

Meeting Summary

Project:	LINKNoCo
Subject:	Guidance Committee Meeting #1
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, August 03, 2021
Meeting Time:	10:00am to 12:00pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual

This summary reflects the general notes and action items for this meeting to the best of the knowledge of the note taker. If you have any questions or find any errors, please contact Chrissy Breit at Chrissy.Breit@hdrinc.com.

Workshop #1

LINKNoCo Guidance Committee Meeting #1 Presentation

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, and Meeting Goals

Chris Proud, Consultant Project Manager for HDR, opened the meeting and Alex Gordon, Project Manager for the NFRMPO, welcomed everyone. Chris led introductions and all meeting attendees introduced themselves. Chris reviewed the meeting agenda and the goals for the meeting, which included: team building; developing an understanding of the project, study area, and planning context; and initial development of the project's purpose and need.

Guidance Committee Purpose and Roles

Chris explained the purpose, expectations, and role of the Guidance Committee. The Guidance Committee is composed of diverse project stakeholders, including MPO staff, transit agency staff, jurisdictional staff, and local multimodal, health, and equity interest groups. The committee exists to guide the project, providing feedback at regular intervals. Committee members are expected to actively participate, serve as a conduit to and from their constituents, and attend five committee meetings between the summer of 2021 and summer of 2022.

LINKNoCo Overview

Alex provided an overview of the LINKNoCo. Alex explained that LINKNoCo will build upon the 2045 Regional Transit Element (RTE) and Front Range Passenger Rail Study. The NFRMPO desires to expand premium transit service to connect communities, by preserving existing corridors for transit and identifying priority corridors that can move forward with premium transit service. LINKNoCo will set the vision for a complete premium regional transit network and recommend top priority corridors for implementation. LINKNoCo is developing the transit network with an eye to ease of use, safety, and equity. LINKNoCo aims to develop a premium



transit system that is a competitive alternative to driving to help reduce regional traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Chrissy shared the project development process, noting that the project kicked off this summer and is expected to conclude next summer. Technical project activities will advance in coordination with stakeholder and public outreach to ensure a symbiotic feedback loop between project development and public input.

Alex showcased some of the possible premium transit elements that could be incorporated as part of this plan. Such elements include transit integration with the bike network, unique identity and branding, and real time information signs.

Chrissy presented on the project's public and stakeholder engagement strategy. The project's outreach approach is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and convenient for all communities within the North Front Range. Chrissy outlined the various avenues that stakeholders and the public will be able to learn about the project and provide feedback, including the digital survey, self-guided online public open houses, pop-up events, and cafecitos. The project will also engage Project Ambassadors to share information and generate public enthusiasm for the project's development. These committees that will bring their expertise to guide the project's development. These committees include the existing NFRMPO Technical Advisory Committee and the project's Policy Advisory Group and Guidance Committee.

Project Process

Chris walked attendees through the project development process, noting that the project began with a review of existing planning studies, land use, demographics, and transit patterns. Potential transit corridors will be identified, which will be whittled down through further analysis and prioritization. At this stage in the project development, the Policy Advisory Group will convene to outline funding and governance recommendations for the project. The project will conclude with a recommended premium transit network and pathways for governance and funding. There will be public and stakeholder touch points throughout the project and this feedback will guide its development.

Transit Market Context

Meghan provided an overview of the transit market context, starting with the region's existing premium transit corridors and those evaluated in the 2045 RTE. She reiterated that LINKNoCo's planning process is rooted in the recommendations from the 2045 RTE, specifically funding the medium investment scenario for the nine baseline corridors. Thereafter she shared the transit propensity analysis map which highlighted areas with populations that are more likely to utilize transit. The analysis found that the highest propensity for transit ridership is within Fort Collins, Greeley, Evans, Loveland, and Windsor. The transit propensity analysis was then applied to corridors, noting those with low to high transit propensity. Lastly, Meghan spoke to the travel market analysis, showing movement between cities within the North Front Range, and projected



ridership if the RTE recommendations are fully built out. Meghan noted that these analyses are preliminary and will be refined through the corridor identification and prioritization process.

General Questions and Comments

The bullets below provide summary information on the conversation and feedback from meeting participants.

- Myron Hora (WSP/Consultant Team): Regarding the "What is Premium Transit" slide, Myron asked attendees if the phrasing made sense and if there were particular phrases that would need to be defined or clarified for participants' constituencies.
 - Ruth Fletcher-Carter (Berthoud Rural Alternative for Transportation) noted that many of these examples (like connections to bike trails) seem to be focused on able-bodied riders. Premium Transit should include considerations for less ablebodied community members. Ruth also noted that this plan should also focus on smaller communities. How do we show that we're linking smaller and larger communities?
 - Project Team Response: We appreciate this perspective and agree that integration with specialized services could be a component of Premium Transit.
 - Spencer Dodge (Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission): "Transit exclusivity" is challenging jargon and might be clear to the general public.
 - Drew Brooks (Transfort): Agree that transit exclusivity is challenging jargon.
 - Brooke Bettolo (Larimer County Public Health): Agree with the "transit exclusivity" comment. Also, "priority operations and signaling." We strive to write at a 4th grade reading level for external communications.
- Brooke Bettolo (Larimer County Public Health): Is the project hotline in Spanish and English?
 - \circ $\,$ Project team confirmed that the hotline is in both languages.
- Ruth Fletcher-Carter (Berthoud Rural Alternative for Transportation) noted that in reference to the Baseline Corridors map, a new mobility hub is being developed at State Highway 56 and I-25.
 - Project team: Thank you for this information.
- Allison Baxter (City of Greeley): In reference to the Travel Market Analysis (slide 26), why isn't Evans included?
 - Project team: Evans was included in the travel market analyses, which are based upon cell phone data. When this graphic was developed, Evans was excluded simply due to considerations of visual simplicity.
- Ruth Fletcher-Carter (Berthoud Rural Alternative for Transportation): Larimer County is not far from Boulder County and there is a lot of travel between the Longmont to Boulder areas. How do we ensure our work connects with travel in this area?



