

# CRV REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## Regional Planning Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2024; 5:00 – 7:00pm Gulkana Fuel Pilot Lounge

- I. Call to Order by Bruce Cain at 5:04pm
  - a. RPO Members Present: Bruce Cain - CV Chamber of Commerce; Joe Bovee – Ahtna; Judy Chapman – DOT&PF&PF; Jim Horell (alternate) – CVDA; Martin Boniek - Copper Valley Air; Brett Nelson – DOT&PF&PF; Jennifer Rosenthal – CVDA (non-voting); Asa Brewi – CVDA (non-voting);
  - b. RPO Members Absent: Gary Schliesing – Glenn Transport/Gulkana Fuel; Jerry Lesemann – Crowley;
  - c. Guests: Meg Jensen – Community Member; Nathan Helmer – GA Chamber; John Becker – GA Chamber; Mike McQueen – Community Member; James Fields – The HUB; Carl Heim – DOT&PF&PF; Christiane Newton – DOT&PF&PF; Jeremy Weld – GA Chamber; Brett Nelson – DOT&PF&PF; Victoria Rego – Community Member.
- II. Invocation: Nate Helmer
- III. ***Motion to approve the Agenda by Martin Boniek, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Judy Chapman, motion passed***
- IV. ***Motion to approve the 12.6.23 Meeting Minutes by Jim Horell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Martin Boniek, motion passed.***
- V. Chairs Report: The Chairs report summarized recent work completed. Some of the highlights; the RPO submitted comments for the McCarthy Road PEL Study, and a report submitted by Robert Behrends, for the long lake relocation at mile 44 – 48.5, and a letter from Commissioner Anderson thanking the RPO for their comments and participation. An initial list of projects or strategic plans was created, and some comments were sent to Bruce. The RPO should look for funding opportunities that support the work and planning of the CRV-RPO. The RPO will provide an annual report at the CVDA Annual meeting on February 28th, and a replacement for the CVDA RPO seat is on the agenda. Bruce Thanked everyone for showing up and participating.
- VI. Grant Finance Report: Jen provided a report for the current fiscal year (7/1/23 – 6/30/24) monies spent as of 1/31/24. The Annual Budget for is \$30K, actual spent \$14K, remaining balance \$16K. The report also included work completed by the CRV-RPO to date. Bruce requested that the financial report for the next meeting include the accounting from the onset of the grant, 8/2022.
- VII. Discussion:
  - a. Wayside Update: Carl Heim introduced Christiane Newton, the designer on the Wayside, she presented and described the preliminary plan for the DOT&PF proposed wayside at the intersection of the Glenn and Richardson Highways, in the DOT&PF RoW. The design has two double vaulted toilets with 4 stalls, each vault has 1000-gallon capacity. The design is constrained by utilities and the GA Chamber of Commerce Cabin that exist in the RoW, the design also includes garbage cans, rock bollards, picnic tables and parking stalls in front of the vaulted toilets. An example of the vaults installed at The Gulkana Boat Launch Vaults were presented as an example of what the facility would look like. Discussion Followed: James Fields, owner of the HUB. James previously expressed his concerns to the commissioner and proposed that he and Carl meet to discuss. The flow of vehicular traffic with pedestrian traffic is still a big concern, he propose an additional wayside be placed on privately owned property between the HUB and the Visitors Center and acknowledged that it is not DOT&PF&PF policy to build on land they do not own. He noted that the layout presented makes more sense than the previous and he is essentially ok with this best-case scenario. Question: What is the maintenance schedule? DOT&PF: Maintenance will be performed by the Tazlina District Maintenance and Operation Facility; they recommend pumping 2- 4 times per year and cleaning the facility 2x per week in the summer. Question: What about the winter? DOT&PF: DOT&PF waysides are typically closed during the winter, but they are considering keeping this open year round, further discussion is required. James Fields will provide gallationage

