

## Chapter 6 Goals and Strategies

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### Introduction

The goals and strategies identified in Chapter 6 are intertwined with each county's transit services.

In Larimer County, Fort Collins, Loveland and Berthoud are oriented to their respective cities as the primary funding source for operations.

In Weld County, Greeley-Evans Transit (GET) serves the more populated areas of the two communities but no public transit service exists outside the Greeley-Evans urbanized area.

This creates a gap in transit services between population and service centers, leaving residents of smaller communities and rural county areas faced with finding transportation services that enables them to live independently. The FLEX service on the Highway 287 corridor, which is jointly funded by Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, City of Longmont and Boulder County, is the only transit service in the region that connects separate communities.

There are also significant needs to connect residents of outlying areas to employment or other services in cities, particularly along the I-25 corridor. Specialized transportation services among residents living within and outside city limits or urban growth areas are requiring more assistance than the existing paratransit systems can provide.

Implementing the goals and strategies identified for each county will help to address issues and enhance existing services while promoting regional needs as identified in Chapters 1 - 5.



This chapter also looks back at the success and challenges of the 2007 Coordinated Plan to provide an understanding of the foundational work that has occurred over the last five years in each county and at the regional level.

In addition, Chapter 6 outlines the fundamental steps needed to make progress towards coordination between transit and human service agencies in each county and at the regional level.

## **2007 Plan Implementation – Successes and Challenges**

### **Successes**

There have been several accomplishments since the NFRMPO Planning Council July 2007 approval of the Coordinated Plan. Specifically, success with several goals and strategies identified in the plan has been achieved including;

- Implementation of Mobility Councils in each county that are working to build capacity for coordination. The Larimer County Mobility Council currently has 16 member organizations and the Weld County Mobility Council has 10 member organizations. Each council meets monthly to work on program goals.
- Hired a Mobility Coordinator to support the activities of the mobility councils which include outreach and program and project work related to the goals outlined in the Coordinated Plan. This includes expansion of the program to include a part-time assistant.
- Each council has established advocacy roles by taking positions on local, regional and state issues related to mobility coordination.
- Participated in community outreach events and surveys to gain a better understanding of the conditions for human service clients. Each council has hosted larger public events that garnered valuable input regarding coordination priorities in each county.
- The focus of the outreach was different in each county and the knowledge gained helped to shape the projects that have been pursued.

- Implemented a multi-agency travel training program to enable riders to have greater transportation autonomy while also working to move funding for more expensive paratransit services to less costly fixed-route alternatives.
- Development of the NFRMPO Riders Guide which provides basic transit/transportation information of public transportation services in the North Front Range area. Over 12,000 copies of the guide have been distributed and demand for the guide is increasing on a monthly basis. The guide is also available online at [www.nfrmpo.org](http://www.nfrmpo.org)

## Challenges

The challenges faced by the mobility councils in working towards greater coordination of services have primarily stemmed from financial limitations and concerns about funding sustainability.

Examples include;

- Work towards forming a one-call transit center which would be designed to enable riders and human service agencies to arrange transit services in a more streamlined approach. The one-call center concept is a fundamental tool for achieving coordination goals and technical support at the national level was provided to help realize this important goal.

In Larimer County, a one-call center was pursued through sub-committee work and research. A one-year action plan was developed and included basic details of the phases of research, planning, public outreach, and recommendation which were scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010.

After multiple meetings of the LCMC sub-committee, the project was put on hold for two primary reasons; the first was a lack of sustainable operational funding for the center and the second was a lack of consensus as to what type of call center it should be.

A regional transit discussion is currently underway in Larimer County regarding the best way to achieve operational efficiency and service delivery. The culmination of these discussions may provide insight to the council as to how to proceed with a call center type project.

- Advocacy has been constrained due to the governance structure of the NFRMPO which manages the mobility management program. NFRMPO staff works with 15 different local governments and maintaining autonomy from the local decision-making process is a factor in advocacy efforts. Both mobility councils have opted, as a group of representatives of different agencies, to take positions that reflect their respective organizational perspectives as well as those of their mobility council.
- Funding constraints – *Often the primary issue, the funding constraints that each member organization faces can make or break implementation of the programs and projects.*

*Establishing trust, though time consuming, is instrumental to sharing agency time and resources, and pursuing jointly funded projects which is critical for achieving many of the Coordinated Plan goals. Additionally, new regulations in MAP-21 as well as the shorter two-year timeframe have created uncertainty regarding funding stability.*

### **Summary**

The successes and challenges of the past five years have provided the mobility councils with the knowledge of which strategies have helped to realize the coordination goals that were implemented, and which strategies may require more foundational work to accomplish the Coordinated Plan goals.