- Project team: Yes, there is a lot of movement happening between these areas. Alex has been involved with planning projects in that area and presented on the US Hwy 287 project to a committee this morning. Alex noted the MPO is monitoring the various planning projects in the region and trying to integrate as many as possible. Since he is involved in both projects, Alex is looking for opportunities to partner our project with the US Hwy 287 project.
- Allison Baxter (City of Greeley): The "Ridership RTE Full Buildout" slide notes the Greeley to Fort Morgan corridor. Will our Premium Transit corridors extend beyond the MPO boundary?
 - Project Team: For our project we are just focusing on the corridors within the MPO boundary. The RTE covered a broader geography than our project. Some of the corridors on this slide may be eliminated from our project because they don't focus on connections within the MPO (Loveland to Estes Park, for example). Other planning efforts are taking place in the region that focus on connections from the North Front Range communities to Boulder and Denver. Those projects are important, but our project's charge is to focus on connections between communities within the MPO.

Purpose and Need Breakout Group Exercise

The meeting attendees separated into three breakout groups to brainstorm purposes and needs for the project. Breakout groups were used to facilitate discussion in smaller groups. Participants used the interactive whiteboard platform MURAL to post digital sticky notes with "purposes" and "needs." After attendees finished placing their sticky notes, the breakout groups discussed the key themes that emerged through the exercise. The MURAL boards are included at the end of this summary, and the project team will use this output to develop a purpose and need statement to help guide the project.

Boyd Lake (Chrissy)

- Purpose
 - Connectivity helping community members reach services, appointments, friends/family, and jobs
 - Reducing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions
 - Improved travel experience faster, more reliable travel and improved mobility if you don't have a car
- <u>Need</u>
 - Make the plan Federal funding ready
 - Quality of Life with premium transit, people can work while commuting, they will experience air quality improvement, they will have more money in their pocket, and they will have faster travel times. Premium transit is needed to ensure/maintain a high quality of life as the area rapidly develops
 - **Economic Benefits** plan should include a public education component showing people how much money they can save by parking a car and taking



transit. Additionally, premium transit enables connections to better/higher paying jobs. Premium transit is in our economic self-interest.

Cache la Poudre (Meghan)

- Purpose
 - **Transit as a viable transportation option over driving** making it convenient for travelers
 - Improved GHG emissions and air quality
 - Connect smaller communities to larger metro areas
 - Partnerships to optimize transit opportunities
 - Accessible transit
 - Opportunities for transit-oriented development/economic vitality
- Need
 - Bike and pedestrian access needed in North Front Range (address missing links)
 - Connect employers, medical facilities, and major events
 - Reduce congestion, both time travel savings and improved air quality
 - Increase partnerships between existing transit agencies and develop new public/private partnerships

Horsetooth (Chris)

- <u>Purpose</u>
 - Easy decision to choose public transit making it as desirable as SOV
 - Influence health outcomes
 - Equity (for whom) and for individual's health
 - Economic vitality help commercial destinations
 - Support movement of rural communities I-25/Bustang is one of the few options
- <u>Need</u>
 - Travel time
 - **Population growth** congestion is becoming worse
 - **Aging population** would use other transportation modes, if available

Conclusion and Next Steps

Following these small group discussions, Chris brought all attendees back as a group and project representatives reported out on their group's key themes. Key themes included: congestion (both from a travel time and greenhouse gas perspective), connectivity (people need to be able to reach jobs, events, services, trails), accessibility (aging and disabled populations), auto-competitiveness/viable alternative to driving, economic development, improved health outcomes, agency coordination and public/private partnerships. Chris noted that the project team will send out the slides and meeting notes to the committee members and will draft a preliminary purpose and need statement. The next meeting is anticipated for September 8.



Committee members will be sent an online poll to share their preference for the next meeting being virtual or in-person.

Attachments

Committee membership and attendance, project team attendance, meeting presentation, and MURAL boards are attached.



Guidance Committee

Community/Organization	Member	Role	Attended
Berthoud Rural Alternative for Transportation (RAFT)	Ruth Fletcher-Carter	RAFT Representative	Yes
CDOT Region 4	Jan Rowe	CDOT Region 4/CDOT transit Representative	Yes
City of Fort Collins	Aaron Iverson	City of Fort Collins Representative	Yes
City of Greeley	Allison Baxter	City of Greeley Representative	Yes
City of Loveland	Katie Guthrie	City of Loveland Representative	Yes
City of Loveland Transit (COLT)	Candice Folkers	COLT Representative	Yes
Greeley Evans Transit	Leiton Powell	Greeley Evans Transit Representative	Yes
Larimer County	Mark Peterson	Larimer County Representative	Yes
Larimer County Public Health	Brooke Bettolo	Larimer County Public Health Representative	Yes
Museo de las Tres Colonias	Betty Aragon	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Representative	No
NFRMPO	Cory Schmitt	Specialized Transportation/NFRMPO Representative	Yes
NoCo Bike and Ped	Gary Odehnal	Multimodal Advocate	Yes
Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission	Spencer Dodge	Southwest Chief and FRPR Representative	Yes
Town of Berthoud	Adam Olinger	Town of Berthoud Representative	Yes
Town of Severance	Mitch Nelson	Town of Severance Representative	No
Town of Windsor	Carlin Malone	Town of Windsor Representative	Yes
Transfort	Drew Brooks	Transfort Representative	Yes
UC Health	Stephanie Booco	Emergency Services General Representative	Yes
UC Health	Julie Bower	Emergency Services General Representative	Yes
Weld County	Evan Pinkham	Weld County Representative	Yes
Weld County	Dawn Anderson	Weld County Representative	No
Weld County	Elizabeth Relford	Weld County Representative	No
Weld County Public Health	Olivia Egen	Weld County Public Health Representative	Yes



