

**Utah Department of Transportation
Utah Transportation Commission
STAFF UPDATE MEETING
October 15, 2015**

The Utah Transportation Commission met with UDOT staff members for a Staff Update Meeting on October 15, 2015 at 11 a.m. at the UDOT Region Three office, located at 658 North 1500 West, Orem, Utah. In attendance were:

- Commission Members: Kent Millington, Meghan Holbrook, Wayne Barlow, Dannie McConkie, Naghi Zeenati, and Gayle McKeachnie.
- UDOT Staff and others: Carlos Braceras, Shane Marshall, Randy Park, Linda Hull, Cory Pope, Bill Lawrence, Bob Pelly, Jason Davis, Joe Walker, Elizabeth Weight, Robert Miles, Scott Jones, Kristin Hoschouer, Teri Newell, Aaron Pinkerton, Craig Hancock, Louise Zeenati, LeAnn Abegglen, Heather Barthold

Welcome and Review Agenda

Carlos Braceras welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. He announced that LeAnn Abegglen will be transitioning into a new position and Heather Barthold will replace her as the Commission Assistant. He also announced Cory Pope's retirement at the end of the year, after 27 years.

Commission Roles and Responsibilities

In response to Commissioner McKeachnie's request to review Commission responsibilities, Linda Hull gave a presentation on the historical and statutory background on Commission roles and duties, and opened the discussion of where to go from here. Her presentation and discussion included information on Commission and Department roles and the evolution of the Commission roles and assignments in statute. She also discussed programming requirements and influential factors, and how and why the Department and Commission are moving more toward a programmatic funding approach. Lastly, Linda gave an overview of programmatic and project level actions and year-round programming decisions.

The Commission used to be involved in the day-to-day operations of running a system, but the roles shifted in the 90s. Now, the biggest role for the Commission is to determine the priorities and funding levels for projects. Other duties include providing hearings and opportunities for public input, establishing policies, advising Department in policies, approving settlement agreements, serving on board of trustees for public transit district, reviewing long range and short term transit plans and Department administrative rules. Other roles discussed include corridor preservation, land use development and management act, establishment of tollways, toll rate establishment and development agreements and the designation of airports and regional significance.

A handout listing Transportation Commission Committee assignments was passed out to the group. Though there are many board assignments made through agreements with MPOs, only three assignments are in statute, which are: Community Impact Board, Corridor Preservation Advisory Committee, and the UTA Board of Trustees.

Commissioner McKeachnie asked how we advise the governor, and Carlos answered that we do it through our budget process, by making recommendations and talking about the conditions of our roads at appropriations and interim committee meetings. Much of this information is in the strategic plan the Department shows the Commission.

It was discovered that the Commission's year-round programming decisions are written in UDOT policy when they should perhaps belong in a Commission policy instead. When the Commission makes a decision, UDOT carries out that decision, but nothing has ever been written down or established. An official Commission policy on how to handle these decisions should be established and a discussion

about whether to modify or change how the decisions are handled should be made. Going forward, Carlos said the Department is open to any changes and hopes to have a good, open dialogue about what the right way to operate is. He said, at the end of the day, he'd like to be able to say, with this investment, this is the outcome we expect. Commissioner McKeachnie voiced his thoughts on political, policy and management decisions. He said what the Commission is doing doesn't fit into a neat box consistent with political or management philosophies. Carlos responded that there are not a lot of politics in pavement projects, but capacity and chokepoint projects have a lot of politics, and those projects will always stay as a Commission responsibility.

Commissioner McKeachnie said a computer will tell us where to get the most bang for the buck, but politically that may not be an acceptable decision; that maybe there is a public reason that would override what the computer analysis says to do. Carlos explained that UDOT doesn't have a computer making the decisions; decisions are being made by the Regions. The system generates a priority list, and the Regions use that analyzed data and information in their ongoing discussion to help them make the right decisions Regions are making the decisions. Shane Marshall mentioned how the format of the next Commission Workshop will be changed so the programmatic actions will be talked about in March, leaving April open to talk about the big projects and get into the weeds to make the key human decisions against the data; sometimes there are economic components the data doesn't capture.

Pioneer Crossing Budget Update

Teri Newell gave an update on Pioneer Crossing's three remaining condemnations as a heads up in case action from the Commission needs to be requested in the future.

One condemnation received a ruling for 3.6 million dollars, when the appraisal deposit was only \$240,000. The project will appeal, and can currently cover under \$500,000, but they may be coming back and asking for more money after the two remaining condemnations go to court.

Safety Analysis Presentation

Robert Miles introduced Scott Jones and Kristen Hoschouer.

Shane reminded the group that we show fatality numbers each month, and in September's meeting, the group discussed going deeper into the numbers during staff update and staying higher level in Commission meeting.

Robert's presentation began with a discussion on current national cost values for different types of injuries, compared with the current cost values used in Utah. With FHWA's permission, UDOT has made modifications to normalize fatal and serious injury crash costs to keep from chasing after fatalities. The dollar figure for fatal crashes is so big that the benefit cost analysis would always chose projects with one fatality associated with them. UDOT can make a bigger difference in the system by looking at both categories together.

Robert explained that there are two ways to look at crash data to answer general questions about safety: Crash History (Reactive) and Systemic (Proactive). UDOT believes that using the two approaches together will bring the best possible outcome. He told the group he'd be discussing the reactive approach today, and will explain the proactive approach at the next meeting.

Scott Jones walked the group through the new crash data tool, and explained how Regions can use it to analyze safety concerns to help them determine what features can be added to projects to address those concerns. He showed the group how the tool is interactive and intuitive, and showed how data can be filtered by crash severity, time of day, year, county, route, city, Region, etc. The data in this tool goes back about five years and includes all crashes, basically anything that has a police report on it. If someone only wants to see serious injuries and fatalities, they can use the filters.

Scott will be sending an email to the Commissioners so they can set up an account to access this data whenever they'd like. Eventually this tool will be made available to the public.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Heather Barthold

Heather Barthold, Commission Assistant