Contact: Mike Dino – 303-594-8818

Commerce City
Washington D.C.
Schedule
March 6-7, 2024
All Times in Eastern Time Zone

Schedule Overview

Wednesday, March 6

8:00 am	**Breakfast Briefing at Hotel**
9:15	**Depart Hotel**
10:00	**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**
11:30	**Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**
2:30 pm	**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
4:00	**Senator Michael Bennet's Office**
4:45	**Senator John Hickenlooper's Office**
6:30	**Dinner**

Thursday, March 7

TBD	**Depart Hotel**
TBD	**Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
12:30 pm	**U.S. Department of the Army**
3:00	**Congresswoman Yadira Caraveo**
TBD	**Dinner**

Full Schedule With Notes Continues To Next Page

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Wednesday, March 6

8:00 am – Breakfast Briefing **Omni Shoreham Hotel**	Discussion Topics: • Review Schedule and Talking Points
9:15 am – Depart Hotel	

10:00 – 10:30 am
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Amy LaVoie
Acting Deputy Chief
National Wildlife Refuge System
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
MIB Director's Conference Room 3038
Contact: Carina Velazquez-Mondragon
202-208-5333
carina_velazquez-mondragon@fws.gov
	Discussion Topics:
	• Highlight the importance of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and benefits to community.
	• This is a model for nation in clean-up and uses.
	• Reinforce the positive partnership – how can city help support USFWS interests?
	• Invite the Director to tour the Refuge with the City Council
	• Top Informational Items
	  ○ The Refuge was established in 2004 when the US Army transferred the first fully-remediated lands to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
	  ○ In 2023, the refuge had over 950,000 visitors
	  ▪ Visitors comes from all parts of the United States and across the world, and, most importantly, from the City of Commerce City
	  ○ Refuge designated as an Urban Flagship refuge and the refuge is doing its job to connect nature to to urban communities
	  ○ Public lands are underfunded, but the refuge staffing continues to decrease and operates will less than 20 full-time employees. And this staff must not only manage our refuge, but also all the other refuges in the area under USFWS's responsibility
	  ○ City of Commerce City and the Refuge have partnered to host a new spring Earth Day event. This event introduced visitors to the Refuge and Commerce City Open Space. This event will continue in 2024
	  ○ The Refuge's bison herd are amazing animals and so critically important to the Department of the Interior's Bison Conservation Initiative
	  ▪ Colorado Front Range Bison Working Group created to connect bison managers, land managers, tribal partners, conservation organizations, and bison researchers/veterinarians. It is exciting for the City of Commerce City to be a focal area for this work.
	  ○ In 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will begin work on restoring 5.3 miles of First Creek within the refuge. This work is funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (or IRA) and will not only benefit fish and wildlife (including bison), and ***will greatly assist the City of Commerce City with flooding***
	  ○ Wildfire is a concern for communities adjacent to large public lands. Starting in 2023, the refuge has been implementing plans to help protect our community funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (or BIL). This work not only helps to protect the community, but also employs local youth to assist with habitat improvements. This is the type of "win win" project that is needed to ensure wildfires will be far less destructive in the future

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11:30 am – Noon
Joint Meeting w/FRA and FHWA
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE (New Jersey Ave Entrance)
Contact: Dr. Santiago Cruz-Roveda
(202) 579-4148
santiago.cruzroveda@dot.gov

FRA's Office of Railroad Safety promotes and regulates safety throughout the Nation's railroad industry. The office executes its regulatory and inspection responsibilities through a staff of railroad safety experts focusing on compliance and enforcement in: Hazardous Materials, Motive Power and Equipment, Operating Practices, Signal and Train Control, and Track. Other functions include: Railroad safety and customer training (including State safety inspectors); Accident and employee fatality investigations and reporting; Partnerships between labor, management, and the agency that address systemic initiatives; and, Development and implementation of safety rules and standards.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Contact: Heather Dean Simei
202-834-2081
Heather.Dean@dot.gov

The mission of the USDOT is to serve the United States by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future.
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that supports State and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation's highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program). Through financial and technical assistance to State and local governments, the Federal Highway Administration is responsible for ensuring that America's roads and highways continue to be among the safest and most technologically sound in the world.

