

**MINUTES  
SOUTHEAST TPR  
SECED OFFICE  
LAMAR, COLORADO  
JANUARY 24, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Chair, Stephanie Gonzales at 10:03 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Representatives attending included:

**In Person:** Stephanie Gonzales – SECED Executive Director and SE Transportation Planning Region Chair, Rick Butler (Baca County), Spike Ausmus (Baca County), Shiloh Freed (Baca County), Mike Lening (Kiowa County), Butch Robertson (Kiowa County), Ron Cook (Prowers County), Charity Markus (SETran), Cindy McCloud (KCEDF), Roger Graham (CDOT-RE Lamar), Neil Mauch (CDOT Maintenance-Lamar), Lex Nichols (Otero County Public Works), Mike Asbury (La Junta), Jeff VanMatre (CDOT R2 Maint), Lachelle Davis (CDOT Local Agency-Region 2), Geoffrey Guthrie (CDOT Region 2-Transit Liaison), Jennifer Sparks (CDOT South Program Engineer), Lindsey Jaquez (CDOT), Kathleen Collins (CDOT HQ Statewide Planning), Matt Jagow (CDOT Region 2), Ajin Hu (FHWA), Mike Duffy (Ports to Plains Alliance), Patrick Vigil (CDOT Local Engineer), Rob Frei (CDOT R2),

**Online:** Wendy Buxton-Andrade (Prowers County), Don Scanga (CDOT Local Agency-Region 2), Shane Ferguson (Region 2 Director), Jamie Grim (CDOT OPGR), Terry Hart (TC District 10), Crystal Armendariz (Local Government CDOT HQ), Justin Snyder (CDOT HQ), Robin Bardmesser (CDOT HQ), Spencer York (CDOT HQ) and Kacey Dykes (CDOT).

**ADMINISTRATIVE – MINUTES**

The minutes of October 25, 2023 were reviewed. A few corrections were noted and made – change CMOS to signal replacement, and national SOFA rodeo to snow plow rodeo. Spike made motion to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Ron. Voted on and approved.

**CHAIR / STAC REP REPORT – INFORMATIONAL**

Local Project Progress Updates

Lachelle Davis reported on the current multimodal projects that are in progress. The current projects include the Regional Bus Stops (in progress), Lamar Pedestrian Bridge (complete), Granada Sidewalks (RFP for design), Bent County Sidewalks (IGA completed and RFP being drafted), La Junta Arroyo Trail Construction (complete), Lamar Sidewalks (Draft IGA).

The following is a list of projects that are in progress, starting or getting ready to start around the region. Roger Graham and Patrick Vigil from CDOT Local Office and Jennifer Sparks CDOT R2 office reported the following:

- 21191 Resurfacing job on Hwy 207 and 266 has been completed.
- 22389 SH 96 resurfacing had a mill and fill and a failed section that has been fixed and is now in closeout.
- 23698 Concrete Panel replacement job between Springfield and Campo is completed.
- 24193 Hwy 93 Eads to Sheridan Lake is completed.
- 24198 Hwy 194 Surface Treatment by Las Animas is very near completion. Signs are on order for that project and will be back up soon.
- 20909 Main Street project in Lamar – Punchlist items to rework a few issues. Will be completed in the next few weeks.
- 21400 SH 109 Bridge repair – very close to being completed.
- 20907 Hwy 385 Realignment north of Granada – Box is installed, and back fill completed. Working on the sub-grade. Anticipated paving will occur in a few weeks. Strong possibility to include extension effort to include repair to structure K27A which is almost to SH 96 or 20 miles north on SH 385, which is already a failing structure that is only going to get worse.
- 20912 SH 50 at Swink drainage improvements project includes a box culvert and drainage work on southside of Hwy 50. Hopefully completed in March.

