

CASPER AREA STIP NOTES

Discussion on the overall amount of federal funding WYDOT receives compared to state funding and where Wyoming ranks in terms of the federal to state funding ratio. Wyoming does rely heavily upon federal funding for highway projects but where the state ranks was unknown.

State Rep. Tom Walters asked about delayed projects and if the amounts of those projects was the same as the amount of money WYDOT shows as being "short." The shortfall amount includes more than roads and bridges, it includes equipment, staff, buildings and all of the other services WYDOT provides.

There was a question whether the total WYDOT funding slide was spread evenly throughout the five districts. District Engineer Mark Ayen explained WYDOT tends to spend a certain percentage on bridges, interstates and for other roads and uses and depending on a district's needs, plus factoring in Interstate 80's multiplier, funding for the districts is not always equal.

Question on whether WYDOT ever receives feedback or praise if a job is completed ahead of schedule. That's not typical, rather we tend to hear about projects that are delayed or behind schedule. Ayen said the department is beginning to increase its recognition of projects that are completed ahead of schedule and that the department does build in incentives to encourage on-time project completion.

There was a question on a portion of the current Poplar Street (WYO 220) project between Collins Street and the North Platte River bridge, specifically \$750,000 marked as community development. That amount is likely for enhancement projects tied to the overall job, Ayen explained.

Greg Pope asked about the overall four lane initiative and whether WYO 220 would become a four-lane highway. Ayen said that ultimately the issue is with funding and the department has moved toward pavement preservation rather than increasing capacity over the past few years. He said that expanding WYO 220 to four lanes would involve more than new pavement, it would also involve more personnel to maintain the highway, from repairs to snow removal; along with more equipment to do the work. Pope and Walters said there is a noticeable increase in truck traffic, asserting the amount has tripled over the past several years.

It was asked how WYDOT, if it were to expand WYO 220 to four lanes, could do so through the area just southwest of Casper known locally as "The Narrows." This area runs near the North Platte River. Ayen said that this was taken into consideration years ago when WYDOT used concrete piers to stabilize the area several years ago and that they could expand the highway to four lanes.

Discussion on fencing and who maintains highway fences. WYDOT maintains its fences. When fences are replaced, Ayen said, WYDOT speaks with the affected landowner and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department about the type of fence to be used.

Comment on WYO 220 near Goose Egg and that the area has seen increased geologic movement. Ayen said WYDOT's geology department is aware and keeping an eye on the area.

CONVERSE COUNTY STIP PRESENTATION NOTES

Commissioner Jim Willox: Comment on how WYDOT has improved its employment situation and feels that the Douglas shop is better staffed now than a couple years ago.

Commissioner Mike Coling: Can the state and drivers save any money by issuing only one license plate as Wyoming only requires one plate.

- This has been discussed but in order to make any comment, would need to understand the state statute.

Overall discussion on buildings. There may be more emphasis placed on WYDOT facilities and buildings in the future due to the number of aging existing buildings used by the department. There was a comment on how older indoor garages are not large enough to handle today's larger equipment.

Commissioner Willox: Was there any discussion in Niobrara County concerning the sand trucks (no). Though the increase in truck traffic was mentioned during the Goshen County Commission meeting.

General discussion of the importance of road use agreements, in light of a solar farm proposal in Goshen County.

Commissioner Rick Grant asked about WYO 90 and concern that trucks will damage the road. Mark Williams said the project in question is being monitored and that any damage will be addressed.

Proposed Glenrock solar farm is in industrial siting review currently though hearings may not occur until November 2024.

Commissioner Coling asked about adding snow fence along areas of Cole Creek Road. If WYDOT were to allow snow fencing, it would be temporary fencing as there's a process for permanent fencing but it would be looked into.

Discussion of the 2027 scheduled replacement of the bridge on U.S. 20/26/87 (East Birch Street) over Boxelder Creek. The project calls for wider walkways to allow for pedestrian traffic.

Upcoming Converse County road and bridge projects were discussed including reconstruction of portions of Jenne Trail, 55 Ranch, Chalk Butte and 20 Mile roads. Lost Springs is seeing some activities, primarily truck traffic too/from nearby water pits.

Glenrock Mayor Bruce Roumell noted that within the next two years the town of Glenrock will update electrical systems to its wells with may include new transmission lines and some bore drilling underneath roads/highways.

GOSHEN COUNTY STIP PRESENTATION NOTES

Commissioners asked about the emergency highway situation in Teton County and how it may impact other projects and future planning.

- Because this was declared an emergency, the federal monies came in to help offset the detour. District Engineer Mark Ayen said that delays of other projects can happen when emergencies arise, depending upon WYDOT's share of the cost and the amount of federal money received.

Commissioner Justin Burkhart asked about accounting for inflation and other increases in project costs.

- A committee exists (WYDOT Inflation Committee) that deals specifically with inflation and can project up to 6-7 years into the future.

Commissioner Burkhart asked if there have been any EV charging stations built since the NEVI program began. Ayen explained the NEVI plan is being updated but there has not been much activity.

