pueblo Reservoir which states that discharges to the Reservoir should be avoided. Pueblo West is not supporting adoption of the Plan with this statement. After many meetings between PACOG staff and Pueblo West, it was recommended by the Water Quality Control Division that the matter should be resolved through formal mediation. At this

time, a mediation date has been set for October 17th with the mediator being former Division 2 Water Court Judge John Anderson, who is currently with Dispute Resolution Services. After PACOG's next meeting, staff will be presenting a status of what came out of the mediation. He doubted it would be ready to bring to PACOG for adoption at that time. Staff requests PACOG continue the public hearing to its December meeting.

Mr. Tom Florczak, PACOG attorney, stated in view of the report which Mr. Woeber gave, it would be appropriate for PACOG to entertain a motion to continue the public hearing until its December meeting.

It was moved by John Cordova, seconded by Roger Lowe, and passed unanimously to continue the public hearing on the Plan until its December meeting.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

(A) Lunch Appreciation

Chairman Nawrocki thanked the Pueblo School District No. 70 for providing lunch for today's meeting.

(B) Acknowledgements

Chairman Nawrocki acknowledged Ms. Ami Nawrocki from City Council, noting this was her first official PACOG meeting.

Chairman Nawrocki acknowledged Mr. Tom Florczak has resigned his position as the City Attorney and, as such the PACOG attorney. He thanked Mr. Florczak for all his years of service to the City and PACOG.

Mr. Munch stated Mr. Kogovsek have discussed among themselves and would like for PACOG to consider Mr. Greg Styduhar performing the legal services for PACOG upon Mr. Florczak's departure. He stated he did not know if PACOG needed a motion or whether Mr. Kogovsek and he, as Co-Executive Directors, could make the decision or recommend it. Mr. Florczak felt it was the decision of the Co-Executive Directors, but if PACOG can indicate its consent that would be appropriate.

Chairman Nawrocki asked for a consensus of the PACOG members. There was a general consensus of PACOG.

MANAGER'S REPORT

There was no Manager's Report.

PRESENTATION BY COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ON NEW PUEBLO FREEWAY

Mr. Ken Conyers stated he has been tied with the I-25 corridor for the last 25 years. He stated the team has been here since the inception of the project. He stated at PACOG's July 26th meeting, a brief presentation was done on the corridor. At that time, there were several questions about some of the components of the I-25 corridor and a workshop was

suggested at that time. He stated this will be a brief overview of how the improvements came about and answer any questions. He stated they would like this to be a dialog, and questions can be asked during the presentation. He introduced Pepper Whittlef, City Traffic Engineer, who has been involved with the corridor with the improvements and construction of the I-25/SH47/SH47 interchange; Lisa Streisfeld, CDOT Region 2's Environmental Manager, who is responsible for the Environmental Impact Statement; Joe DeHeart, the CDOT Project Manager, who is responsible for getting the project through the pre-construction phases and into the construction phases; Mary Jo Vobedja, Project Manager for the consultant firm of CH2M Hill; Kevin Shanks, Principal with the landscape architect firm of THK Associates Landscape Architects; Tom Wrona, CDOT Region 2 Director; and Karen Rowe, South Program Engineer for CDOT.

Ms. Whittlef reported the interstate system through Pueblo was built in the mid-1950s. It was initiated by President Eisenhower's Interstate Act. The whole goal of the Interstate Act was to build facilities to move our military equipment. During that particular time, there were no design standards, especially for an interstate facility. When the interstate came through Pueblo, it was a very quick process, noting the environmental process only took two years. At that time, this was viewed as a great project. It has some drawbacks such as in the Bessemer area where the interstate right-of-way backs up to a person's back porch. There are neighborhoods such as the Grove which were completely cut in half and where the two neighborhoods had interaction before, they were now separate entities. During the current environmental process, they looked to the community. Their first meeting was in November 2002. The public talked about what they loved about Pueblo and what they hated about it and what the interstate did to them when it first came through. There have been hundreds of public meetings over the years with the public, business owners, and property owners. This particular alternative is what they think the community wants based on all of the input received. During this process, they developed a community vision statement. The involvement from the public has been tremendous, and has been a model project for the Federal highway government.

