



# SOUTHWEST TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION

## Regular Meeting Agenda

Thursday, December 7, 2017, 9:00 a.m.

Carnegie Building, 1188 E 2nd Ave., Durango

- I. Introductions 9:00 a.m.
- II. Consent Agenda:
  - 1. October 5, 2017 Meeting Minutes
  - 2. Financial Report: January - October 2017
- III. Decision Agenda 9:05 a.m.
  - 1. Election of 2018 Officers – Jessica Laitsch
- IV. Reports 9:15 a.m.
  - 1. October 2017 STAC Update - Bentley Henderson
  - 2. Letters of support for the US 550/US 160 Connection Fastlane Project and the US 160 North of Towaoc Passing Lane Project – Jessica Laitsch
- V. CDOT Reports 9:30 a.m.
  - 1. Construction Update
  - 2. Development List Update for SB267 and Ballot - Kevin Cury and Matt Muraro
  - 3. US550/160 Connection Project - Mike McVaugh
- VI. Other Business 11:00 a.m.
  - 1. Transit Provider Updates
  - 2. Community Updates – Round Robin (pending available time)
- VII. Adjourn

Next meeting date: Thursday, February 1, 2018

Video/Phone Conference Info:

<https://zoom.us/j/109670693>

1-646-558-8656 (US Toll), Meeting ID: 109 670 693

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**Southwest Colorado Regional Transportation  
Planning Commission  
Thursday, October 5, 2017 - 9:00 a.m.  
Carnegie Building, 1188 E 2nd Ave., Durango**

TPR Members in Attendance:

Phil Johnson – City of Cortez  
Brad Blake – La Plata County  
Bentley Henderson – Archuleta County  
Keenan Ertel – Montezuma County  
Chris La May - Town of Bayfield (by phone)

Others in Attendance:

Sarah Dodson - City of Durango  
Peter Tregillus – SUCAP Roadrunner  
Bill Frownfelter - Russell Engineering  
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office  
David Valentinelli - Colorado Department of Transportation  
Matt Muraro – Colorado Department of Transportation  
Mike McVaugh - Colorado Department of Transportation  
Mike King - Colorado Department of Transportation (by phone)  
Jessica Laitsch – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Dylan Lucas – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m.

**I. Introductions**

**II. Accept Minutes: August 2017**

**Phil Johnson motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Bentley Henderson seconded, unanimously approved.**

**Accept Financial Report: Jan - August 2017**

**Keenan Ertel motioned to approve the financial report as presented, Phil Johnson seconded, unanimously approved.**

**III. Reports**

**1. Aug Sept 2017 STAC Updates - Bentley Henderson**

- There was discussion about the Central I-70 project, they have identified a contractor and they are anticipating revenue from toll lanes. Mike McVaugh mentioned that they are well under way and the contract must be finalized by November. There was discussion about the funding for the I-70 Viaduct project.
- CDOT is gearing up for next legislative session, there are still details to be figured out regarding SB 267.

- Applications are being accepted for the INFRA grant, which is replacing FASTLANE. Mike mentioned that funding tends to be granted to projects that are in partnership with local communities. Bentley added that the TIGER grant cycle is also open.
- There was an update on the Volkswagon settlement.
- There was discussion about possible updates to the alternative fuels program. Mike mentioned that there have been discussions about where to put in recharge stations. Mike King offered to provide an update on the status of the alternative fuels program.
- There was discussion about the budget and future revenue projections. Brad Blake mentioned the state is looking at the possibility of a ballot question for funding. Bentley noted that there is the possibility the state could be on the hook for repaying the notes out of other programs.
- In September there was an overview of how the Bridge Enterprise Fund would be split. There was discussion about the I-70 Viaduct project. Mike King mentioned that there is a project specific website that will have updates.
- There was significant discussion on the INFRA and TIGER grants, which include the Towaoc passing lanes.
- CDOT is setting the groundwork for the Statewide Transportation Plan, looking at what is most important and what will provide the greatest return.