Project Team

Organization	Member	Role	Attended
NFRMPO	Alex Gordon	MPO Project Manger	Yes
HDR	Chris Proud	Consultant Project Manager	Yes
HDR	Meghan Boydston	Consultant Deputy Project Manager	Yes
WSP	Myron Hora	Agency Coordination & Local Outreach Liaison	Yes
HDR	Chrissy Breit	Stakeholder and Public Involvement	Yes







Guidance Committee Workshop #1

August 3, 2021









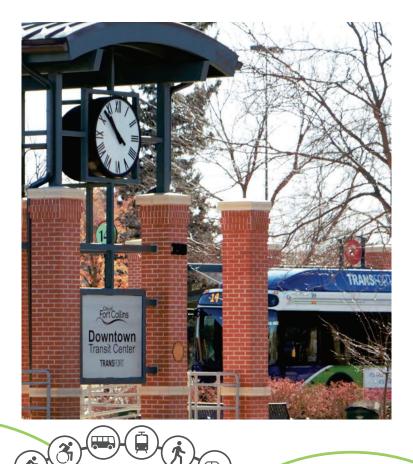
- 1. Welcome, introductions, agenda review, and meeting goals
- 2. Guidance team purpose and roles
- 3. LinkNoCo overview
- 4. Project process
- 5. Transit market context
- 6. Purpose and need background
- 7. Breakout group exercise
- 8. Next steps







Introductions



- Welcome
 - Alex Gordon, Project Manager: North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO)
- Self introductions
 - Briefly state name and organization





Meeting Goals and Outcomes

- Team building and organization
- Understand the project, study area, and context
- Inform the project framework (purpose and need)









Guidance Team

- What is the guidance team?
 - Diverse mix of mobility professionals, decision makers, advocates, and influencers
- What are the expectations and roles?
 - Active participation
 - Conduit of information to your constituents
 - Attendance at five meetings (summer 2021 to summer 2022)









Project Background

- 2045 Regional Transit Element (RTE) adopted (2018)
- NFRMPO Planning Council request to study regional transit to complement Front Range Passenger Rail (2019)
- Premium transit is anything above local bus (bus rapid transit, express bus, rail, etc.)
- Focus on community connections





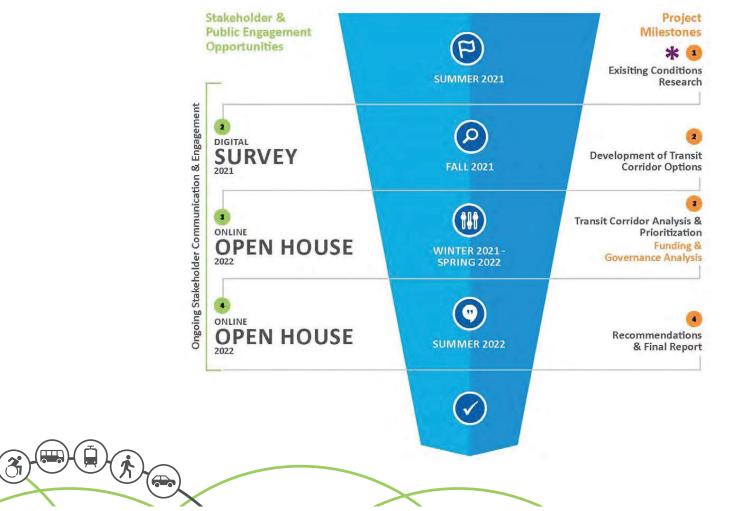
Project Vision



- Define a North Front Range premium transit network and advance to most promising corridors
- Link regional (North Front Range) communities
- Promote ease of use and safety, focusing on all users equitably
- Offer a competitive alternative to driving to help reduce regional traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions
- Provide inclusive and accessible stakeholder engagement



Project Process and Schedule





Baseline Corridors

Legend

3

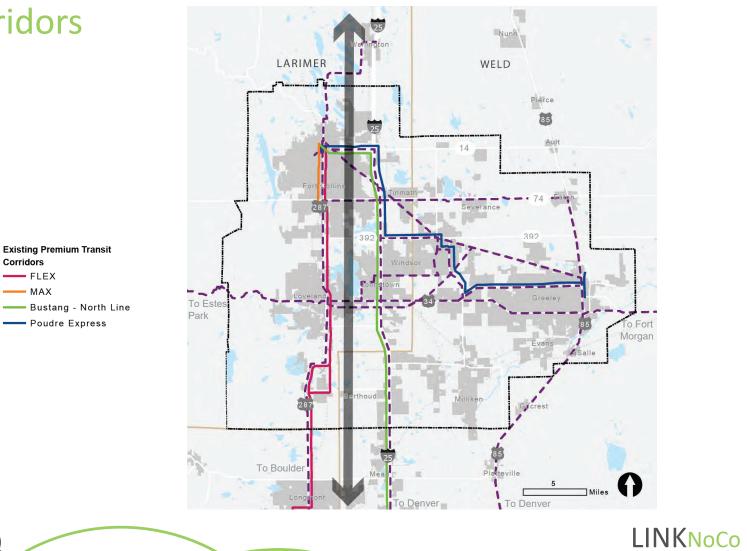
--- NFRMPO Boundary

----- County Boundary

-- 2045 RTE Evaluated Corridors

Potential Future Passenger Rail

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Public Engagement

Our outreach approach: **INCLUSIVE – ACCESSIBLE – CONVENIENT** for community members