Ms. Streisfeld stated the reason they are doing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is that I-25 is a Federal interstate highway and Federal money will be used for the improvements. It falls under the guidance of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which was approved by Congress in 1969. NEPA basically says you need to look at your social, economic, and natural resource impacts when you do a project with Federal money. CDOT prepared a draft EIS and a public hearing was held earlier this year. A number of alternatives were proposed including a "no action" alternative, and when they came up with the modified alternative as their preferred alignment they were using context sensitive solutions. CDOT looked at the community vision. They heard from people not to touch the Bessemer neighborhood, we want better north-south connectivity, and we want better trails and pedestrian access. CDOT feels the preferred alignment addresses those needs the best. She stated there were a number of workshops, citizens' advisory committees, and a parks working group that helped to develop the preferred alternative and the environmental mitigation, which includes improvements to Mineral Palace Park. CDOT is expecting to have the final EIS in late winter or early spring and then the record of decision following. The record of decision document will indicate the first reconstruction project to be undertaken. They anticipate as each section of the corridor begins the final design and eventual construction that they will come back to the community and work with the different entities and elected officials to look at what are the best ways to design this for the community's needs. CDOT is currently working on the design of the Ilex bridges and some

trail improvements in the area. Even though they are nearing the end of NEPA, the communication has only just begun.

Mr. Connolly asked what the timeframe on the final design and construction is. Ms. Streisfeld replied they are currently working on the final design of the Ilex bridges. The rest of I-25 will be done as funding becomes available. CDOT is also looking at initiating the design for the Northern Avenue Bridge. She stated Mr. DeHeart will go into more detail on the final design and construction and Mr. Wrona will be talking about the funding.

Ms. Whittlef stated the first thing the community had to look at was where was I-25 ultimately going to sit—does it sit in the current corridor or does it get pushed to the east or the west of the bypass? There were many alternatives considered. She stated the community wanted the interstate within its existing corridor and to figure out solutions to making the roadway better given that parameter of the existing corridor. The roadway had to widen from two lanes in each direction to three lanes in each direction, with acceleration and deceleration lanes. National standards say that within an urban area you are looking at one mile spacing of your interchanges. In Pueblo, this is a seven-mile project and there are eleven existing access points. The other big criteria which was problematic was the Federal government likes to have the access points to the interchange be full movement, which means you can get on and get off at that very point. She stated SH50/SH47 is a major design point and established the north end of the project. She asked PACOG and the audience to picture being on Highway 50 and you want to get on southbound I-25. You are trying to get into the through lanes of traffic and there is someone wanting to get off at 29th Street. This is a huge problem in this particular project because of the weave in the area. If you are going northbound I-25 and over 29th Street Bridge and there was a northbound I-25 ramp there, imagine all the traffic coming in while you are trying to get off and this would cause a conflict. The idea behind the one mile spacing is to eliminate that conflict.

Mr. DeHeart stated this leads into the SH47/SH50 interchange being the anchor point for how to measure the one-mile spacing heading south through Pueblo on the corridor. He stated the first point would be from SH47/SH50 down to the Highway 50 Bypass. He stated part of the community input was that 29th Street is a huge access point for residential and businesses. He stated keeping access there was very important. CDOT had set in motion with the SH47/SH50 project that 29th Street doesn't meet that spacing and there are acceleration/deceleration problems and weave problems. At that time, CDOT was told that 29th Street had to go away. With the construction, the community saw the northbound off-and on-ramps go away to help alleviate the weave problem, but CDOT was able to negotiate to keep the southbound entrance. CDOT now has to address the problem because it can't be kept in place. He stated 29th Street looks a little unusual, but this was the solution of being able to keep the access to it a viable point of connection on I-25 and not eliminate it. The next interchange is the Highway 50 Bypass. The preferred alternative shows it with a little different alignment, noting this is an adjustment to make sure the acceleration and deceleration lanes work correctly. He stated the drawings show the Dillon Drive extension connecting to Highway 50. He stated one of the driving factors in the EIS was mobility within the City and making it better. This would mean not getting onto the highway anytime you need to go to another part of the City. Dillon Drive could make that extra connection for those local trips and there are economic potentials which could happen. He stated there is a PowerPoint demonstration showing how to make the movement.