FRA Discussion Topics

- Funding obligated for $9.6 million - Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant to advance preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition to create a new grade-separated interchange with US 85 & 120th Avenue and grade-separation with 120th Avenue and Union Pacific Railroad line
- Train-related complaints
  - Blocked crossings adversely affect Commerce City because of our limited east/west road network is split by two railroads.
  - Impact to public safety, emergency response, and traffic congestion, increasing resident and agency frustration.
  - When routine train blockages exceed 10 minutes, vehicles attempting to cross US 85 queue significantly.
  - Because of the difficulty crossing US 85 during peak hours of traffic, the rear of a truck may sit on the tracks for a long period of time.
- Train noise is still an issue, but costs remain prohibitive to implement broad local solutions.
  - CRISI Grant will help Commerce City in partnering with state and regional partners to advance a grade separated interchange at U.S. 85/120th Avenue.
  - Request the FRA to reopen 2005 rulemaking to identify balanced opportunities that ensure safety while providing local governments with more flexibility to reduce noise and promote long-term economic growth.
  - Any timeframe for reopening rulemaking on noise?
  - Opportunities for further collaboration/rulemaking on train blockages.

FHWA Discussion Topics:

- Commerce City is adjacent to six major highways, Denver International Airport, two railroads, and two commuter rail lines.
- Effective transportation is critical to the City's success.
- Support infrastructure legislation that helps fund US 85/120th Avenue, I-270 and 88th Avenue improvements
  - New interchange at U.S. 85 and 120th Avenue
  - Proposed design is a six-lane diverging diamond with two bridge structures (over US 85 & the Union Pacific Railroad)
  - The US 85/120th Ave. interchange is a direct connection from rural communities to the urban core.
  - US 85 has served as a National Security Route and conduit for agricultural products and natural resources
  - Estimated to carry 30 to 40 million tons of freight/year
  - Slow moving and parked trains cause major delays; threaten emergency response, hinder regional mobility
  - 591 crashes over a five-year period
- I-270 is a corridor of commerce where hundreds of companies in the region's key industries are located (energy, advanced manufacturing, and logistics).
  - Project funding is needed to address urgent safety, mobility, capacity, and operational concerns.
  - 88% of the city's workers commute to their jobs.
  - Vasquez/I270 interchange recognized by DRCOG as one of 18 regional bottlenecks
  - 389 crashes occurred within the project area over 5-year period.
  - Truck traffic represents 15% of daily travel volumes; potential 59% increase in travel demand by 2035

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2:30 – 3:00 pm
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
William Jefferson Clinton Building North, Room 3530
Washington, DC 20460
Contact: Arnita Hannon
240.602.7118 (Cell)
Hannon.Arnita@epa.gov
Note: Enter on the NORTH entrance of the WJ Clinton Building from the middle of 12th Street and NOT Pennsylvania Avenue
 	
The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment. EPA works to ensure that:
• *Americans have clean air, land and water;*
• *National efforts to reduce environmental risks are based on the best available scientific information;*
• *Federal laws protecting human health and the environment are administered and enforced fairly, effectively and as Congress intended;*
• *Environmental stewardship is integral to U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy;*
• *All parts of society--communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments--have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks;*
• *Contaminated lands and toxic sites are cleaned up by potentially responsible parties and revitalized*
• *Chemicals in the marketplace are reviewed for safety.*
	Discussion Topics:
	• Suncor Refinery
	  ○ Directly impactful to Commerce City
	  ○ Looking for federal funding for air monitoring, surface and ground water and human health issues
	  ○ HUD is using the Refinery's safety record as rationale to resist the construction of affordable housing in a nearby redevelopment
	  ○ *KEY DISCUSSION TOPIC: How can EPA be more helpful to the community?*
	• Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
	  ○ EPA Success Story - https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-success-stories-epa-region-8#rma
	  ○ From the EPA's website: The thorough Superfund investigation and cleanup, combined with the dedication and collaboration among EPA and our federal, state, and local partners at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal transformed the highly-contaminated Rocky Mountain Arsenal property into a magnificent environmental resource and community asset. Today, the vast majority of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal has been deleted from the National Priority List because all required cleanup is complete. Under the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act of 1992, the Department of Defense transferred roughly 15,000 acres of Rocky Mountain Arsenal land to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service to become one of the largest urban national wildlife refuges in the country. The Refuge is home to 330 species of animals, including bison, black-footed ferrets, deer, coyotes, bald eagles and burrowing owls.
	  ○ Congress approved legislation in 2016 that established a process to remove deed restrictions that prohibited agricultural, residential and industrial uses on Victory Crossing, adjacent to Refuge.
	  ○ KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS:
	  ▪ Is the on-site testing showing improvement of the environmental quality of the Refuge and surrounding environs
	  ▪ Can the Bison be given to Tribal partners?
	• South Adams County Water and Sanitation District
	  ○ EPA PFAS/PFOA regulations announced last year caused SACW&S to take significant action to meet the new standards
	  ○ KEY DISCUSSION TOPIC: Support for funding for a new treatment plant

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Contact: Mike Dino – 303-594-8818

