

**Meeting Minutes of the
NORTH FRONT RANGE TRANSPORTATION &
AIR QUALITY PLANNING COUNCIL**

**January 7, 2016
6 p.m.
Weld County Events Center
1150 O Street
Greeley, CO**

Voting Members

Present

Gerry Horak-Chair	-Fort Collins
Jan Dowker	-Berthoud
Kevin Ross	-Eaton
John Morris	-Evans
Robb Casseday	-Greeley
Troy Mellon	-Johnstown
Tom Donnelly	-Larimer County
Paula Cochran	-LaSalle
Joan Shaffer	-Loveland
Jordan Jemiola	-Milliken
Kathy Gilliland	-Trans. Comm
Sean Conway	-Weld County

Absent

Chris Colclasure	-CDPHE
Don Brookshire	-Severance
Paul Steinway	-Timnath
John Vazquez	-Windsor
*No member	-Garden City

MPO Staff:

Terri Blackmore, Executive Director; Renae Steffen, Administrative Director; Crystal Hedberg, Finance Manager; Alex Gordon, Transportation Planner/Mobility Coordinator.

In Attendance:

Dawn Anderson, Jeff Bailey, Shailen Bhatt, Leah Browder, Julie Cozad, Jim Eussen, Aaron Greco, Joel Hemesath, Mark Jackson, Dave Kisker, Gary Oplinger, Suzette Mallette, Johnny Olson, Maria Seacrest, Jeremy Scott, and Gary Thomas.

Chair Horak called the MPO Council meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING AGENDA:

*Conway **moved** to accept the meeting agenda. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** unanimously.*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

*Ross **moved** to approve the December 3, 2015 meeting minutes. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** unanimously.*

Lead Planning Agency for Air Quality Agenda

Chair Horak opened the Air Quality portion of the meeting.

Air Pollution Control Division Report

A written report was provided.

Regional Air Quality Council –RAQC

A written report was provided. Horak mentioned that at upcoming meetings RAQC would be discussing their measures for the next couple of years and announced they would be reviewing proposals in the next week to hire a firm to handle their public outreach.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda

Chair Horak opened the MPO portion of the meeting.

PRESENTATION:

CDOT Update

Shailen Bhatt, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Executive Director, thanked the Council for being invited to speak and expressed his appreciation for the collaborative work done by MPO's nationally, mentioning his own previous experience as an MPO Director in Kentucky. He addressed the following topics from his presentation handout:

- The focus of CDOT and priorities for the next year-
Director Bhatt explained the infographic on his handout and stated that when he came to Colorado CDOT was in the top ten DOT's in the country, his goal is to be number one. He cited the implementation of CDOT's RoadX program and HERE mapping technologies as viable steps toward the achievement of that goal.
- The new Federal Bill passage and its implications for CDOT-
According to Director Bhatt the biggest implication of this five year bill, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act, is that the authority to spend the funding will not be called into question. He expressed his concern regarding the use of pension smoothing and the practice of partisanship, but praised the addition of what he called "funded federal mandates", like the billion dollar funding for connected vehicles and the freight program. He also expounded on why he was pleased that the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) was partially restored in the bill and how it works well for the State of Colorado. He also specified that TIFIA is government financing at a favorable rate, not funding.
- How Bustang fits into the statewide plan and the importance of transit as part of the mix-
Director Bhatt noted that it is not possible to build your way out of congestion and that is why transit options like Bustang play such an integral role in reducing congestion. He explained how Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) design allows for schedules that are very appealing to riders and credited that to the increase in Bustang ridership overall. He noted that although Bustang was only a "drop in the bucket" for helping to solve the problems currently on I-25 or I-70, it does provide a positive option for commuters.
- I-25 with focus on the importance of getting the "managed lane" in to help with trip reliability/ Update on how using the shoulder as an additional lane on West I-70 is working-
Combining the last two topics, Director Bhatt said that while he feels that there is a risk in using managed lanes and they are not the ultimate solution, he proudly stated that over 50,000 vehicles were able to travel without issues on the I-70 managed lanes through the Eisenhower Tunnel and the eighteen mile stretch from Empire to Idaho Springs over the New Year's holiday weekend. The

challenge is determining whether the lanes can eventually pay for themselves. Bhatt also indicated that a managed lane is currently under construction on I-25 that will hopefully reach the managed lane on C-470 and eventually, with necessary financing, meet up with State Highway 7. He feels this is the most realistic way to get relief on I-25.

Director Bhatt completed his presentation by stating that he wants to be involved in the conversations regarding the issues on I-25 and provide aid in the most responsible way possible.

Melon asked if CDOT planned to partner RoadX with any traffic alerting programs providers. Bhatt indicated that CDOT is willing to work with multiple providers to get the best finished product, but currently they have a Memorandum of Understanding for a pilot program using approximately 1000 cars and explained how a "managed motorway" would potentially work.