Ms. Kelly Fredell, a Design Engineer for CH2M Hill, offered a PowerPoint presentation on how to navigate through I-25. She stated going southbound I-25 to 29th Street, you would cross over 29th Street and exit and use what is called a "Texas u-turn movement" and come back around to 29th Street. You would exit the highway and turn left on your own lane on your own one-way road. There is no traffic signal, cross traffic, or conflict point. Chairman Nawrocki asked if there is bridge running over the freeway. Ms. Fredell replied you would go underneath the freeway. Mr. Mike Hartkop asked what the mileage of the Texas u-turn is and how long is the off-ramp to 29th Street. Ms. Fredell replied it is about ½ mile between SH50/SH47 to US50, noting it would be ½ mile from 29th Street down to US50 back up or a mile long trip. Mr. Hartkop asked if it would be at 25 miles per hour so it would take four minutes to do it. Ms. Fredell replied it would probably be signed at 40 miles per hour because it would be a one-way rail. Mr. Conyers stated this would be if you didn't take SH50/SH47. Chairman Nawrocki stated when you are heading north if all the traffic would be meeting together. Ms. Fredell replied yes. Northbound you exit to Highway 50 and continue north on the frontage road to 29th Street. Mr. Conyers noted there is a traffic signal at the ramp. Ms. Fredell stated there would be sign on the highway, which would say exit to US50 Bypass and 29th Street. The public could also get off at the Dillon extension and meet with 29th Street. Chairman Nawrocki asked if those roads will run parallel side-by-side--the one coming from the north that goes back and this one. Ms. Fredell responded it is the same road and you merge together. Chairman Nawrocki stated during Christmastime that could be a very busy road. He asked if it would be a two-lane road. Ms. Fredell replied yes.

Mr. Dan Centa asked if CDOT looked at the merge where the Texas u-turn comes in for traffic going to 29th and the traffic then coming from 50 to get onto the interstate northbound. It seems like a short distance with the peak traffic. He asked if that weave was going to create a problem, noting they would be weaving across three lanes and at the same time have a continuous u-turn and the through movement through 29th competing with that. Ms. Fredell replied the through movement would be signal controls. Mr. Centa asked if this is a free-flow right turn west to north on 50. Ms. Fredell replied yes. Ms. Vobedja added one of the reasons it is so difficult to keep the 29th Street ramps open is because the actual hourly volume is very low. When you look at the traffic that would get off going south on I-25 at 29th Street and put them in this loop, it would be a low volume. As that volume comes down and around, there is enough space between them so that the weave works. It is all one direction going northbound.

Ms. Fredell stated if you are on 29th and get on southbound you will have to go up through the intersection with 50B and continue on to catch it. She showed how it runs east and west. Chairman Nawrocki stated signage will be important.

Mr. DeHeart showed the signing plan which was developed for 29th Street and downtown. Ms. Daff asked if there would be signage provided by CDOT to different sites such as the Pueblo Mall, CSU-Pueblo, etc. Mr. DeHeart answered they still have rules they have to follow as far as signs. He stated he couldn't give a carte blanche "yes" that they would be signing everything. He stated there would directional and amenities signage.

Mr. DeHeart stated 29th Street has quite a few challenges to overcome. The first one is there should be no on- and off-ramps. The Texas u-turn was the solution that best balanced all of the needs which were presented in the area.

Mr. DeHeart stated the next big section is the downtown area from Mineral Palace down to 1st Street. There is an overriding rule on the number of interchanges which they can have and the spacing of those interchanges and not having acceleration lanes and deceleration lanes overlapping each other causing that "bleeding" problem. This created a big problem in the downtown area. This means there could only be one interchange into downtown. CDOT knows that 1st Street is important because of HARP, Pueblo Convention Center, Sangre de Cristo and Arts Center, and Union Avenue. If you go to 4th Street, it is important because it is State highway and a major east-west connector which crosses the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek. Sixth Street is the main road to the heart of the financial district. Thirteenth Street is the connector for Parkview Hospital. Each of those has an important role in how the City functions and how we serve those businesses and the development and the emergency services. He stated the draft Plan is different, but it is the balance of trying to serve all those important streets and doing it with one interchange. There were different scenarios looked at, but this split diamond is the way to offer one interchange, but there are more connections to more City streets with this configuration than what we have today. Mr. Colucci stated this is going to be a key area for signage because CDOT is covering 13 City blocks otherwise someone might wind up in Walsenburg. Ms. Whittlef stated when they first took this plan back to the downtown area that was the exact complaint—you are giving us one chance to get people off downtown. What we did was on 6th Street in both directions there is a slip ramp. This allows you to get off at the interstate into downtown at a second point. She stated she didn't know how our consultant team was able to sell that to the Federal government, but they did and they bought off on it. This helps solve this concern. You can now get off at 13th and 6th and northbound you can get off at 1st and 6th. What we are losing is one exit. She felt this provides better access than what we have today to downtown Pueblo.