Learn more:

- Website
- Fact sheet
- Flyers
- Presentations
- Project hotline and email

BIENVENIDOS

Spread the word:

- Project ambassadors
- Social and traditional media
- Radio

Share your vision:

- Digital survey
- Self-guided online public open houses
- Pop-up events
- Cafecitos

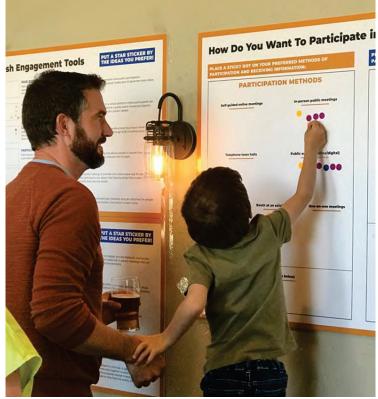






Stakeholder Coordination

- 1. Technical Advisory Committee (existing)
- 2. Policy Advisory Group
- 3. Guidance Committee
- 4. Project Ambassadors









Spread the word and stay in touch!



UNITING THE NORTH FRONT RANGE

Quick Links:

What is Link NoCo? | What is Premium Transit? | What are the desired outcomes? Building on Previous Efforts | LinkNoCo Timeline | Get Involved | Questions?

What is LINKNoCo?

The NFRMPO desires to expand premium transit service to connect communities by preserving existing transit operations and identifying other areas that can move forward with premium transit services.

LINKNoCo will set the vision for a complete premium regional transit network and recommend top priority corridors for implementation to unite the North Front Range community.

What is Premium Transit?

Premium transit means a service that offers more amenities and/or more frequent service than most local bus services. Current regional premium transit services that you might be familiar with in the area include Bustang, FLEX, MAX, and the Poudre Express.



Website

nfrmpo.org/transit/linknoco/

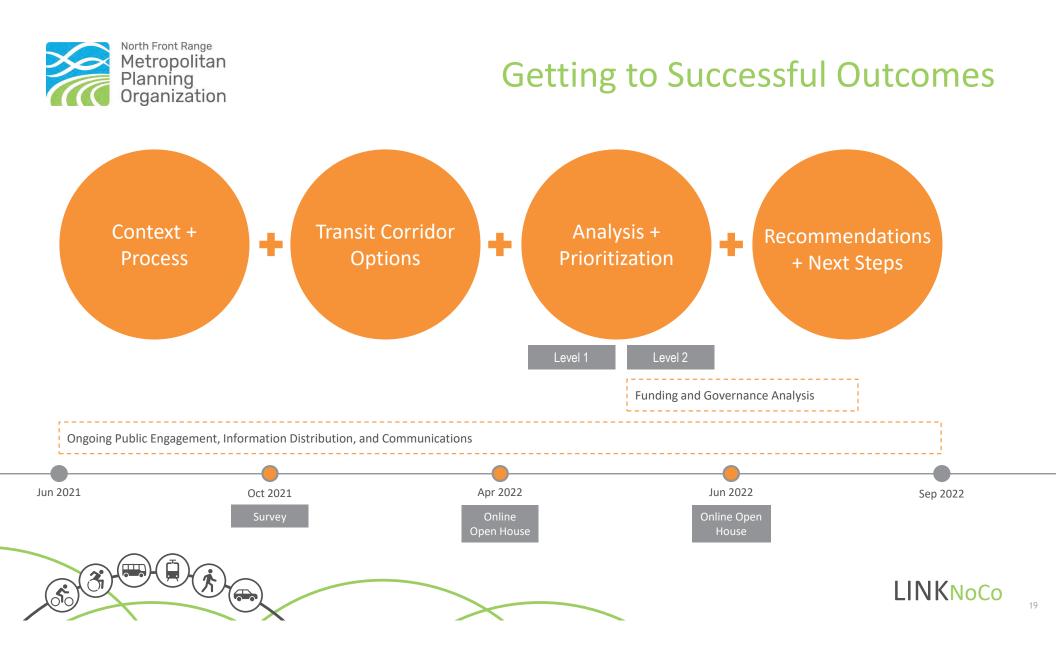
Email

info@linknoco.com

Hotline (970) 387-8058















- Reviewed past planning and recent infrastructure, demographic, and community data/information
- Building on the RTE
- Updated transit propensity index