### **III. CDOT Reports:**

#### **1. Construction Update – David Valentinelli**

- US 160 Wolf Creek Fiber Optic RAMP – Mike explained that there had been no fiber throughout the tunnels, now this connects Alamosa, and ultimately Walsenburg, to Wolf Creek.
- SH 145 Chipseal – This the Telluride side of Lizardhead Pass and has recently been completed.
- R5 Region Wide Striping, Rumble Strip – Completed.
- SH 145 Wall Failure – Replaced a wall and drainage work.
- US 491 Surface Treatment – Expected to be completed in the next few weeks.
- US 550 Cribwall Repair – Paving in completed, guardrail is being placed, expected a few weeks of work remaining.
- SH 145 Sawpit Debris Flow – This is a culvert replacement with box, currently ongoing.
- SH 84 Priority Culvert – Ongoing, recently received shipment that had been delayed 3 weeks due to the hurricane. They are working to get back on schedule.
- US 550 Durango Signal Replacement – 32<sup>nd</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> – Will go to ad in November.
- US 160 Wolf Creek Pass Phase 1 Signs – McVaugh explained that there are still spots that drivers do not understand some of the dangers on the road and they are trying to figure out how to address driver behavior. He described some of the efforts they have undertaken with building walls.
- US 491 Overlay CR S – Hopefully will go to ad later this month.
- US 160 Dry Creek Passing Lanes – This is slated to be shelved due to the US 550/160 connection moving forward. Mike elaborated that there was an opportunity to re-look at the development list, they are working to get Dry Creek shovel ready so that it will be on the development list and ready to go if funding becomes available.
- Mesa Verde Chipseal – Summer 2018.

- Dolores ADA project – Summer 2018.
- Chris asked if they have reached out to the La Plata-Archuleta Water Project. David replied that they have and are in negotiations. There was discussion about the various moving parts surrounding right-of-way acquisition. Bentley asked about the role of the TPR with respect to swapping funds. Matt described that CDOT had their projects in priority order and they had previously moved funds to Dry Creek, but the US 550/160 connection remains the top priority. The change is because there is now funding available to complete the whole project.

**2. SB 267, Development List, and US 550/160 Connection Project – Mike McVaugh**

Mike described that INFRA is the replacement for FASTLANE, it is still focused on freight movement. CDOT was able to reduce the total cost of the project to \$75 million. La Plata County applied for the grant, since CDOT had higher priorities throughout the state to apply for. He described the current status and possibilities for leveraging funding for the project. He described some the elements needed to complete this interchange, including some significant bridges. He described that they are working to find a way to accomplish as much as possible towards building four lanes to CR 302. He described how they will be applying funding previously identified for Dry Creek to this project. He mentioned that there is a new, grassroots Southwest Transportation Alliance that is working on this project and is expected to work on future transportation projects in the region.

David mentioned that they will be doing a surface overlay from Elmore's Corner to Gem Village.

Bentley asked if this has already been through NEPA. Mike replied yes. Matt added that SB 267 is a statewide pool, and this would be our equitable share for the region. Keenan asked for clarification that they have \$46 million in the project already. Mike replied that is for what has been built, and they need an additional \$99.6 million. Brad added that this does not include the \$10 million Wilson Gulch Road that connects to it. Mike replied that is true. Kennan summarized that the total project would be \$156 million, and asked what the cost would have been if it had been built as originally designed. Mike replied that the alignment changed a little which reduced the cost. Brad commended CDOT staff. Bentley asked if the group would like to send a letter in support for this project. **Phil Johnson motioned, Brad Blake seconded. CDOT will work with staff to draft a letter for the middle of November. Mike requested that if possible the letter be done by the end of October. Unanimously approved.**

**3. CDOT Road Usage Charge Pilot – Michael King**

Michael summarized that this is only for research purposes, there are currently no plans to implement this system. He explained the reasons behind exploring an option like this. Phil asked about current funding through gas taxes, disparate impacts from different vehicle types, and how the potential revenue could be impacted by having a third party supply the information. Michael replied that for most vehicles the different impact is negligible, and they have not addressed whether it would be appropriate to charge larger

freight vehicles a higher rate. Bentley asked about the anticipated next steps. Michael replied that there is not a specified timeframe, they have just been doing research. Mike added that there are still issues to be resolved such as travelling across state borders and whether revenue should be split to the owners of the infrastructure used, such as state vs counties and municipalities. Keenan asked if revenues are expected to increase under such a program versus the gas tax. Matt replied that it would depend on what level the fee was set at, and added that there could be hybrid models or a transition period. Sarah Dodson asked about tie in with transit. Michael replied that they are continuing to look at such issues. He added that they will continue to seek feedback.

## **V. Other Business**

### **1. Transit Provider Updates**

Peter Tregillus summarized the issues that SUCAP has been facing with the intercity bus route. He detailed some of the solutions they are considering to address their issues, such as managing maintenance locally, adjusting driver schedules and temporarily reducing service, and what the implications would be. Bentley asked if a reduced schedule will create challenges. Peter replied that they anticipate the greater reliability to be more important than losing planned service for a couple days a week.

Sarah reported that the City of Durango Transit will be reducing service and will be seeking feedback from citizens about how they should handle this.