Chairman Nawrocki asked what the distance between the 13th Street Exit to get onto the parallel road to downtown versus the next slip ramp is. Ms. Whittlef replied it is ¼ mile. Mr. DeHeart stated the signage will help you the entire way, noting it will be very apparent. Chairman Nawrocki stated signage is paramount to the downtown area, especially with all the work the City has put into it. Mr. Conyers felt the mileage is closer to ½ mile. Ms. Fredell showed a PowerPoint simulation on the downtown area. Northbound the highway can be exited to 1st or 4th and there is a slip ramp in the northbound direction. Chairman Nawrocki questioned if there is going to be a third lane which allows merging to the two-lane road heading off to 13th which runs parallel to the freeway and the 2nd slip ramp where you can exit. Ms. Fredell responded it will add a lane probably to the intersection at 8th Street before it drops. If you were in downtown and wanted to exit the highway, you would enter the one-way frontage road and all of the traffic from downtown would be collected and get onto the highway at the one single entrance ramp. Ms. Rowe added that Santa Fe is underneath those ST letters on the map. Ms. Whittlef stated the one-way ramp on the west side of the interstate sits in the Albany street alignment which exists today. Mr. Gradisar asked if the frontage roads will be one way--one going south and one going north. Ms. Whittlef replied yes. Mr. Gradisar asked if they would be separated by the freeway. Mr. Conyers replied yes.

Mr. Hartkop stated it looked like 1st Street was being cut off as a southbound exit because now you have to go through one traffic light onto a frontage road before going onto 1st Street. He stated 1st Street is probably the most important exit for HARP and downtown. He questioned why it has been made harder to get to it. Mr. Conyers replied when they looked at the hierarchy they would have said 4th Street would have been the only interchange we

would have had because that is a State highway that also crosses the Fountain Creek. This wasn't acceptable. They heard 1st Street was hugely important because of all the investments that the community has made. Sixth Street is the financial district, and 8th Street is another one that also crosses the Fountain. Thirteenth Street goes into Parkview and Mineral Palace. They are all important and to say that one was going to be more important than the other wasn't going to fly. This was the compromise. Mr. Hartkop stated the investment in downtown has always been to get the 1st Street corridor as the booming district. What this does is shunts all the traffic that typically gets on and off at 1st Street easy and with this plan there is a mile of frontage road and stoplights. To go northbound, it is another mile of frontage roads. Mr. Conyers replied if we ask for a vote of who wants 1st, 4th, or 13th, then we're not going to get anywhere. This is a compromise, noting you have access to all of those, but you don't have a direct access to any of them. Chairman Nawrocki stated this would mean when you are entering downtown on 1st Street heading north on the freeway you would get off at 1st Street. Mr. Conyers replied yes. He stated that would be difficult because you are asking people to make a lot of decisions in a relatively short space and at a relatively high speed, but it is critical to making this whole thing work. There was a comment from the audience I-25 would be flattening out and the vertical profile of the highway is not going to be the rollercoaster it is now and this will help the signage because you can see it for a little bit longer.

Ms. Woods asked if there was consideration given of moving that slip lane closer to 4th Street to make it more direct onto 1st Street as opposed to having to make that second decision all the way up at 8th Street. Mr. Conyers replied they looked at a number of iterations, but again it comes back to 4th Street is a State highway and it crosses the river. If there is any opportunity to come off if you are southbound and get down to 4th Street, you would be able to cross the river without having to double back somewhere.

Mr. Lopez asked if going southbound on I-25 if there is an off-ramp after 1st Street and before the Arkansas River. Mr. Conyers replied no, there is not another one after 1st Street until Ilex in the interim, but ultimately it will be at Abriendo.

Mr. Centa stated when you view the slip ramp southbound, the key is that you have a 1st Street and 4th Street sign so that southbound slip ramp looks similar to a 1st Street off-ramp today, except the signing will be 4th Street and 1st Street. Ms. Vobedja replied that is correct. She stated the slip ramps are a blessing as well as a curse. You can't have it come down right at 4th and become 4th because of the way you have to handle the operation. You won't think you're getting off for 6th Street; you'll think you're getting off for 4th and it will say 4th and 1st. The signs allow for a destination location. It is possible for the sign to say something that this is an exit for downtown or an exit for the historic district.