Commerce City
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4:00 – 4:30 pm
Senator Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building (SR-261)
Washington, D.C. 20510
Contact: McKinley Mueller
(202) 306-0595 (cell)
grace_bobertz@bennet.senate.gov
 	
4:45 – 5:15 pm
Senator John Hickenlooper's Office
374 Russell Senate Office Building (SR-374)
Washington, D.C. 20510
Contact: Sam Boger
202-657-2365 (cell)
Ashley_Morrill@hickenlooper.senate.gov
	Discussion Topics:
	• Thank you for helping with federal funding
	  ○ FY 2023: $4 million - 62nd Avenue/Vasquez Blvd improvements
	  ○ FY 2024 Appropriation Request - $6 million request for Chambers widening forwarded by Senators but not included in Senate Transportation Appropriations Bill – and – Bennet forwarded $3 million request for South Adams County Water & Sanitation District for PFAS Removal but not included in Senate Interior Appropriations
	• FY 2025 Appropriations Request – Congressionally Directed Spending
	  ○
	• RAISE Grant Application
	  ○ $?
	  ○ East 88th Avenue Corridor Improvements from I-76 to Highway 2 will:
	  ▪ Widen 88th Avenue from two to four lanes with turn lanes
	  ▪ Upgrade the traffic signal at 88th Avenue and Rosemary Street and interconnect all traffic signals along the corridor
	  ▪ Construct a new traffic signal at Mile High Flea Market to improve safety at the entrance
	  ▪ Construct sidewalks and a multi-use path along the full length of the corridor to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety
	  ▪ Install storm drain improvements to reduce persistent roadway and neighborhood flooding
	• Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issue with Greyhound Park affordable housing development
	  ○ Affordable housing elsewhere in Commerce City
	• South Adams County Water and Sanitation District
	  ○ EPA PFAS/PFOA regulations announced last year caused the District to take significant action to meet the new standards and protect the health of the City and its citizens
	  ○ Support for funding for a new treatment plant

6:30 pm **Dinner**	*Lebanese Taverna* *2641 Connecticut Avenue, NW* *Washington, DC 20008* *202-265-8681*

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Thursday, March 7

TBD – Depart Hotel	
TBD **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** **Marriott Marquis - Room 1, Independence E, M4 Level** **Contact: Patrick Byrne, Senior Advisor** **Office of Congressional & Intergovernmental Relations** **Patrick.J.Byrne@hud.gov** *HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination, and transform the way HUD does business.*	Discussion Topics: • Housing at the Mile High Greyhound Park • In 2016, Commerce City met the population threshold to become a direct recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Approximately $2.2 million in CDBG funding will be provided to the city over the first five-year period. Since entitlement, the city has: ○ Prevented 151 residents for becoming homeless through the Domestic Violence Victims Support Program ○ Rehabilitated 46 owner-occupied, LMI homes to improve safety, accessibility, and energy efficiency ○ Modernized and staffed the city's Small Business Resource Center assisting over 150 entrepreneurs ○ Constructed 1,560 linear feet of new ADA sidewalks to improve pedestrian mobility ○ The remaining funding was utilized: ▪ Rehabilitate an additional 66 LMI owner-occupied households ▪ Assist 25 blind residents to live more independently ▪ Provide job training and summer employment for at-risk youth ▪ Continue to provide public services and homelessness prevention ▪ Revitalize the older neighborhoods within the city ○ Commerce City has abundant opportunities to utilize future CDBG funding. Hundreds of older homes need rehabilitation, crime victims and their families need emergency support, and the city's most critical and vulnerable populations continue to need protection. Future federal grants – especially the direct entitlement of CDBG funds – will allow the city to revitalize blighted neighborhoods, increase affordable housing stock, and generate economic activity. ○ Protect and Increase CDBG program funding. CDBG funds numerous successful projects and organizations which assist the vulnerable populations within our city. CDBG has never been adjusted for inflation, even though project costs increase every year.