### **2. Community Updates – Round Robin**

Bentley reported that Archuleta County is working on a road reconstruction from US 160 north on Pagosa Boulevard. Mike asked if the restripe project helped. Bentley replied that it did.

Keenan reported the US 491 project has been good and they are ready for the CR BB project to begin. Mike clarified that the CR BB project will be next summer.

## **VI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 7, 2017.

## Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

## Profit &amp; Loss

12/01/17

January through October 2017

Accrual Basis

	<u>Jan - Oct 17</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
CDOT Grants	
SWTPR Grant	4,149.93
Total CDOT Grants	4,149.93
Dues Revenue	
SWTPR Contributions	7,607.00
Total Dues Revenue	7,607.00
Total Income	11,756.93
Gross Profit	11,756.93
Expense	
Internet Connectivity	
Internet Connection (AT&T)	23.70
Total Internet Connectivity	23.70
Meetings	462.57
Office Equipment	38.40
Office Supplies	120.80
Professional Development	14.00
Professional Fees	
Accounting Software	43.99
Legal	14.40
Total Professional Fees	58.39
Salary and Wages	805.76
Travel	4,976.45
Total Expense	6,500.07
Net Ordinary Income	5,256.86
Net Income	<u><u>5,256.86</u></u>

# Election of 2018 Officers

To: SW Colorado Transportation Planning Region  
From: Jessica Laitsch  
Date: 30 November, 2017

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Comments: The by-laws of the SWTPR state that “the officers shall be elected by vote at a regularly scheduled TPR meeting to serve a term of one year or until their successors are elected. Their term of office shall begin upon adjournment of the regular meeting during which the election took place. Officers may be elected to successive one year terms as voted on by the representatives” and that elections shall be held at the last meeting of every year. The offices to be voted on are the Chair and Vice-chair.

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# Memo – Letters of Support

To: SW Colorado Transportation Planning Region  
From: Jessica Laitsch  
Date: 30 November 2017

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Comments: At the meeting on 5 October 2017, the SWTPR voted to send a letter of support for the US 550/160 Connection Project. Additionally, there was a request for a letter of support for the US 160 North Towaoc Passing Lane Project, which has previously been identified as a regional priority. Both these letters are attached.

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## SOUTHWEST TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION

October 17, 2017

Mr. Joshua Laipply  
Chief Engineer  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
4201 E. Arkansas Avenue, Room 262  
Denver, CO 80222

Mr. Mike McVaugh  
Region 5, Regional Transportation Director  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
3803 N. Main Avenue, Suite 306  
Durango, CO 81301

RE: Letter of Support for the US 550/US160 Connection Fastlane Project

Dear Mr. Laipply and Mr. McVaugh,

The Southwest Transportation Planning Region (SWTPR) incorporates the far Southwest region of the state of Colorado. Within this region are the counties of Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan and the municipalities of the Cities of Cortez and Durango and the Towns of Bayfield, Dolores, Dove Creek, Ignacio, Mancos, Pagosa Springs, Rico, and Silverton, as well as the two Native American reservations of the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribes. The top three industries in Southwest Colorado—agriculture, energy development, and tourism—are dependent upon a well-connected and efficient transportation system. The US 550 corridor south of Durango is a primary travel route between Colorado and New Mexico that supports the transport of goods and services into Southwest Colorado. Because of the topography in the region there are no county roads or other facilities that can handle the heavy truck traffic (13%) that supports these industries. The US 160/US 550 Connection Fastlane Project was prioritized in 2015 as the Southwest Transportation Planning Region's highest priority and the Region's #1 priority in the Project Priority Programming Process (4P) as part of the development of Colorado's Statewide Transportation Plan.

US 160 and US 550 were identified as strategic highway corridors in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program 19 years ago. There has been continued support for the needed improvements to these corridors at the state, regional, and local level. The US 160/US 550 Connection Fastlane Project would complete the connection of US 550 with US 160 at the Grandview Interchange. The opportunity this grant award poses is incredible for Southwestern Colorado transportation because it would:

- Mitigate a long standing bottleneck for commerce in and out of Southwestern Colorado along both US 160 and US 550.
- Provide direct access from US 550 to the City of Durango annexation of the Three Springs development which is an expansive growth generator for the City.
- Reconstruct the intersection of County Road 220 and US 550 to improve the safety and operation of this intersection with the addition of full turn lanes.
- Spur greater economic growth that is currently lost to Farmington, New Mexico. It is estimated that Colorado loses nearly \$47 million annually in tax revenue to the New Mexico retail market from the Southwest portion of the state. The completion of this interchange connection will help

to bring more retail and commercial development into the region and stem the need for Colorado residents to travel to New Mexico for retail goods and services.