Mr. Hartkop stated we should look at making Main Street and other downtown streets two-way streets because what you are doing is putting traffic into one-way streets, noting the traffic flow on the downtown one-way streets is horrible. Ms. Whittlef stated the City is the process of doing a downtown pedestrian and traffic master plan. It is an overview of the entire downtown and they are looking at alternatives to change street configurations such as the cross-section of a street. They have considered changing some of the one-ways back to two-way. This project will not run through the State, noting it is a City project.

Mr. Kevin Shanks stated there were concerns about the height of the interstate. It will not be any higher than it is today. He stated the highway between 1st and 13th Streets has a lot

of curves and rollercoaster movements. The split diamond concept would straighten the road and it also horizontally takes the vertical curve out of it. He stated during the public meetings, they asked people what they liked and didn't like about Pueblo, and one of the things they liked was the views of downtown from I-25. The split diamond concept would also provide better sight lines to downtown. He stated they also did a lot of studies on what that interstate should look like from downtown and they put together aesthetic guidelines to give direction to future designers on how to consider dealing with the sight slopes, bridges, and structures through downtown so that it is visually integrated with downtown. Mr. Conyers added the interstate is not going to be any higher than what it is at 13th or 1st and at 8th where it drops down, that will be raised, noting it will be one level all the way through town.

Mr. DeHeart went over the area from 1st Street to Indiana. The interstate will take a shift in the alignment. It came about because of conversations with the railroad. Santa Fe will now take over the old I-25 alignment, noting they are going back to the original piece of the EIS and the community vision which is mobility through town. There will be a new street which can take you from Mineral Palace Park down to Indiana, noting you can make those trips within town and not have to get onto the interstate. The other thing is the connection of Abriendo to Santa Fe, which doesn't exist today. The Ilex Exit will go away and will be replaced with the Santa Fe Drive Exit. The community spoke about once the change is made there would still be problems getting out of the Eilers area and getting to downtown. This is where the Stanton Avenue extension came from.

Ms. Vobedja stated downtown was a challenge, but so was the south end of the highway. She stated not only are there interchanges which are too close, but a lot of these interchanges only go one way. One of their goals was to improve local mobility and give people access both east and west. She stated the problem was whether to have an interchange at Abriendo or Northern. These were both presented at public meetings and neither was well received because the neighborhoods are very different and separated and it would have made local trips more difficult. They began to look at making this a split diamond. If you are going southbound, you would get off at Abriendo and take the frontage road down to Northern and northbound you would get off at Northern and it can take you to Abriendo. By doing this, it allowed them to connect Santa Fe Drive which turns into Abriendo Avenue with at-grade intersections at Santa Avenue and Santa Fe Drive. She stated when they started looking at this, they struggled with the railroad. The railroad is along the steel mill and comes up and is woven through. If we have to widen I-25, we knew that we wanted to maintain the neighborhoods. Every time they started widening towards the east, they hit the railroad, which meant they had to move the railroad. When you move a railroad, they would have had to move it from about Abriendo to Northern, which is a mile north and a mile south to get the railroad aligned again, which are the railroad standards. It was then decided not to move the railroad but to move the highway to the other side of the railroad. This was not a decision that was driven by the railroad, noting they didn't tell them they couldn't be touched. In fact, for most of the time in the beginning, CDOT thought they would move the railroad and were in conversations with them. The railroad was telling them what they would have to do in order to do this. There is an amazing benefit of moving I-25 to the other side of the railroad, which is the extension of Santa Fe. The old I-25 alignment would become a local street and could provide access from Minnequa to downtown. All along they had a split diamond so you could access Abriendo, get on and off at Mesa, and get on and off at Northern. The community didn't want highway ramp traffic on Mesa. So they separated the highway so that you are on the ramps from Abriendo and you cannot get

on and off at Mesa. You can get to Northern, but not Mesa. Ms. Montoya stated another point was that seniors didn't want to get on the freeway. Ms. Vobedja agreed, noting they heard a lot of people who wanted to stay on the frontage road. She stated if you analyze the traffic on I-25 now, it was found that 75% of the traffic on I-25 are trips that are local and 25% of the trips get on the highway for less than one mile. This is not the intent of interstate highway or the intent of ramps. Ms. Whittlef stated if you lived on the St. Charles Mesa and wanted to get to Dutch Clark Stadium, you can get there by using one road.