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numbers to DOT&PF&PF and the pump scheduled for the existing porta potty's during previous summer months. Question: Will the flagpole and signage stay where they are? DOT&PF: We would like to move these as they are encroaching on the right of way. The HUB may be able to get a permanent encroachment permit for those items including the cabin. Further discussion/research is needed on this. Question: Will the Wayside be impacted by future construction projects planned by the DOT&PF&PF? DOT&PF: Any new projects coming up in the next 10 years would not affect the Wayside in its current location, it was noted that there is enough room to add a turning lane and keep the wayside where is. John Becker: Noted the Chamber owns the cabin, and prefers to keep it in its current location, improvements to the Cabin are on the Chambers agenda for this year. DOT&PF noted they do not want to take on the maintenance responsibility and would prefer to move the Cabin out of the DOT&PF RoW if possible. Further discussion is required with the HUB, The Chamber, and the DOT&PF. Martin B: Reiterated what he expressed at the last meeting; the proposed location is poorly placed and is a safety hazard, the location should be reconsidered. Look at other land, private landowners, purchase property for this. What is DOT&PF doing to mitigate the safety/pedestrian issues? Bruce Cain: the CRV-RPO is not taking an official position on this and encourages the group and DOT&PF to continue the conversation around this project before construction begins. Jeremy Weld: DOT&PF has a terrible track record of maintenance of its facilities, why wouldn't DOT&PF hook into the sewer than rely on pumping? DOT&PF doesn't understand the volume of traffic going through the HUB and using the facilities. Required maintenance should be more than 2x per week. Bruce Suggested a look at traffic counters to better understand the volume moving through this area during its peak months.

- b. Long Range Transportation Plan: Bruce B: clarified, no working groups were formed but rather the committee decided to have people who were interested in specific topics work on those areas and report back to the group at each meeting. Due to the ambitious list of topics, Jen: suggested picking one or two topics for each meeting to discuss so the work is more manageable. Meg Jensen: Spoke about the need to develop a comprehensive region wide multi use trail system for regional residents as well as an attraction for tourists. Suggested to start small, there are people and organizations willing to help, BLM offered support, the Chamber wants to provide info on hikes and trails at the visitors' center. Meg is willing to help if the committee thinks this is a worthwhile endeavor and would like the support of the RPO. Discussion Followed: Jim H: There are a large number of bears in this area, and visitors would need to be made aware of the danger, choose areas for trails where there is less danger and provide adequate safety information on trail signage. Question: Whose land would this be built upon? It was noted by the group that land ownership needs to be identified. The access through private land is on section line, the problem with it is poorly marked and almost impossible to follow because of our swamps and rough terrain. How could this be made easier? Some areas are better for winter trails and some better for summer trails, Bruce B: Is their support for this? Waysides for parking at trail heads would be necessary. Areas to look at, river trails, pipeline trails, locations that are high and dry. Jen R: Suggested reaching out to other organizations in the region such as WISE, Wellwood Center, NPS etc. for information. Martin B: Focus on public lands with road access that have a destination. Land ownership would be a good place to start. Brett N: Identify where pedestrian paths along existing road corridors would work, waysides at trail heads with parking facility are necessary. Park/State or Federal Land would be the easiest place to start. There is a Federal Lands Access program to connect people into federal lands. Identify the needs and interests and then look at grant opportunities. Next steps work on ideas and land ownership and report back to the group at the next RPO meeting
- c. Bruce B asked if anyone wants to volunteer to work on mapping. Martin has a map with much of this area, the map should be drawn on, and color coded to identify the ownership of roads, State, Federal Private, Roads to start. Jen, volunteered to help with mapping.

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- d. RPO Planning Grant Update; The Denali Commission Federal Co-Chair resigned in December and left on December 31, 2023 without signing off on the RPO Planning Grant. Until they place an interim or permanent co-chair the money will not be released, and no planning work can be started. The CVDA has reached out to the Denali Commission, our state representatives as well as those in DC any anyone who could help move this forward with not much luck. She will keep the group updated.
- e. Website: Jen is working with Michael Baker & Associates to update the indexing on the website, so we come up in searches, track analytics, and in the future SEO optimization. No action is needed; the DOT&PF is providing this resource for CRV-RPO.
- f. Bruce B. Thanked everyone for coming and noted the meeting attendance is growing and there is a need to find a larger facility to accommodate the increase in attendance. Martin B volunteered Copper Valley Air facilities if the RPO can use this, Bruce will report back. Bruce will put a budget together for meeting tools, once that is done Jen will look at purchasing what is needed. Bruce asked the group to look at other potential facilities in the Glennallen area. Several attendees thanked everyone for participating.

VIII. ***Motion to adjourn by Martin Boniek, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Horell, motion passed***

IX. Next Meeting April 3, 2024, location to be confirmed.