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Baseline Corridors

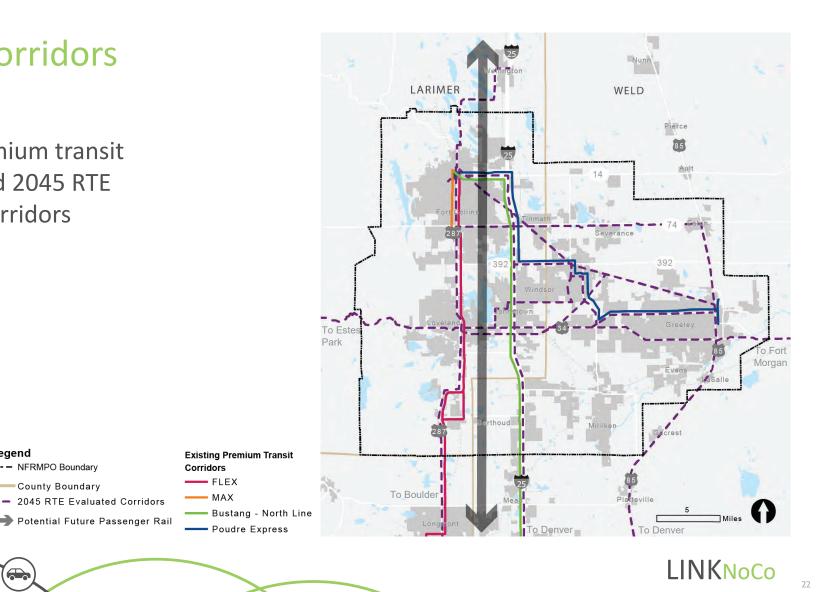
Existing premium transit • corridors and 2045 RTE evaluated corridors

Legend

3

--- NFRMPO Boundary

County Boundary



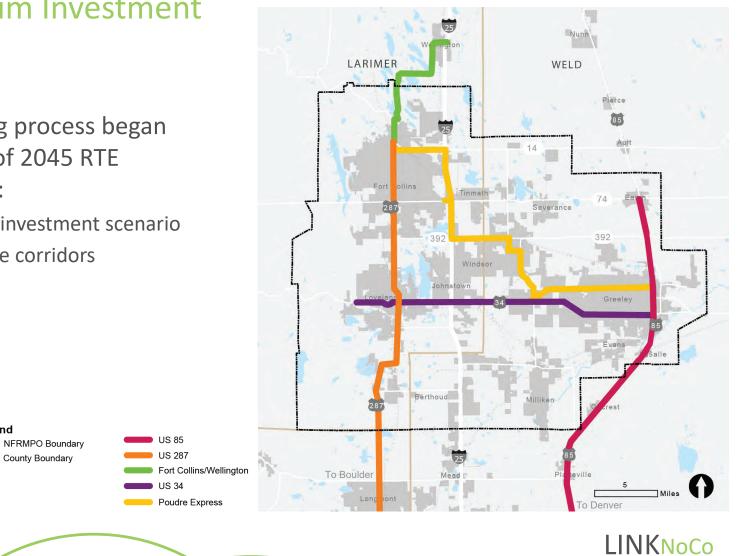
2045 RTE Medium Investment Scenario

- LINKNoCo planning process began with the baseline of 2045 RTE recommendations:
 - Fund the medium investment scenario

Legend

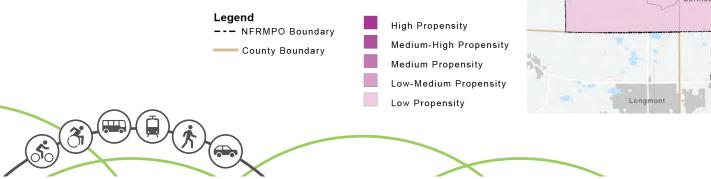
- Study nine baseline corridors

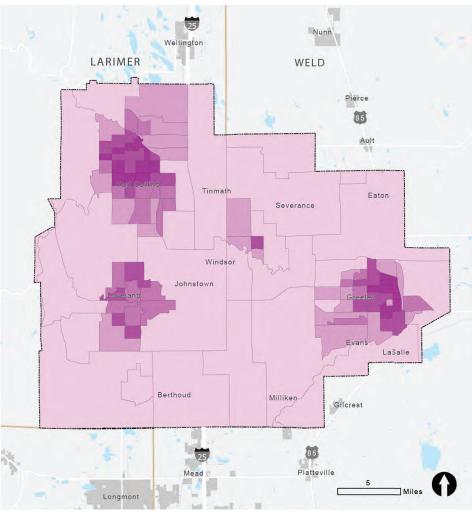
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Transit Propensity Analysis

- Methodology
 - Zero vehicle households, population with a disability, senior (60+) population, population below federal poverty level, college aged population (18-24)
- Results
 - Highest propensity within Fort Collins and Greeley, Evans, Loveland, and Windsor





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Transit Propensity - Corridor

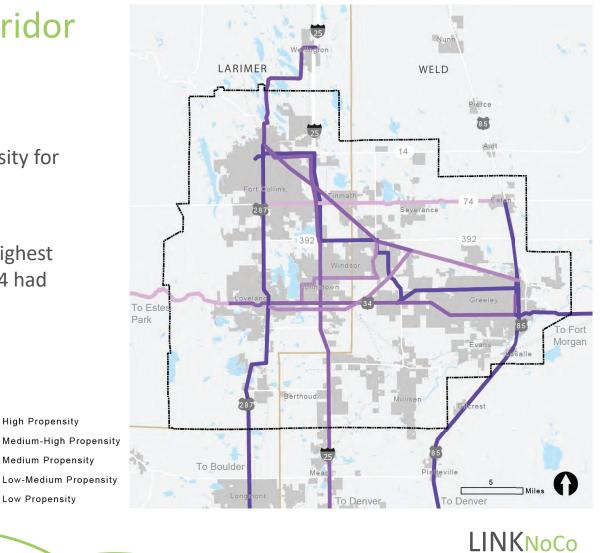
Methodology

Legend

--- NFRMPO Boundary

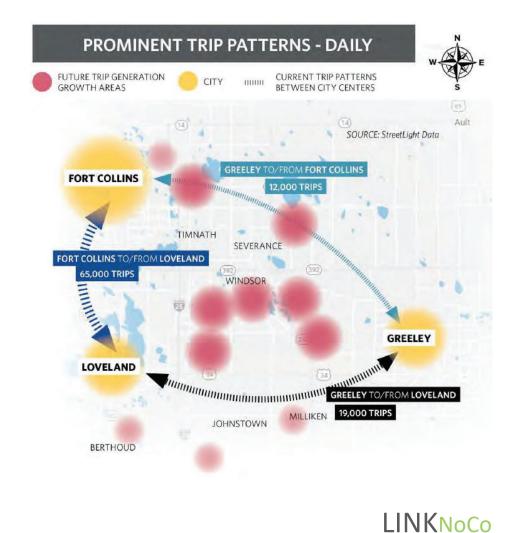
County Boundary

- Further analysis of transit propensity for each baseline corridor
- Results
 - Greeley to Fort Morgan had the highest transit propensity, County Road 74 had the fewest riders