Ms. Daff stated there are some very viable houses in the Eilers neighborhood. When I-25 on the north was modified, some houses were moved. She stated she would like the homeowners who have a strong sense of tie to their house to have the opportunity to move their homes, if possible. Mr. Conyers replied the original owner of the property has the first right of refusal and if they want they can buy it back and then relocate it. CDOT will not have any part of that other than establishing a salvage value which they can buy it back for them. If the original owner doesn't want that property, the local government has an option of being able to pick it up for low income housing or some use that the City might want to see happen. Lastly, it could be offered at auction, but chances are it would be torn down. Ms. Streisfeld stated one of the laws that CDOT follows is called the Federal Uniform and Relocation Act. Everyone is treated the same way. CDOT provides assistance to residents who are relocating. If they own the home, they look at a comparable home that is safe and sanitary. If it is a two-bedroom and two-bath house they will look and have one of their right-of-way agents assigned to that person to help them find replacement housing for two bedrooms and two baths. If they can't find two bedrooms with two baths and can find three bedrooms to meet the needs, then it usually upgraded because it has to meet the minimum equivalent. If a person is a renter, CDOT also provides rental assistance for up to 42 months of rent subsidy. If someone is renting a house at \$600 per month and the only comparable housing is \$700 per month, they get an extra \$100 a month up to 42 months to help them with those relocation costs. In addition, CDOT pays for moving expenses into the new housing. Businesses are also assisted with relocation costs. She stated one of CDOT's right-of-way agents could also meet with Ms. Daff and her constituents. Ms. Daff stated many of the homes in the area are paid off and it is their investment, and they may have credit challenges that would preclude them from purchasing another home even with the money that CDOT offered them. She asked if CDOT would be open to partnering with a local credit counseling agency to help people get their credit back on track so they can purchase houses. Mr. Conyers responded that CDOT would not get involved with credit counseling. The basic precept of the acquisition and relocation process is that the property owner gets put back in the same position that they are right now. If they own that property free and clear, then they should go into the replacement housing free and clear. Ms. Streisfeld stated if someone wants to stay in the same neighborhood, the right-of-way agents will work hard to find replacement housing for that particular resident. If that resident wants to move to a different part of the City that is an option too. The agents are trained to be really sensitive to what the homeowner needs and wants.

Ms. Debbie Rose asked how many homes are going to be relocated. A CDOT representative replied there are 117 residential full acquisitions and 0 partial acquisitions. Under commercial, there are 56 total acquisitions and 26 partial acquisitions. There are public properties CDOT will be working with too. This is the entire corridor. Ms. Streisfeld stated the EIS document provides this information. She stated CDOT is at 10-15% level of design, and is not in final design. CDOT will look at every opportunity to reduce right-of-way impacts once they get into final design.

Mr. Hobson asked if CDOT could talk about worst case scenario. Ms. Streisfeld stated CDOT is looking at the future template for the corridor. They are also looking at their construction zone and how much additional land will be needed on either side of the highway for the contractors to drive their construction trucks up and down. Mr. Hobson stated with the amount of takings you need to look at the worst case scenario so you don't get into the project and relook at the EIS. CDOT looks at what will be the most severe taking that could happen with this scenario so that you're not going back and revisiting the EIS when you get into construction. Ms. Streisfeld stated CDOT is disclosing its best guess based on this level of design and best guess on the number of properties which need to be acquired. You don't want to have to reopen NEPA and reopen the public process and reopen the plan. She stated this isn't the end of the conversation, noting they will be coming back to the City planners and engineers as they move into final design.

Ms. Daff asked of the 117 residential properties if 90 of those are in the Eilers neighborhood. The CDOT representative replied in the Eilers neighborhood there are 56 residences being acquired. The additional residences are in the Grove area.