Donnelly thanked Bhatt for his presentation and complimented Director Blackmore and Commissioner Gilliland as being the best in the State of Colorado. He handed out a table of I-25 projects using funds with local discretion and asked that Bhatt and CDOT consider working with the Northern Colorado communities differently than the rest of Colorado because, unlike others in the State, Northern Colorado Communities provide substantial funding for I-25 projects, therefore CDOT should not need to collect funding from managed lanes there. Although Bhatt said he respects the communities in Northern Colorado for their understanding of the issues and funding participation when it comes to I-25, he views the tolling as a pricing perspective issue. He clarified that not a lot of money is generated from toll lanes, but if you have three striped lanes they will all become gridlocked, therefore a free-flowing tolled lane is the best operational use of their money. Donnelly said that the communities in Northern Colorado chose to help pay for I-25 projects because it is the right thing to do and they want to work collaboratively with CDOT to find solutions that work for everyone. Gilliland acknowledged the substantial contributions Northern Colorado has made toward I-25 and suggested they wanted that to be recognized.

Conway thanked Bhatt for presenting to the Council and gave an historical account of the debates surrounding the Transportation Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs Bonds) proposal process and the significant projects that were eventually able to be funded after the bill passed in 1999. He fervently stated that although he understood the need for significant maintenance funding (\$750M Asset Management Budget) and respected Bhatt's position on bonding and debt, he questioned where Colorado's transportation system would be today if that bill had not passed and asked that a gas tax, hospital provider's fee, TRANs II, and others be put on the ballot and let the voters decide. Bhatt agreed that TRANs Bond I funds had been significant in assisting with many important projects and the transportation system would be in a much more difficult place without them. He explained that he could not wholeheartedly get behind borrowing \$3.5B because of the \$250M it would cost in payments each year that would be taken out of the maintenance (Asset Management) funding that is already at a deficit, but added he was willing to work together on viable solutions.

Jemiola asked Bhatt to elaborate on Governor Hickenlooper's PEL's Program which allows for a \$100M commitment to Colorado's biking infrastructure. Bhatt addressed that many are concerned about what the media is publishing regarding the distribution of this money and clarified that \$60M of it is passed through by the communities through their MPO's for specific projects and is not controlled by CDOT, \$30M is Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) funds for Colorado's rivers, parks, open space, wildlife, and trails, and \$10M goes to Safe Routes to Schools. The money will be dispersed over the next four years. Council discussion ensued regarding the details of this commitment and its effect on the public's view of the need of funding for I-25 because of how it was presented to the public. Bhatt responded to the discussion by indicating this may be a circumstance where politics have come above policy and expressed his desire to work with the MPO and the communities to form constructive solutions for I-25 and other transportation issues in Colorado. Horak remarked that on January 6th the North I-25 Coalition formed a committee, which will include CDOT, which will be tasked with exploring financing/funding options while working with FIX I-25 on improved messaging and lobbying. He thanked Director Bhatt for the work he is doing and for addressing the Council's questions and concerns.

REPORTS:

Executive Director Report:

Terri Blackmore, Executive Director, indicated that the January 2016 Director's Report was in the packet and noted that the Council had been provided with a copy of the MPO Newsletter, *On the Move*, which included an article on the MPO's donation of computers to Salida del Sol Academy in Greeley, as chosen by former Chair Conway. Also provided was a year-end VanGo™ Metrics and revised 2016 MPO Council Meeting Dates & Locations. She stated that over thirty applications had been received for the vacant Transportation Planner positions, from which they hope to hire two planners, and they have a temporary staff person in place soon to assist with the VanGo™ Program while they assess the need for full or part-time staff once VanGo™ transitions to a new website. She announced that Alex Gordon, Transportation Planner, will now also be the Interim Mobility Coordinator, replacing Mary Warring, former Mobility Coordinator.

Report of the Chair:

Chair Horak said he would announce the appointment of STAC members as noted on the agenda.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

A written report was provided.

Mobility

A written report was provided.

ACTION ITEMS:

Negotiations on MPO Office Space

Blackmore briefly reviewed the information from the Office Lease memo with the Council. Crystal Hedberg, Finance and Operations Manager, added that she had researched Loveland and Berthoud properties and found the square footage to be comparably priced with the MPO's current office space. She also said that after considering the value of covered parking, the housing of MPO servers and overall staff commuting requirements, it was determined that negotiations with Blue Ocean Enterprises on a new lease were the appropriate course of action. Horak noted that there was also a consideration of staff as they had been hired with the understanding they would be working in Fort Collins. He felt there were not enough favorable financial circumstances to warrant moving to a new location.

*Conway **moved** to approve the authorization the NFRMPO Finance Department to finalize a lease agreement with Chair Horak's assistance. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.*

FY2016 UPWP Budget Approval

Hedberg briefly reviewed the information from the FY2016 Budget memo with the Council.

*Ross **moved** to approve Resolution 2016-02 Approving the FY2016 Budget. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.*

2016 UPWP Amendment

Blackmore briefly reviewed the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget Amendment memo with the Council.

*Ross **moved** to approve Resolution 2016-03 Approving the 2016 UPWP Budget Amendment. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.*

Support for Improvements on I-25

Blackmore reminded the Council that this resolution reflected revisions as requested at the December 3, 2015 meeting.