As a result, the goals and strategies each council has developed for the next five years are based on experience and the understanding of where best to invest time and energy towards improving coordination of transportation services.



The goals and strategies for each county are outlined on the following pages and reflect the experience each council has had over the last five years.

Specifically, all the goals underscore the primary purpose of working to ensure that every individual in the Larimer and Weld County area of the North Front Range MPO has the transportation services they need to be self-sufficient and to live independently.

## **Coordination Goals**

### **Larimer County**

The 2007 Coordinated Plan established five primary goals of the Larimer County Mobility Council (LCMC) which remain priorities.

**1. Continue to foster the coordinated efforts of the LCMC which consists of human service agencies, a variety of jurisdictions, and transit providers, representing the entire County.**

An important focus of the LCMC is to build capacity for coordination.

- This includes activities on a management level and on a service level that increase mobility options on a county-wide basis. The emphasis is to educate the public on the mobility options needed for human services transportation and to address travel needs that cross jurisdictional lines.

Specific activities include a range of options such as:

- Joint decision making process supporting regional specialized transportation services.
- Establishing agreements between providers, assure costs are fully covered by the responsible agencies, and similar coordination activities.
- Oversee mobility coordination activities, working with existing agencies to provide a range of mobility options that can be used throughout Larimer County.

- Participate in selection process for FTA 5310 Mobility Management projects.
- Identify how existing resources can be leveraged to improve services within a framework in which agencies pay for the fully allocated costs of service.

**2. Garner support for policy level changes that would improve mobility options.**

**Work to build stable and adequate funding for fixed-route transit, demand response transit and other mobility options.**

Funding availability affects urban and rural mobility services. Securing adequate funding will be important to achieving goals related to improving mobility for special populations – those needing specialized transportation services or access to fixed-route services for employment or other activities.

**3. Build capacity for coordination through activities on a management level and on a service level, with the goal of increasing mobility options on a regional basis.**

**4. Improve regional mobility among people requiring specialized transportation services,**

whether it is for dialysis or other medical treatments, employment, childcare or activities of daily living. Services are needed that cross jurisdictional boundaries and a range of mobility options are needed to address these human service transportation needs.

**5. Improve employment transportation for low-income workers, especially from areas that do not**

**have transit services.** In addition, services that are more direct with shorter travel times are needed within Fort Collins. Areas where additional services are needed include Wellington to Fort Collins, services to employers in the I-25 corridor and on Hwy 287 between Loveland and Longmont.

## Weld County

The four primary goals of the Weld County Mobility Council (WCMC) stem from the core challenge of not having enough transportation service to adequately cover the large geographic area in Weld County.

The goals have shifted slightly since 2007 to reflect the on-going challenges the large and diverse geographic areas of Weld County pose to transportation providers. Additionally, the goals have been greatly impacted by the loss of transit service in rural Weld County and between Greeley & the Loveland area around I-25 & Hwy 34 in Larimer County.

1. **Improve employment transportation and access.** This is especially true for trips that cross the county. Service from Greeley to the employment base around I-25 and Highway 34 is one area. Another is to the Denver area along SH85 that runs through the east side of Greeley. Service from many small towns into either Greeley or other major employment centers in Adams or Boulder counties is another gap in service. This could be accomplished through peak hour transit services, car sharing, or van pools, depending on the area and needs for services.

Areas where there are significant transportation needs include:

- Fort Lupton, Erie, and other southern towns
- From Greeley west along Hwy 34 to the I-25 corridor
- Johnstown/Milliken/Windsor service for employment and other transit needs

2. **Improve Medical Transportation Services.** Transportation to medical services in the Greeley area for urban residents that live outside the transit service area and for rural residents in the surrounding Weld County area is a necessity. Medical transportation is often complicated by the immediacy of the medical attention needed, short notice to providers and requests outside of normal service hours. Lack of transportation services for needed medical services can create health issues for those that are not able to seek regular care.

Additionally, as the medical community becomes more regional in nature, medical trips often require the patient to go between communities for care within their providers system. Transportation between medical centers or clusters of medical providers is needed to resolve many health and accessibility issues that Weld County residents face.