Ms. Daff asked about the stacks at the steel mill. She felt it is important to know these stacks are an integral part of Pueblo. It would behoove CDOT to negotiate with Evraz to make sure they maintain the stacks on their property. Mr. Conyers stated that is the question--who is going to own and maintain those stacks? The steel mill doesn't want them. CDOT doesn't want to maintain them. He stated Mr. Shanks has done research on it and the stacks can be moved relatively easy. Mr. Shanks stated the stacks have to be removed because they are actually in the way. They probably would have been gone by now, but Evraz knows that CDOT is looking at trying to purchase that property and CDOT would have to look at taking the stacks out. The stacks are fire brick on the inside and there is asbestos in those bricks, but it is not friable as long as the bricks are taken down in the right manner. Once the bricks are taken out, it is just a steel skin, which is easy to take the rivets out and move it. The stacks are movable, but the question is--to where and who is going to maintain and own them. Ms. Streisfeld replied CDOT had multiple meetings with the City of Pueblo, especially with Wade Broadhead who is also on the Historic Preservation Commission, representatives of the Bessemer Historic Society, and staff from the State Historic Preservation, Colorado Preservation, Inc., and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. She stated a programmatic agreement was done, and they will be looking at historic mitigation. The relocation of the stacks was discussed. Three possible locations have been identified: (1) north end of the Rocky Mountain Steel Mill (Evraz facility); (2) relocated Benedict Park; and (3) parking lot of the Bessemer Historical Society near the old hospital. Mr. Conyers stated ownership brings with it liability. Ms. Streisfeld welcomed Ms. Daff to come and work with CDOT during that process to try and find a good spot. Ms. Daff stated there was a document sent to the Bessemer Historical Society asking for their signature on, as well as HPI. She stated ultimately the Pueblo City Council is the one who needs to take a lead on that document. The Bessemer Historical Society was hesitant to sign it and has refused to do so. She felt it needs to go City Council. Ms. Streisfeld stated she would work with City staff to bring it to the City Council.

Mr. Conyers stated 2½ years ago the City Council passed a resolution and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CDOT for this project.

Ms. Nawrocki stated it was her understanding CDOT would have to take 50' from Mineral Palace Park. In order to take 50', it looks like that would cut into the lake and get rid of the bridge. Mr. Shanks stated as part of the new Pueblo freeway, CDOT assembled a parks advisory committee which included current parks staff at the time and many of the citizens in the area. CDOT looked at different options for Mineral Palace Park. There were concerns about the noise, the band shell, and the bridge area. The interstate will not hit the band shell and bridge area and those would remain. The idea is to come back into the park and reintroduce a performance venue in order to have concerts in it again. The other thing was to reconstruct the irrigation system and plant trees, noting some are over 100 years old. These trees are starting to become a maintenance problem and to take one out would be expensive. It was suggested to put in a nursery crop of new trees in the park. These are now in the plan. This would make the park more efficient, more viable, and bring back a lot of the past uses. There was a debate whether there should be a solid noise wall along Mineral Palace Park or to leave it completely open. The resolution was to do some noise walls in combination with noise berms. It is not a consistent wall; it is a unique combination of walls and berms and landscaping. It would block sound to some key places in the park, but allows some views into the park as well. Ms. Vobedja stated this would impact the lake. There is a wall right now holding up the lake, and that wall would be impacted for about 50'. The lake will be redesigned and made bigger. It will be realigned, moved, and made bigger so that it can be cleaned and circulate itself.

Mr. Hartkop asked about accessibility to the bike trails. There is no access to the river trail system from the Mineral Palace Park neighborhood. Mr. Shanks replied there is a proposed pedestrian bridge which will be built to connect Mineral Palace Park over into the Fountain Creek Park floodplain area with a trail that will take you back to Highway 50. When the Highway 50 Bypass loop is taken out, a trail will be added towards 29th. Ms. Woods asked if there is any extension of that over the Fountain Creek to get to where the trail is. Mr. Shanks replied yes, noting it will be on the Highway 50 Bridge, which will be widened to accommodate pedestrians.

Ms. Yolanda Butler stated she lives one-half block from the Mineral Palace Park and the noise has increased. People who live in the neighborhood know it has increased greatly. She felt it would be good to have signs saying there is a historic park. Mr. Shanks stated there would be a pedestrian bridge which connects. At the time when the design of the park needs to be done, this would be a consideration on how to design the noise structures and how to design the bridge. Ms. Butler stated the neighborhood organization would really like to work with CDOT because they donate to getting new trees and sometimes they get complaints that CDOT might not like this. She stated they have been waiting a long time and a lot of trees have died. Between now and when CDOT gets around to making those plans, the neighborhood organization needs to know more or less what they can plant. Mr. Shanks stated this isn't the last meeting they will be talking about this. Mr. Conyers stated this is going to be Pueblo's park. CDOT will work with the City parks department.