*Conway **moved** to approve Resolution 2016-04 Support for Improvements on I-25. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.*

Establishing 2016 Committee Membership

Horak reviewed his choices for the 2016 Finance Committee members as follows: Kevin Ross; Chair, Tom Donnelly; Vice Chair; Paula Cochran and Jan Dowker; members.

Horak recommended Conway as the STAC Representative and himself as the alternate.

*Mellon **moved** to approve Resolution 2016-01 Establishing 2016 Committee Membership. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.*

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Transportation Commission Report

Gilliland reported on the following:

- Transportation Commission met on January 6th and had discussion with David Specter regarding HPTE on TIFIA. There is a small group that will be working with HPTE on obtaining some realistic funding streams for Northern Colorado, a proposal made by Horak. Also discussed was the idea of breaking the corridors into segments for funding purposes.
- She attended a presentation on the unique Diverging Diamond Intersections (DDI) which have better traffic flow with no left turns, or signals and they help improve safety and increase mobility. They plan to use a DDI for the US 36 project. It will be only the second one in the State. RTD put \$8M towards the installation of special ramps underneath it.

CDOT Region 4

Olson briefly reviewed the CDOT Project Status Update with the Council and added that US 34 East was open but needs grinding that will require some lane closures. He will be providing the US 34 Coalition with pricing for a PEL study.

North I-25

There was nothing additional to report.

Highway 34 Coalition

There was nothing additional to report.

Host Council Report

Conway enthusiastically handed out Weld County lapel pins and Weld County's 2015 Summary and announced that Weld County Charter was celebrating their 40th Anniversary. He and Julie Cozad, Weld County alternate, praised the Windsor Wizards Football team for their State Championship and for having a combined GPA of 3.6, the highest of any other football team in the State. Also recognized was the Eaton Reds Girl's Volleyball team, for winning their State Championship and the University High Bulldogs Cheerleaders for their State Championship and moving into the national championship. Each team will be honored by Weld County with their own day of celebration. He also announced that Julie Cozad would be his new alternate for Weld County and thanked Alberto's Mexican Restaurant for providing the dinner.

Loveland- Shaffer announced that the Valentine Re-Mailing Program begins Feb. 4 with the first stamping at 9 a.m. at the Loveland Chamber of Commerce and the Loveland Fire and Ice Winter Festival will be February 12th-14th

Berthoud- Dowker announced there will be five spots on the Berthoud Town Board for the April elections.

Johnstown-Mellon reported that Johnstown transportation impact fees for usage will increase 50%. Over the next five years they will impose a 10% plus inflation increase. In the past ten years the fees were only increased in accordance with inflation rates. Another transportation funding mechanism that was discussed in September was a street maintenance utility fee, but it was voted down due to the lack of a revenue-neutral solution.

Loveland- Shaffer announced that the Valentine Re-Mailing Program begins Feb. 4 with the first stamping at 9 a.m. at the Loveland Chamber of Commerce and the Loveland Fire and Ice Winter Festival will be February 12th-14th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Ross **moved** that the Council go into an Executive Session pursuant to section 24-6-402(4)(f) of the Colorado Revised Statutes for discussion of a personnel matter involving the MPO's Executive Director Performance Evaluation Process for the current year and her potential salary and benefits. The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.

The Council entered into an Executive Session at 7:33 p.m. The session lasted approximately 44 minutes.

Chair Horak reopened the regular MPO Council meeting.

Council discussion ensued regarding date the Executive Director's salary increase and deferred compensation percentages.

Jemiola **moved** to approve the Third Amendment to Employment Agreement for the Executive Director with a six percent increase and no deferred compensation effective January 14, 2016. The motion was **seconded** by Conway.

Council discussion ensued regarding date the Executive Director's increase percentage and her deferred compensation.

Jemiola **moved** to amend the motion to approve the Third Amendment to Employment Agreement for the Executive Director with a 4.3 percent increase and a \$3000 onetime bonus. The motion was **seconded** by Conway.

Council discussion ensued regarding the tax implications of a bonus.

Jemiola **moved** to amend the motion to approve the Third Amendment to Employment Agreement for the Executive Director with a 5% increase and no bonus or deferred compensation. The motion was **seconded** by Conway.

Conway, the seconder of the motion, suggested they amend the motion to a 4.3% increase with a 1% deferred compensation for 2016. Jemiola agreed to the amendment of the motion

Council discussion ensued regarding the salary increase and the deferred compensation. It was clarified that the deferred compensation would be given in 2016 only, and that the money goes into a 457 International City/County Management Association Plan that the director does not manage, and the Council takes the liability on the money.

The motion was **seconded** and it **passed** unanimously.

Blackmore was highly praised for her determination, dedication, extensive transportation planning knowledge and amiable community involvement and outreach. It was requested that she increase her outreach to area Chambers of Commerce. They also offered her any training and other assistance she may need for herself and MPO staff.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Final Public Comment:

There was no comment.

Next Month's Agenda Topic Suggestions:

- 1) MPO Council goal setting
- 2) Request Executive Director Salary Survey from MSEC.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Renae Steffen, MPO Staff