3. **Education and awareness of transportation services.** This two-fold goal is intended to inform residents of the existing services that help them with their employment, medical and daily living related transportation needs. Additionally, it underscores needed transportation services and guides the council in pursuing strategies such as public/private partnerships, agency coordination and collaborative transportation services to populations in need.
4. **Identify funding and develop steady funding resources.** Securing adequate local matching funds for projects and programs, particularly in the face of dwindling federal funds for human service programs, and can limit service provision. Creating awareness of the benefits of increased services and need to support the services through increased local funding for transportation is critical.



## Coordination Strategies

### **Program and Projects Supporting Program Objectives**

The programs and projects of the mobility councils represent a mix of strategies that can be specific to one of the counties or more regional in scope.

The following list combines the strategies of both councils and includes current as well as future types of programs and projects each of which focuses on an identified objective.

Each objective is the backbone of the individual strategies and keeps each strategy focused on achieving the larger Coordinated Plan goals.

However, specific actions such as project details, program direction and timelines may change to reflect larger community issues or direction, transit and human service agency participation and funding realities.

All of the strategies, whether county specific or more regional in nature, can be combined to form a larger scope of work to guide the region in achieving the goals identified in the Plan.



- **Mobility Coordinator/Mobility Coordination Program Staff**

Objective – To support the effort of the mobility councils and work on the goals and strategies of the Coordinated Plan.

Strategy – Seek funding each year for a half-time mobility manager and part-time mobility coordination assistant under the FTA Section 5310 program. Total annual expenses are anticipated to be \$40,000 for a half-time position.

Outcome – On-going mobility council and program support.

- **Employment Transportation**

Objective – Continued support of transit services that serve areas with high concentrations of low-income employment areas.

Strategy – Council support or direct agency work on projects that address employment transportation for low-income individuals including fixed-route transit service, programs supporting carpools, community vehicles and other types of transit services.

Additionally, a planning project to identify transportation options for low-income workers who need to access jobs would be beneficial. This would include a Job Access group that would include job placement professionals, employers and agencies serving low-income workers who would identify a range of options and strategies to improve mobility among this population.

Outcome – Continued transit services that primarily benefit employment areas that have a high ratio of low income employment positions.

- **Improved Accessibility of Fixed-route Bus Stops and Signage**

Objective – Improvements that make the stops more accessible to seniors or people with disabilities.

Strategy – On-going support of funding for transit agencies and other entities that would undertake bus stop accessibility projects. Matching funds would come from the communities where the bus stops are located. This might include various cement pads, connections to existing sidewalks, enhanced shelters, additional schedule information, new signage and other improvements.

Outcome – Fully accessible bus stops and signage and/or facilities.

- **Communication Equipment for Volunteer or Non-profit organizations**

Objective – Procurement of radios, cell phones or other equipment that enhance communication between dispatch services and organization volunteers or staff.

Strategy – Seek funding for initial capital expenses and/or ongoing operating costs of potential project costs. Local matching funds are needed for any equipment acquisition.

Outcome – Enhanced communication equipment and/or administrative support that help organizations providing alternative transit services.

- **Transit to Transit Connectivity**

Objective – Increase connectivity between existing transit services.

Strategy – Support funding for transit service that connects communities and helps to eliminate gaps in service. Examples include transit agency connections between Fort Collins and Loveland, Greeley and Loveland and to destinations to the south. Currently, the success of the FLEX commuter service which connects Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud and Longmont could be used as a template for future transit service connections.

Outcome – Increased transit service between communities within the North Front Range area and to destinations to the south including Longmont and the Denver Metro area.

- **Transit Connectivity to Areas Currently without Transit Services.**

Objective – Increase connectivity to communities outside the North Front Range urban area boundaries.

Strategy – Support funding for transit service that connects communities and helps to eliminate gaps in service. An example would be to connect senior center shuttles from communities such as Wellington, Windsor and Johnstown to transit services that go to the larger urban areas.

Outcome – Increased transit service between communities within the North Front Range area and foster connections with residents that have limited transportation options.

- **Expansion of Fixed-route Service**

Objective – Help to expand fixed-route services.

Strategy – Support funding for transit service that increases the frequency of bus service on existing routes and/or provides expansion of service area boundaries or.

Outcome – Increased fixed-route services in areas that have a demonstrated need for additional fixed-route services.