Mr. DeHeart passed out a handout. The handout includes the purpose and need, the description on the features of the interstate, the community vision, a map, the Memorandum of Understanding between CDOT and the City of Pueblo, and a brochure.

Mr. Wrona reported CDOT has already secured the funding for replacement of the Ilex Bridges. They are two of the worst bridges on the State system. Once the EIS is approved, CDOT will advertise and begin construction using FASTER bridge funds. CDOT is

expecting a favorable record of decision on the EIS by March 2012, with a design build advertisement in June or July. Construction should begin by next fall or winter. The Northern Avenue Bridge project will follow the Ilex Bridges and will also be funded with FASTER dollars.

Mr. Wrona reported on a large scale, CDOT is looking at a new and better way to manage its cash flow. The proposed program will allow them to accelerate large significant projects by advancing funds from several years out. Even if there is not new funding sources, CDOT can look forward to the year 2017 when the State's Trans-Bonds will be retired. This will bring in an additional \$170 million back to CDOT for construction purposes. Mr. Conyers asked what those bonds bought. Mr. Wrona replied all the 7th Pot projects. The first one completed was the I-25/SH47/SH50 interchange. He said he saw the new Pueblo freeway as one of those significant projects, but in order for it to be considered, we have to move past this step. An approved EIS needs to be done in order to move forward and to get ourselves in position for that funding. CDOT is asking for PACOG's enthusiastic support in this effort.

Ms. Karen Rowe stated CDOT has tried to cover the highlights of the decision-making process with PACOG. CDOT would be willing to set up individual meetings with City Council and the Board of County Commissioners and go over specific concerns or issues. CDOT wants to work towards a resolution with City Council, as well as PACOG, noting they would like a resolution of support from both entities. Even with the EIS, this is the study that allows us to move on to other projects. There are phasing plans for the funding. The phasing will vary on the level of money CDOT gets. CDOT would like to work with groups with what phase of the project should be done. She stated the right-of-way acquisition has been taking two to three years to acquire the properties and to relocate. She stated we could possibly build noise walls first. CDOT would like to thank the City and County staff for working with them.

Ms. Rowe stated CDOT wants to be careful of setting up too many community meetings with just 10 people there. They want to make it cost effective. CDOT would probably ask that City Council sponsor the meeting, help them organize it, and get their constituents or interested parties to attend. One of the important points is that CDOT is not accepting comments at this time. They can listen to your concerns, but can't do anything about it because it is part of the NEPA process. CDOT will have a final EIS and it will be published. There will then be a 30-day comment period and a public hearing. During that 30-day comment period, CDOT will show how they addressed the comments from the previous draft EIS and accept comments for the final EIS. In summary, CDOT's goal was to present to PACOG how these decisions got made in the various locations by listening to the community and working with City staff. CDOT tried to come up with creative solutions. The benefits of the new Pueblo freeway are great to the City and will enhance seven miles of I-25 and will improve mobility, safety, and community access. It will more efficiently connect all portions of Pueblo and support economic investments the community has made. It will bring jobs to Pueblo one way or another. The new Pueblo freeway is the result of all citizens input and reflects the culture, history, and communities of Pueblo.

Ms. Montoya asked if the Fountain Creek amenities, such as the trail system, will be incorporated into the EIS. Mr. Shanks replied yes, as far as connecting to them. The answer is "no" as to those in the creek. He stated there will be over 10 miles of new trails with the new freeway. Mr. Hobson noted also part of the project is the redesign and

replacement of the 4th and 8th Street bridges. As part of those redesigns, there will be new bike and pedestrian access both across 4th and 8th Streets to connect to the Fountain Creek.

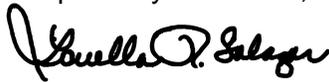
Mr. Conyers stated this project was also done in coordination with the City and the RTA. Everything with the I-25 corridor improvements will accommodate looking at expanding the River walk over towards Runyon.

Mr. Connelly asked what is the estimated construction and completion time. Mr. Conyers replied it is a \$758 million project. It will take from 15-20 years depending on the funding. Congress has not seen fit to change transportation funding in the last 20 years and CDOT hasn't done it either since 1991. He stated this is why it is being phased. There are a lot of different ways to work with the City to identify how that money is best spent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before PACOG, it was moved by Michael Connelly, seconded by Nick Gradisar, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting. It was adjourned at 2:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Louella R. Salazar
PACOG Recording Secretary

LRS