- Address the local desire to see this connection completed after over 18 years of planning and discussion. This desire has prompted a local grass roots effort to create the Southwest Transportation Alliance, which was created to help fully fund the NEPA approved four-lane reconstruction of US 550 to the New Mexico border as well and the NEPA approved four-lane reconstruction of US 160 between Bayfield and Durango. The alliance is not only composed of several local agencies in the area, but it also includes the Southern Ute Tribe and several key business leaders from the La Plata County area.

Due to this project's overwhelming benefits, this was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the largest 2017 FASTLANE award nationally at \$12,312,886. Additionally, Region 5 will be allocating \$33 million of regional funding to the project. We understand that the Transportation Commission is considering three Senate Bill-267 (SB-267) funding options ranging from \$32.7 million to \$57.3 million. Using \$32.7 million in SB-267 funding, Region 5 would be limited to construct three lanes of the planned 4-lane facility for 1.7 miles. After closely communicating with Region 5, we strongly recommend the project be funded with \$57.3 million to construct up to 4.1 miles of 4-lane highway that connects to a previously completed 4-lane segment on US 550.

The higher value of this increased investment creates a net realized savings of \$18 million or a 137% benefit, which includes the addition of the fourth paved lane to the project. This would capitalize on the value of innovative contracting and limit impacts to the traveling public. This additional work also provides a disposal area to utilize a majority of the 1.5 million cubic yards of excavation material the project will produce, saving millions in future project costs to import earthwork required for these segments (net savings between \$6m and \$14m by combining segments). Completion of this 4.1 mile segment is critically important to the SWTPR because it will:

- Reduce projected future annual crashes per year from 34 to 7.
- Improve the operation of US 160 and US 550 at the Grandview interchange from F to A, saving freight travel time and increasing reliability.
- Increase property values with new or improved access.
- Replace existing aging infrastructure with new construction.
- Construct features to improve wildlife habitat and connectivity and reduce the potential for animal-vehicle crashes.
- Reduce maintenance expenditures on Farmington Hill.
- Support the comprehensive land use planning completed by the City of Durango, La Plata County, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.
- Support new commercial and residential development in the growing Three Springs development, which is owned and managed by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

In summary, the SWTPR strongly endorses the investment of \$57.3 million of SB-267 funds to construct up to a total of 4.1 miles of highway in the final 4-lane configuration due to the overwhelming benefits and efficiencies this project provides for Southwest Colorado.

Sincerely,



Bentley Henderson

Southwest Transportation Region Chair



## SOUTHWEST TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION

October 11, 2017

Ms. Bernadette Cuthair  
Director of Planning & Development &  
Community Services Division  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
125 Mike Wash Road  
Towaoc, CO 81334

RE: Support for the US 160 North of Towaoc Passing Lane Project

Dear Ms. Cuthair:

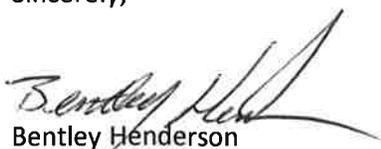
The Southwest Transportation Planning Region (SWTPR) would like to express its support for the US 160 North Towaoc Passing Lane Project. US Highway 160 is a critical transportation corridor in southwest Colorado, the sole east-west corridor in southern Colorado, and the current roadway configuration represents a safety hazard that increases the likelihood of vehicular accidents resulting in injuries, property damage and even fatalities.

The US 160 North of Towaoc Passing Lane Project is directly north of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal boundary and is the only northern highway access for this Tribe. The highway also provides essential access to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe located to the east and the Navajo Nation directly across the Colorado border in New Mexico and Utah. The Ute Mountain Indian Tribe relies on this highway corridor for economic growth and development. The Tribe benefits from tourists who visit their recreation sites, including the Four Corners Monument, Ute Mountain Casino Hotel and Resort, Sleeping Ute RV Park, Ute Mountain Pottery, the Ute Mountain Tribal Park. Materials and products are shipped on this highway to and from the Ute Mountain Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise. Additionally, the highway is the sole access for tribal members traveling north to the City of Cortez.

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe has been engaged in ongoing efforts to revitalize the Reservation and increase economic opportunities for Tribal residents. As these efforts come to fruition, drawing more visitors and economic activity on the Reservation, traffic on the roadway will increase which, unfortunately, will likely correlate to more accidents through this corridor. We believe that the proposed passing lane is critical to mitigating the dangers now and for years to come.

In summary, the SWTPR supports this important and worthwhile project.

Sincerely,



Bentley Henderson  
Southwest Transportation Region Chair