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12:30 – 1:00 pm **Department of the Army** **John Tesner, Director for Restoration** **Pentagon** **Contact: Margaret Jarosz** **110 Army Pentagon, Room 3D453** **(703) 693-5205** **margaret.t.jarosz.ctr@mail.mil** *The office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health (DASA-ESOH) provides policy, programming and oversight of the Army's ESOH programs; provides recommendations to milestone decision authorities on Army materiel regarding ESOH concerns; executes the Army's arms control program; and serves as the Executive Agent for several DoD programs. This office has been involved in the clean-up of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.*	Discussion Topics: • Ongoing partnership between Commerce City and the Army on the stewardship and clean-up of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. • Ask about any issues on which the Army needs advocacy from the City. • Notable Updates ○ Removal/Replacement of the Offpost Groundwater Treatment (OGT) Plant ▪ The Army completed the demolition of the 2-story Offpost Groundwater Treatment (OGT) Plant (located on Peoria St. around 100th Ave.) in the summer of 2023. Two, smaller groundwater treatment facilities were constructed at First Creek/East of Highway 2 (First Creek) and 107th Ave./West of Highway 2 (Northern Pathway) to replace the 30-year-old OGT Plant. The new facilities are smaller, single-story structures that accomplish the same treatment goals but have a lower profile within the community. These changes are expected to be beneficial to new housing developments expanding throughout this area. ○ New RMA Environmental Remediation Services Contract ▪ A new, nine-year Environmental Remediation Services (ERS) contract was competed and awarded to Navarro Research and Engineering (Navarro) in August to support the ongoing operations and maintenance of RMA's two landfills, two waste containment areas, and five groundwater treatment facilities. The contract has a ceiling of $86 million through November 2032. Navarro has successfully performed these services since December 2012. ○ Navarro to Initiate New Grant Program in Adams 14 Schools ▪ Through its Community Commitment Grants Program, Navarro focuses on growing the next generation of workers for the RMA and on improving the educational experience in local schools. Navarro designed the program to recognize and support excellence in teaching by providing funds for specific projects or curricula in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The first award for the RMA area is expected in the fall of 2024. ○ Renovation of RMA Administrative Building ▪ The Army will begin a project this spring to renovate portions of its administration building (Building 129) to consolidate contractor staff into this facility. Once renovations are complete in late 2024/early 2025, all Army and contractor staff will be officed in Building 129 and the existing contractor support building (Building 132) will be demolished, saving approximately $30,000/year in annual operating costs. ○ New RMA Program Manager in 2024 ▪ The Army will be hiring a new RMA Program Manager in 2024 to replace Charlie Scharmann, who is retiring in June. The goal is to have the new PM in place and introduced to all stakeholders in May or early June. ○ RMA Consolidated Groundwater Treatment Plant (CGTP) ▪ The new Consolidated Groundwater Treatment Plant (CGTP) will be located on RMA at the intersection of Highway 2 and 88th Avenue. The CGTP will replace two existing facilities currently located at 88th Avenue and Highway 2 (Northwest Boundary Treatment System) and 96th Avenue and Peoria St. (North Boundary Treatment System). The design of the new CGTP is expected to be finalized by the end of 2024. Construction will be completed under a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers scheduled for award in late 2025. Construction is expected to take approximately two years and the CGTP should be operational in 2027. The new plant will increase the efficiency of ongoing groundwater treatment operations, provide space for additional new treatment processes (if necessary), and will allow for the demolition of the two older facilities referenced above.

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3:00 – 3:30 pm **Congresswoman Yadira Caraveo – 8th CD** **1024 Longworth House Office Building** **Contact: Collin Allen** **(202) 603-2987 (cell)** **Collin.Allen@mail.house.gov** *Representative Yadira Caraveo, 43 years old, represents the 8th Congressional District that includes Commerce City. She was elected to Congress in 2022. Yadira lives in Adams County near her parents, and her life is filled with large family gatherings of relatives near and far, including her brothers and sister.* *She is on the House Agriculture Committee and on the Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture and Horticulture Subcommittee and ranking member of the Commodity Markets, Digital Assets and Rural Development Subcommittee. Plus, she is on the House Science, Space and Technology Committee Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee*	Discussion Topics: • Thank you for helping with federal funding ○ FY 2024 Appropriation Request - $3.5 million for Chambers Avenue widening in House Transportation Appropriations Bill – ***and*** - $960,000 for South Adams County Water and Sanitation District for PFAS Drinking Water Treatment Plant Project in Interior Appropriations Bill • FY 2025 Appropriations Request – Congressionally Directed Spending • RAISE Grant Application ○ $20 million (?) ○ East 88th Avenue Corridor Improvements from I-76 to Highway that will: ▪ Widen 88th Avenue from two to four lanes with appropriate turn lanes ▪ Upgrade the traffic signal at 88th Avenue and Rosemary Street and interconnect all traffic signals along the corridor ▪ Construct a new traffic signal at Mile High Flea Market to improve safety at the entrance ▪ Construct sidewalks and a multi-use path along the full length of the corridor to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety ▪ Install storm drain improvements to reduce persistent roadway and neighborhood flooding • Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issue with Greyhound Park affordable housing development • South Adams County Water and Sanitation District (Please see below for an article about this issue) ○ EPA PFAS/PFOA regulations announced last year caused the District to take significant action to meet the new standards and protect the health of the City and its citizens ○ Support for funding for a new treatment plant
6:00 pm	**TBD**

END OF SCHEDULE