- 23558 Regional bridge bundle projects being replaced on Hwy 350. 5 of 9 structures are substantially completed. Working on the other 4 structures now. And hoping to have those completed as well in the spring.
- 25924 Las Animas resurfacing – Hwy 50 through Las Animas – Bids higher than expected. Hope to award – Pending / hoping to start in late March.
- 25542 SH 160 Resurfacing Kim to Pritchett – Low bidder so is in progress –March/April Start to wrap up in September.
- 24703 US 350 resurfacing project from MM 46.7 to MM 63.7 is in design and hoping to go to bid in November of this year.
- 22225 Passing lanes project – grant application is pending however was just notified that it was not awarded Infra funding.
- 25974 Southeast timber retrofit project – sister beaming – 15 structures – goes to bid next month and will be in construction this spring/summer.
- 25538 Hwy 71 – Passing Lane project Arkansas River and County Road C surveying is complete and is in design phase. Field Inspection Review (FIR) meeting tomorrow
- 25921 Two bridges over Las Animas – working through design and surveying – hoping to advertise at end of summer and start construction in the fall.

**Traffic Update:** Matt Jagow reported the following progress on traffic projects:

- 23292 Hwy 50 and 71 intersection project is completed.
- 25539 Intersection improvement in Ordway – scoping in next few months adding a couple of other areas to address in Sugar City and Grant St in La Junta to the project.
- No number to provide is a signal replacement in Lamar at Cedar Street and Maple Street. Survey and design pending with hopes to advertise in February and construction next year.

Charity Markus gave a brief update with the work of the Mobility Manager/Facilitator office. CDL school is going well. Theory and behind the wheel training is going well and being utilized each month. Our regional transit efforts have slowed a bit, but we continue to work on getting our ducks in a row to have a late spring kickoff for the service. Routes to start will be along Hwy 50 east from Las Animas

**Legislative update:**

Jamie from CDOT updated the team on the legislative process related to changes in transportation districts, mentioning that staff recommendations had been submitted to the Transportation Commission and State Legislature in November 2023.

The TC will make the final decision. Staff requested that TC, so the boundaries of the TPRs are decided as part of the Transportation Commission's rules, which are not under the purview of the state legislature. They are decided by TC. And so, what we're doing is we're opening the regulatory rulemaking process. We asked TC permission to do that in January, and they approved that. And we are in the process of filing it with the Secretary of State. So, once the rule change is filed, what we'll do is publish it on our website and then we will get ready for our rulemaking hearings.

Hearings are an opportunity for people to leave formal comments about the recommendations within the rule and the proposed changes to the rule. Our plan is to hold 2 rulemaking hearings the 1st week or 2nd week of March. To stay in line with the schedule given by the Secretary of State. We will be having 2 virtual options, one will be in the afternoon, and one will be in the evening. We're still working on what those dates are, but we will obviously let you all know when they're going to be.

Many of you have already submitted letters. Those letters are included as part of the rulemaking packet. Those are being formally submitted to the Secretary of State. So, if you have already written letters, you don't need to do so again because they are part of the exhibits. But if you would like to submit another one, obviously that's fine. We encourage you to come to the rulemaking hearings and leave a formal comment.

We are happy to talk with you all more about that, but we will let you know once they're scheduled. We should know next week when those are going to be. And then what will happen is after the rulemaking hearings, the TC will go back, and will review public comment, and then decide on whether to leave boundaries as they are, accept staff recommendations, or a 3rd option that I don't think they will do is do something completely different...but they could do that as well.

And hopefully by June we will have a decision on the rule.

### **Local Report**

Stephanie asked Mike Asbury, Lex Nichols and Neill Mauch if they had any further comments or reports for the local area projects.

Mike Asbury reported that a sister beam project had been completed on Hwy 109 between Kim and La Junta. Had great success with that. They've been pouring cracks and just regular winter maintenance, cleaning some ditches, and fighting a little snow and ice.

Lex Nichols commented that the Hwy 350 project there were a few questions but those have been answered. The Hwy 50/Hwy 71 stoplight project went well.