Travel Market Analysis

- Analysis of movement between cities in the North Front Range
- Greatest number of trips between Fort Collins and Loveland
- A more detailed analysis of current trips between cities and future trips will be completed



Ridership - RTE Full Buildout

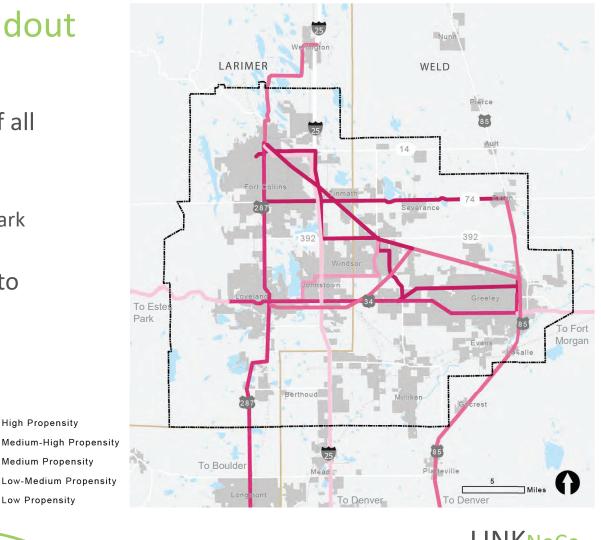
- Ridership estimates per route if all • routes were implemented
 - Highest ridership Poudre Express
 - Fewest riders Loveland to Estes Park route

NFRMPO Boundary

County Boundary

Making improvements to data to ٠ find more accurate results

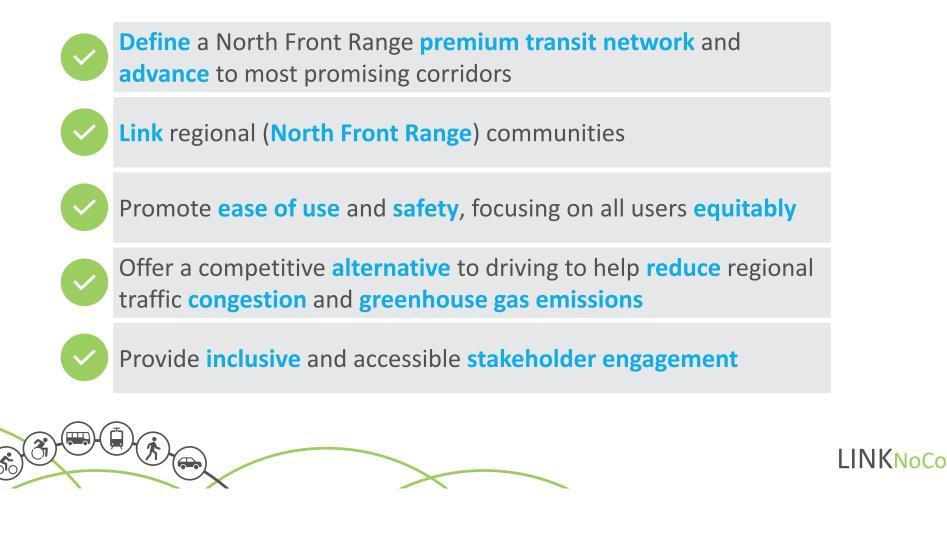
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Vision Elements





What is the Purpose and Need?

- PURPOSE WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?
 - Broadly defines the problem to be solved and the desired transportation outcome of the project.
- NEED WHY IS IT NECESSARY?
 - Supports the purpose with a quantifiable explanation of the transportation deficiencies











Outlines the existing and future mobility deficiencies and issues

- Guides the development of mobility options and decision-making
- Is supported by facts and data
- Is supported by local planning
- Provides a succinct justification for the project
- Helps make the case for action and funding

The purpose and need is preliminary, dynamic, and will continue to be refined



Example Purpose and Need

Mill Plain Project – Vancouver, WA

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Mill Plain BRT project is to provide transit system improvements to serve the business and residential growth along the Mill Plain corridor, improve east-west and regional connectivity, improve transit travel times (particularly for transit-dependent populations), and improve safety conditions to access transit. The level of improvements provided for the recent implementation of The Vine service can serve as a model for improvements for the Mill Plain Boulevard corridor. The Vine includes several design elements that have improved safety and security, travel time, schedule reliability, customer experience, and capacity, all of which have attracted increased ridership and supported environmental sustainability. In addition to physical and operational improvements, Mill Plain BRT will support the COV's Comprehensive Plan, Complete Streets Policy, and the ongoing subarea planning processes (including The Heights District Plan in the central portion of the Mill Plain corridor).