- **Additional Service Hours for Fixed-route & Paratransit Service**

Objective – Help to eliminate the service gap that exists when fixed-route and paratransit stops providing service in the evening and on weekends.

Strategy – Support funding for transit service that operates before or after fixed-route service hours. Extended service could include options must be public in nature and service for those that might normally use paratransit services.

Outcome – Extended hours of operation for paratransit service that serves individuals who have transportation needs that fall outside of fixed-route transportation operating hours.

- **Multi-Agency Coordinated Travel Training Program**

Objective – To expand travel training from one or two transit programs to multiple agency capacity that offers more flexibility and demand responsive training.

Strategy – Host workshops which provide participating agencies with the following services in order to further the program goal.

- Tracking and maintenance of participants programs ensuring agencies have the tools to help their clients with the travel needs.
- Creating a system for understanding the larger programs effect on the paratransit services in each county.
- Support to program agencies including materials, data tracking and additional training if needed.

Outcome – Have one primary transit agency with group training as well as individual human service agency travel training offering demand based training for their clients.

- **Continue to address issues identified in the LCMC Transportation Goal Project**

Objective – The goal of the LCMC in partnering with The United Way was to work on the best way to eliminate barriers to transportation for those in poverty. An action plan was developed based on research and public outreach that outlines multiple strategies for addressing the barriers identified at the outset of the sub-committees work.

Strategy – To create positive public perception of transit in both counties and to work on implementing the three highest priorities/matrix options including partnership with existing city programs (Transfort/PassFort program & GET Business Outreach), education and community shuttle.

Outcome – Work on the strategies outlined in the LCMC Committee's Options Matrix. Partnership with local transit agency's business outreach programs will be the first strategy to pursue. Education through expanded outreach to business groups will also be pursued dependent on individual opportunities with human service contacts.

- **Coordination Event(s) in partnership with groups or organizations that share human service transportation issues and/or challenges**

Objective – To enhance outreach efforts and educate residents on the human service transportation issues that need to be addressed.

Strategy – Partner with other agencies, organizations or groups to reach a large audience interested in understanding and/or helping to address the problems identified in the plan.

Outcome – An event or series of outreach opportunities that presents an issue that needs to be addressed to participants, participant feedback and a direction and/or targeted plan of action as a result of lessons learned at the event.

- **Online Resource Guide**

Objective – Continue partnership with Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) to provide Northern Colorado data and information to the DRMAC online guide.

Strategy – Hire a consultant to complete the database component of the project and to train mobility coordination staff to continue database maintenance. (Additional \$20K in 5310 funding has been secured for set-up of database and training.)

Outcome – A user friendly online resource guide for consumers and agency representatives to plan transit trips within the NFRMPO region and to the Denver Metro area. The database will incorporate individual transit agency trip planning/online tools through links and program promotion. A longer term goal is to use the guide as a data collection point for demonstrating the need for transit connections between the two regions.

- **Regular Mobility Council Meetings**

Objective – To keep the mobility councils up to date with the project information necessary to make progress towards their goals and to keep them current of relevant mobility coordination, human service/transit provider and funding information.

Strategy – Develop annual Work Plans for each county that details key elements and objectives of primary projects based on the goals and strategies outlined for each county in the Coordinated Plan. Work Plan charts are distributed monthly and used to track project progress and form the basis for monthly discussion of projects.

Outcome – Accomplishment of plan goals and strategies as well as discussion and understanding of the ongoing human service transportation accomplishments and challenges in each county.

- **Expanded Community Outreach**

Objective – To inform larger community groups of the issues surrounding human services transportation and awareness of the mobility council's goals and strategies.

Strategy – To address community and civic groups with updated information that focuses on examples of successes through current projects and coordinated efforts of the council. Program materials have also been created to educate agency staff and the general public about mobility coordination and the work of the Larimer and Weld mobility councils. The latest program materials are grouped together at the end of the attachments.

Outcome – Increased community awareness of the need for coordination and multiple transportation options in each county as well as to destinations outside the county.

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## **Summary**

The strategies outlined in Chapter 6 provide the concepts intended to help each county get closer to achieving the primary goals identified in the Coordinated Plan. Monitoring of program and project challenges and success will be conducted annually to ensure resources are being used effectively.

The Coordinated Plan, as the guiding document for regional mobility coordination, will be revisited in five years so that all stakeholders in the regional mobility coordination program can have an opportunity to evaluate the health and success of the program.