Neill Mauch reported on a few stats that he put together for you the region. So far this winter, they've spent \$477,000 on snow removal, (includes manpower, equipment, and materials), covering about 52,000 miles, which comes out to about \$9/mile. They've cracked for 41,500 pounds of material and spent \$49,000 (includes material manpower equipment). Mowing and weed spraying for approximately 4,000 miles over the summer was approximately 800 hours, with expenditures of \$295,000 which is about \$75. /Mile. They've done patching. Patching about 640 square yards for approximately \$155,000 worth or an average of \$200 a square yard. They have also been doing snow removal. Pouring cracks where they can, sealing roads, and keeping potholes from getting away through the winter.

Jennifer Sparks commented that they did a great job keeping people safe. Recent storms were a big effort, and locals did great dealing with the problems that road closures caused.

### **Transit Update**

Geoff Guthrie updated the group on the activities of the Bustang Outrider for routes and ridership. He pointed out that the data shows ridership is trending a little higher than the year before. It shows its on a good trajectory to continue increasing. There are preliminary conversations in Denver with the folks that run Bustang Outrider hopefully to someday supplement this service. Discussion was held regarding the location of Bustang bus stops and easement problems when a stop is located on private property.

Lindsey Jacquez asked the members to update their information for the distribution list.

Kathleen Collins gave a couple of staff updates: Brian Metzger, who used to work at the Division of Transit and Rail, is back with the Program Reporting and Transparency Office. He was leading Bustang for a brief time, and I believe that Jeff Prillwitz is now overseeing that position right now. Two new interns have been hired at the Multimodal Planning Branch, Robin Bardmesser and Spencer York.

CDOT is in the process in Kathleen's branch of hiring a full-time junior planner and a part-time strategic communications staff member. She stated that there is a requirement to be accessible with all their documents and online documents, and that person is going to help them with some of that work.

She announced Winter Bike to Work Day happening on February 9th, and HQ is having a breakfast station. She inquired if anyone around the region was doing anything to honor that day.

Stephanie asked for a contact name and more information and Kathleen indicated she'd reach out to Annelies van Vonno, who does bike and ped at CDOT, or Phil von Hake, who put out the announcement and does air quality planning for CDOT.

She gave a brief update on the last STAC meeting on January 4th. There was a lot of good conversation including Herman Stockinger's update on the fiber fee structure being passed by the TC. Also, there was a great

presentation of Planning 101 and how the statewide plan will be developed because we have so many new commissioners and on STAC. Both of those entities are getting that same presentation.

There was an asset management overview provided by the performance and asset management branch, an overview of the recently updated freight plan, Shane Ferguson, Region 2 RTD, gave a great presentation on all the major projects happening in Region 2. The STAC work plan schedule is underway. We're trying to figure out what topics that members want to bring to discuss. Feel free to tell Stephanie what you would like to hear at STAC and we can work with Stephanie to figure out what to put on the agenda that you would like to hear.

### **STIP Update**

Geoff Guthrie presented a STIP update request and gave a brief overview of the history of the Region 2 RPP Regional Priority Program funding by reviewing the 9-year plan from 2022 to 2030. He asked for approval of fiscal year 2028 to put a placeholder for \$800,000 RPP funds in fiscal year 28 the US 287 corridor to do safety improvements that are yet to be identified. It has previously been discussed. A brief discussion was held. Rick Butler made the motion to approve, and Donald Oswald seconded. It was voted on approved.

### **FWHA Presentation**

Ajin Hu, with FWHA Colorado Division Grant Program Manager presented opportunities for the region to access grant writers that are now available to the region. There is the IJJA \$2 billion initiative for infrastructure, including transportation, water, among other things.

Of the money being allocated, Colorado is going to get \$4 billion over five years. But the \$4 billion is a competitive grant.

Colorado has been doing well as far as getting competitive grants. As of today, Colorado has received about \$340 million. Colorado is doing pretty well as a State as we get about 20% of the entire nation's grant. It is doing well, but the map will show you the vast majority is north and west of Colorado.

Very few in south and east Colorado area. Ajin stressed that is why she was here to provide outreach to southeast and northeast Colorado. Not many applications are being submitted from our region, as finding resources to write grant applications, securing matching funds, and the federal government's reimbursement process is a deterrent to the region to apply. But she gave examples of awards such Denver-Washington Street who got \$14 million, Pueblo who is getting \$17 million, and Alamosa who was awarded \$4.7 million.