Commission Chair Aaron Walsh commented on the importance of meetings such as the yearly STIP presentation to the Commissioners, stating he feels it shows that the State is dealing with many of the same issues as counties or city governments and that everyone is feeling the strain of lack of funds.

Walsh added the greatest concern for Goshen County was the area of U.S. 85 near WYO 154 (Yoder intersection). The commissioners agreed truck traffic has increased in the area making the intersection less safe.

PLATTE COUNTY STIP PRESENTATION NOTES

Commissioner Ian Jolovich asked about this year's WYO 320 overlay project and whether it involves new pavement or recycled pavement. The overlay project involves removing any patches and 1 inch of the surface prior to laying the new surface – with new asphalt.

Commissioners Jolovich and Kayla Mantle commented on how the interests of the railroads seem to trump the wishes/wants of the local government agencies, specifically regarding a railroad a 2027 project on the I-25 Chugwater south service road railroad overpass. How this project will take shape is still being discussed. WYDOT would like to do an at-grade crossing at the railroad tracks. Discussion of options is ongoing.

Commissioner Mantle asked if the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) chooses which projects WYDOT can use federal funding for. District Engineer Mark Ayen described the use of federal funding as similar to grant funding whereby there are criteria on what roads funds can be used on but WYDOT ultimately selects the projects which are approved by the FHWA.

Upcoming projects in Platte County: Commissioner Jolovich said the meat packing plant that was proposed in the Dwyer area has stalled. There is a planned rare earth mineral mine that would be located near WYO 34 in Albany County. If this mine needs an entrance onto WYO 34, the company would need to file a request with the state's Industrial Siting Committee.

He also stated that WYO 34 in general has seen an increase in the amount of traffic recently.

NATRONA COUNTY STIP NOTES

Discussion on changing (reducing) speed limits on state highways. Commissioner James Milne specifically referred to the area on WYO 257 near Robertson Road in Mills. It was explained there would need to be a study performed to justify lowering the speed limit and there are statutes in place that govern speed limits. That area is within Mills and the town may have some say in the speed limit. Commissioner Milne asked if he could make a formal request to begin the study in hopes to reduce the speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph at Robertson Road.

Commissioner Dallas Laird was concerned about an increase in semi traffic along WYO 220 especially in the area of Coates Road, southwest of Casper, where a gravel quarry operation is being proposed. District Engineer Mark Ayen said that if the proposal comes to fruition, WYDOT would certainly watch that area for increases in traffic impact. If the traffic volume was large enough it could warrant acceleration/deceleration lanes at Coates Road. However, WYDOT does not regulate truck traffic onto highways.

Commissioner David North asked when the current reconstruction project on WYO 220 (Poplar Street) between Collins Street and the North Platte River bridge would be completed. Though the project does not have a completion date until late 2025, the contractor is hoping to be substantially finished sometime this winter. Commissioner North asked about the completion dates for the other two large Casper projects. The intersection of CY Avenue and Wyoming Boulevard is nearing completion and the Interstate 24 five bridges reconstruction project has crossed the halfway point and will be completed by October 2025.

Discussion then focused on future projects. It was asked if the final section of Poplar Street (between Collins Street and CY Avenue set for 2026 would include widening of the street. It will not as there is no room or right-of-way for street widening.

Commissioner Peter Nicolaysen asked about WYO 253 (Hat Six Road) and if in future years it will include wider shoulders. Ayen explained Casper crews are doing some shoulder widening as part of ongoing training but there won't be any shoulder widening beyond that. Commissioner Nicolaysen asked if asphalt pavement lasted as long as concrete. Developments in technology is closing the gap with regards to pavement longevity.

Casper Mayor Steve Cathey asked about replacing the WYO 220 (Poplar Street) bridge over the North Platte River. That project is on hold due to costs and design.

Niobrara County Commission STIP Presentation Notes

Discussion on dynamic message signs along U.S. 85. Niobrara County Sheriff Randy Starkey asked about installing a northbound sign on U.S. 85. Commissioner Elaine Griffith asked about who posts messages on the signs which is the WYDOT TMC.

The Commission gave kudos to a project from 2023 on U.S. 18/20 and to the contractor, Northern Improvement, for the work they performed.

The Commissioners updated WYDOT on drilling/fracking work on Cheyenne River Road, 20 Mile Road and Mackie Road. Increase in semi traffic in the Lance Creek area. They asked for WYDOT to keep an eye on traffic using WYO 270.

Wyoming State Representative Allen Slagle asked about use of federal funding for roads and how that may impact the cost of construction projects. District Engineer Mark Ayen said that federal money does come with requirements but it's hard to say how much it impacts a project's cost and though a theoretical comparison could be made, receiving federal funding for highway projects would still be the most cost effective way to fund projects.

Discussion on WYO 270 from Hartville north to Manville. There are upcoming projects and the highway isn't seeing a big increase in traffic from previous years.

Regarding the slide on delayed construction projects the Commissioners agreed new passing lanes on U.S. 20/26 (Natrona and Fremont counties) has helped ease traffic issues between Casper and Shoshoni