

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES**

**REAP Business Meeting**

March 10, 2022

12:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID# 615-031-3051

The monthly meeting of the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chairman Kirk Holwell.

**The following Board Members were present:**

Jeff Baker	Ivy Craig	Loretta Daniel	Kirk Holwell
Kevin Hougren	Gary May	Glenn Rotkovich	Tom Turrell
Becky Zierer			

**Guests attending were:**

Angelia	Baker	Tri-County Health Dept.
Brad	Bauer	Consulting
Kip	Cheroutes	Reap
Marilyn	Cross	CDOT
Kendra	Davis	Arapahoe County
Julie	Drummond	I-70 Communities that Care
Matt	Elvehjem	High Plains Bank
Nichole	Harrell	I-70 Communities that Care
Steve	Hebert	Bennett
Gabriela	Isturiz	Rep. Weissmann's Office
Jim	Katzer	Arapahoe County
Janet	Lindquist	Adams County
Kathy	Mahan	Reap
Jeff	Prillwitz	CDOT
Justin	Reyher	Beacon Realty

Gretchen	Ricehill	Arapahoe County
Ferinand	Rouse	Adams County
Ethan	Rouse	Adams County
Gizelle	Rowe	I-70 CoCC
Jan	Rowe	CDOT
Kathy	Smiley	I-70 Scout
Andrea	Suhaka	Transportation Solutions
Libby	Tart	Adams County
Steven	Vetter	I-70 Scout
Lynette	White	Bennett

**Approval of February 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

Minutes were approved as submitted.

**Chairman Report:**

**Executive Director Report:**

Last fall Kip spotted in the CDOT 10-year transportation plan a commitment of transit money for a line from Limon to Denver bus service and shortly thereafter he met Andrea Suhaka. Andrea has been working on the advocacy for this plan. Kip met the guest speaker at an eastern plains CDOT. The money for this cause is a little over a \$1 million dollars committed by CDOT for this service. Kip mentioned the survey out for transportation services in the I-70 Corridor. The survey was advertised in the I-70 Scout.

**Guest Speaker – Jeff Prillwitz – CDOT Bustang Coordinator**

The Colorado Transportation’s first transit service was launched July 13<sup>th</sup> 2015. It included Denver to Colorado Springs, Fort Collins to Denver, Glenwood to Denver and recently Denver to Grand Junction. The ridership has burst from expectations, extra trips have been added. Some of the routes are up above pre COVID. Jeff showed pictures of the buses currently being used, the bus that would be servicing the Limon to Denver route would be a smaller bus. CDOT administered the FTA 5311 this is Transit Administration Funds, and it can only be used for rural and intercity bus services and not improvement to roads. This funding is Federally paid for, CDOT provides a State-owned fleet state of the art buses. CDOT has inspectors to keep up the buses to a very high standard. Stakeholder support is important and that’s why you don’t see a route that reached beyond Limon. Kit Carson is very adamant; they want no transit to Denver. An email was recently received from Kit Carson County demanding they

do not put an Outrider route out there. The data gathered for analysis consists of percentages of minorities, people below the poverty lines and households without access to vehicles. Each factor was rated from low, medium and high to determine the CDOT transportation region and transportation planning region for each route. CDOT has found that it is a variety of people that use these buses. The consultants work the ridership to predict what the ridership would be in each area. They predicted 15% was general population, 15% employment and 35% were disadvantaged populations i.e., senior, below poverty line and disabled. 35% were households without vehicle access. The predictions were very close to conditions on the Outrider routes. Limon to Colorado Springs are showing a potential of 20,000 annual ridership and going to Denver would meet that if not more. CDOT meets with transportation planning regions, local stakeholders to see if there is a desire to have our service. When CDOT puts in a route and they work closely with the local communities with the routing and stop locations. For this route they would start off with a cutaway bus until ridership builds. CDL license holders are in very short supply. CDOT works with local organizations to run the routes. The first choice is locals and non-profits, occasionally they have to put out a request for proposal.

**Andrea Suhaka:** Andrea runs Transportation Solutions Arapahoe County, who is a non-profit. This all started with seniors in Byers begging for a way to get into Denver. A lot of seniors don't drive and they live out on the plains. They zone in on seniors and disabled. The whole point with this route is to get support for this Bustang route. I have been sending out the word to everyone I could find to fill out the survey and send out your ideas to Mr. Prillwitz so he can see that there is support for this.

**Kip Cheroutes:** Mr. Prillwitz you will see a support letter from Reap in strong support for this bus route with this survey as an attachment that demonstrates a stakeholder interest. The survey shows enough support that this initiative should be advocated for and planning by both Counties as to how this would work. The Corridor is growing with high density housing as seen in Bennett, Strasburg and Deer Trail. This survey serves the population as it currently exists along the Corridor but doesn't take into account the future demographics for the future Corridor. Reap needs to take a stand on the future with this and help with resources that will get this initiative moving.

**Jeff Baker:** The Board of County Commissioners have completed a letter of support for the Bustang Outrider service. I know of at least one business that does some senior transport into the Denver University Hospital and I think that is pretty specialized and I don't see it impacting those businesses. I was concerned about that and had a couple of people bring that up to me, we don't want to hurt any small businesses currently in the transportation business.

**Kip Cheroutes:** Jeff who actually runs these businesses?

**Jeff Prillwitz:** We have grants and the FTA so we have no concerns with funding there. We look at local non-profits first and I know of a local non-profit that is interested in this route already. For private businesses we do not want to compete with them. We provide the buses and they have to lease the bus

for \$1 a year, it's the same lease RTD has with their private contractors. We do expect contractors do marketing and it is all reimbursable through a grant, they know the areas better than us. We generally have some outreach meetings that discuss the stops and schedules, and any concerns towns could have. We haven't installed bus shelters yet, but we will be, we are just going through the process.

**Kip Cheroutes:** The hope for this meeting today is to show you there is enough community support and advocacy to push this forward with the community to discover destination, scheduling, stops and implementation.

### **Development Updates:**

Kip reported on a couple of developments for Reap that we are working on. We are excited to announce that April 29<sup>th</sup>, Reap was able to arrange to have 28 kids from Byers High School to take a field trip to Denver International Airport for job and career awareness. The airport is looking to the future, what it will look like and who is going to work there. The airport is eager to arrange trips for these high school kids. The airport is providing shuttle service to take these kids to the airport for a day of tours and talks about career and job opportunities. Everyone will be cleared by security to go out onto the tarmac to see operations up close. The principal and counselor are extremely grateful that Reap has jumped in to make the connection. We will also start making the connections with other schools in the Corridor. We think this is a replica model to get kids to the airport or to any other job center. Core Electrical Coop has a shop in Bennett, and they are eager to host high school kids for job and awareness opportunities. #2 I will get Reap involved in the electrical vehicle charging stations. The State of Colorado has a revenue stream to determine where electrical vehicle charging stations should go around the State. Reap will be making the case for recharging stations to the furthest east as possible in our territory. CDOT, the Colorado Energy Office and Colorado Department of Health are all in on this. Reap is about to make formal contact with all three agencies for no other reason but to let them know eastern Colorado needs to be in on this game.

### **Other Business:**

Kip announced the topic for the April meeting. Mark Harding will help us understand how you accomplish economic development in a water constrained environment.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.