She explained further that several programs were available as planning grants to position communities to go after demonstration and implementation grants. Components are in place through SS4A (Safe Streets and Roads for All) and Thriving Communities to name a few. Safety action plans must be part of the design. Ajin provided a slide presentation outlining all of the sources of funding that are available. She reviewed the criteria for applying for an implementation plan, emphasizing safety analysis, publishing, endorsements, and considering all users and highlighted the importance of approval from local official bodies. The conversation concluded with the Ajin providing resources for further information and mentioning a scheduled follow-up with a funded grant navigator.

### **TC Update**

Terry Hart, the Southeast's representative on the Transportation Commission, provided an update on the recent TC meeting, which included budget discussions, a joint project with Region 2 and Region 5, an emergency bridge strike, and an overview of the asset management program and multimodal planning process. The impacts of winter storms on traffic were also acknowledged. The discussion on HB 1101 and its rule-making process was concluded with a Terry stating that a resolution is expected by June 1, 2024. Terry also discussed the fiber issue, specifically the process for negotiating the use of the right of way. Despite legal advice indicating the fee must be based on the actual value of the right of way, a simpler and cheaper process based on a fee was suggested. The TC was not mandated to make any changes but could consider proposals from interested parties. Terry expressed concern over several unresolved questions, particularly regarding the funding mechanism for local governments seeking to extend broadband fiber into unprofitable areas and the fair market value versus the actual cost to the Department of Transportation. Terry discussed the challenges and uncertainties surrounding a new process related to the fiber issue.

As for HB 1101, he expressed concerns about proposed changes in the planning areas including the potential combination of SE and SC TPR areas and the impact on representation. Terry Hart mentioned that maybe the answer is to amend the law limiting the number of TPRs and emphasized the importance of considering need over population when allocating funds. Ron Cook also raised concerns about the

impact of proposed TPR changes on funding in rural Colorado. As a member of STAC, he pointed out that the entire STAC voted to leave the boundaries alone for all three TPRS as it takes away a voice at the table for the most rural areas. He asked if this did not have any impact on the decisions being made? The group ultimately agreed on the need to continue to voice our opinions, gather more information, and ask the TC to make decisions based on the best interest of the state as a whole.

### **Administrative**

#### **Election of Chair and STAC Representatives**

Nominations and election of the Chair and STAC representatives was held. A motion was made by Mike Lening to keep Stephanie as Chair and Ron Cook as the STAC rep. Discussion followed and the final recommendation was that Ron Cook would serve as the STAC rep, Stephanie as the alternate and Stephanie as the TPR Chair. Donald seconded and motion passed.

### **Bylaws and IGAs**

Discussion was held regarding the need to adopt new bylaws as for many years, the TPR has just been operating under the IGAs that were adopted in 1993. This would allow for the creation of a Regional Planning Commission, which would fall in line with the requirements of the Statute that governs TPRs/RPCs.

Stephanie pointed out that it is sometimes very hard to get participation, so therefore, the quorum would be allocated as a 50% of the voting members, as we have a total of 32 members. In addition, it would be the majority vote of those present. The website is being updated to be able to post the minutes for public comment and to encourage public participation. She asked the board to consider the bylaws as the next steps in address our formation should there be a decision to combine the TPRs. Then at least we would have our ducks in a row. If the bylaws are approved, then we can send out the IGAs to each of the member municipalities and counties to update the current IGAs to reflect the new bylaw rules that are specific to the TPR/RPC.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held April 24, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. It will be a full slate of meetings for the day with SETran/RCC meeting at 8:30, SETPR at 10:00 a.m., SECOG at 1:00 p.m. and SECED at 2:30 p.m.

With no other business coming before the group, Spike made the motion to adjourn. Rick seconded. Motion passed at 12:04 p.m.

**\*\*Next meeting will be Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. – Noon via Zoom and In-Person\*\***