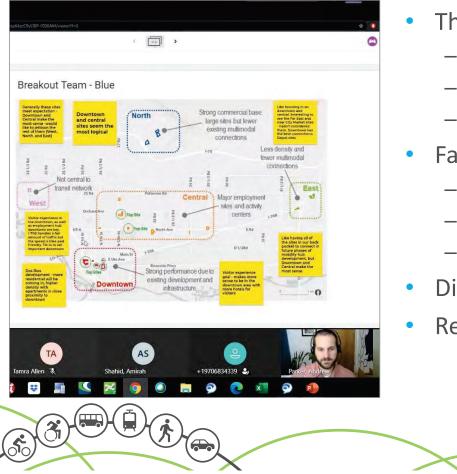
NEEDS

- Increasing need to accommodate projected employment and population growth along Mill Plain.
- Increasing need for east/west travel, transit connectivity, and regional mobility.
- Uncompetitive transit travel times and delay cause by traffic congestion.
- **Poor reliability** of the current service.
- **Concerns** with **safety** and **access** to transit.





Exercise – Informing the Purpose and Need

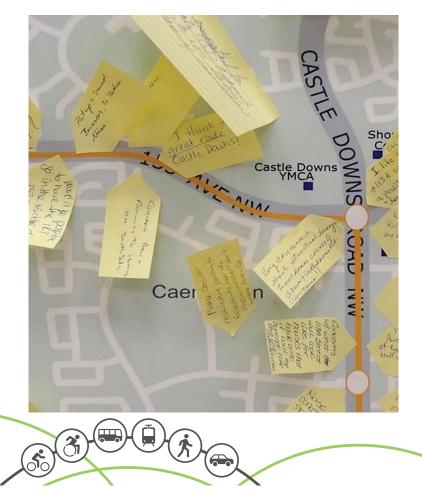


- Three virtual groups (random)
 - Automatic virtual rooms
 - Transition pause
 - Any issues, use chat box
- Facilitators
 - Meghan (Team Cache la Poudre)
 - Chris (Team Horsetooth)
 - Chrissy (Team Boyd Lake)
- Discussions (40 min)
- Report out (15 min 5 min per team)





Exercise – Informing the Purpose and Need



- Exercise:
 - Work together to develop a 'rough' project purpose and need
 - Help to frame and focus our efforts
 - Determine who will 'report out'
- Brainstorming:
 - Take 5-7 minutes
 - Brainstorm as many 'purpose' points and 'needs' as possible
 - Using MURAL, write one purpose or one need per sticky note
 - Click on the link in the chat to access the MURAL board

LINKNoCo

Doubleclick on the board to create a sticky note

Purpose Points

What is the desired transportation outcome?

Improve mobility in NoCo
Improve transit efficiency

Needs

Why is the action required, problem definition, and what proof supports this?





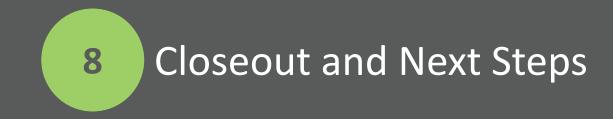
Report Out

Report out:

- Team Horsetooth 5 min
- Team Cache la Poudre 5 min
- Team Boyd Lake 5 min

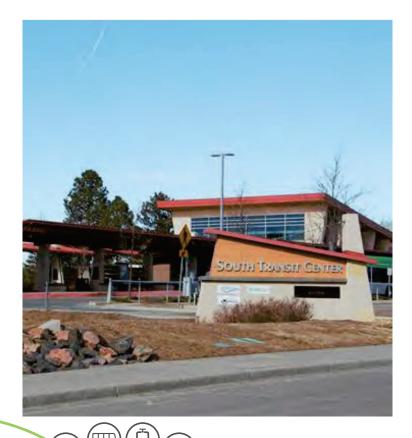








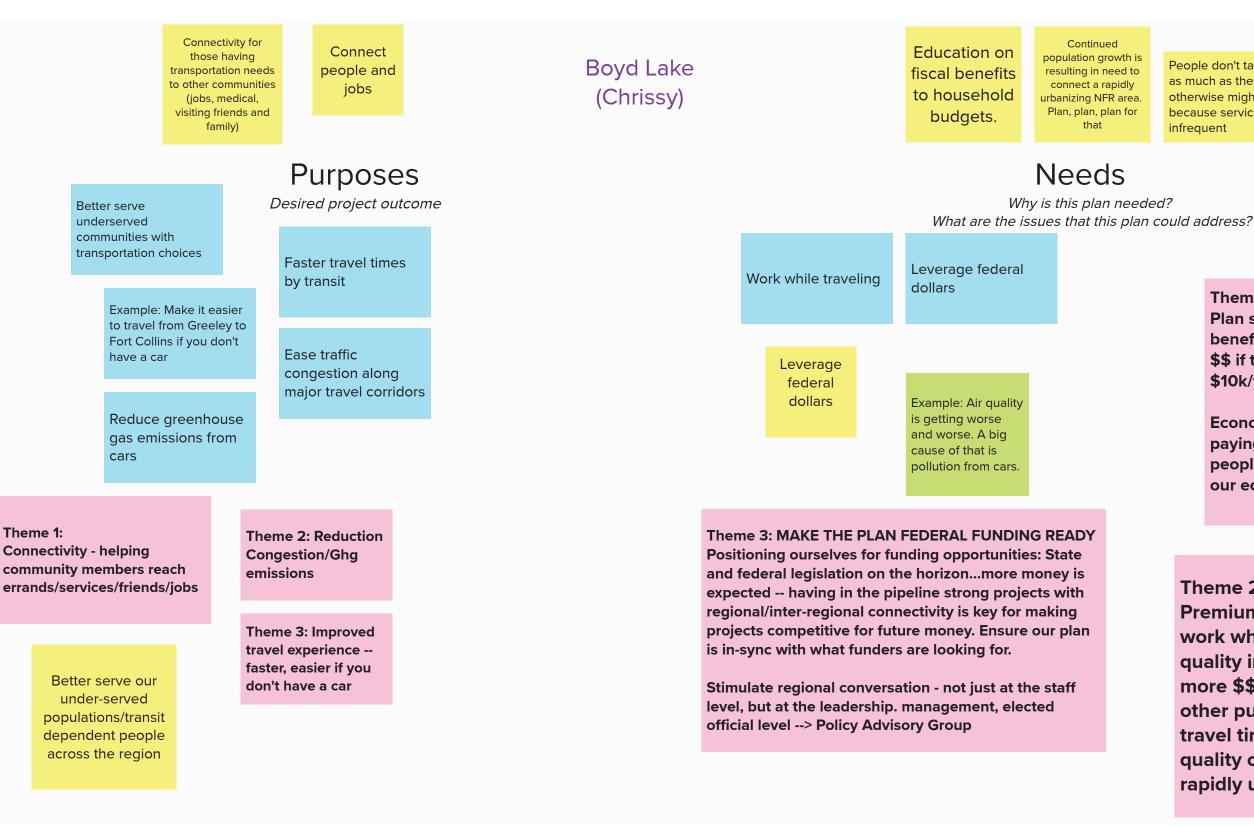
Next Steps



- Review exercise results and draft preliminary purpose and need – for your review
- Meeting notes and documentation
- Set next meeting:
 - Sep 8th (tentative)
 - Online poll (in-person/virtual)
 - Evaluation process, criteria, and transit corridor options

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!





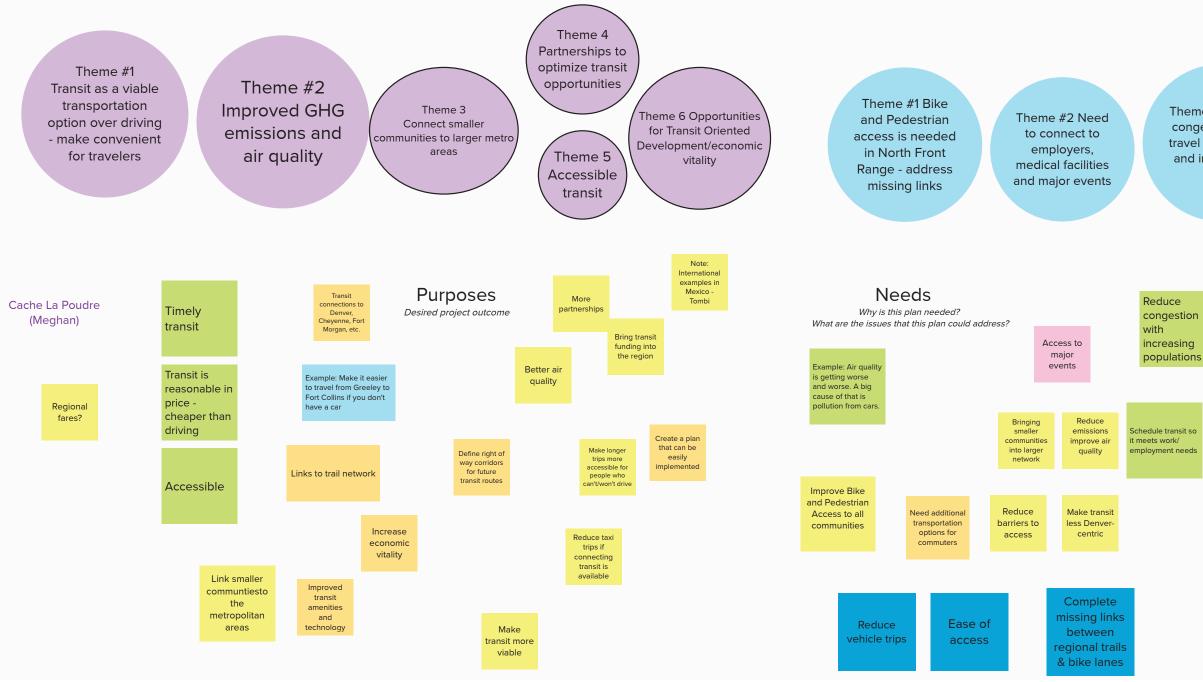
People don't take transit as much as they otherwise might because service is too infrequent

Theme 1: ECONOMIC BENEFITS Plan should include public education on fiscal benefits to HH by opting to use transit. (HH saves **\$\$** if they park a car and take transportation) -- save \$10k/year

Economic benefit -- connections to better/higher paying jobs-- good regional system connects people to other/different jobs. Premium transit is in our economic self-interest

Theme 2: QUALITY OF LIFE

Premium transit = ppl can work while traveling, air quality improvements, more \$\$ in your pocket for other purposes, faster travel times. Ensuring high quality of life as the area rapidly urbanizes



Theme #3 Reduce congestion - both travel time savings and improved air quality

Theme #4 Need to increase partnerships between existing transit agencies and public/private partnerships

Increase partnerships between existing transit agencies

> partnerships with employers encourage them to have a transportation plan

Improve bike and pedestrian access to communities

* northern colorado transit group could be an opportunity for partnership

choose public Influence (fo	eme 3: Equity or whom) and or individual's health destination:	Theme 4: Support movement of rural communities - I-25/			Horsetooth (Chris)	Theme 5 Need: travel time What ar	aging Congest	ion Ag (with Ag ed more wo oth av	ing population buld transition to her options if ailable.	
Increased access to health and other services	preventing gentrification through increased access to transit for ALL neighborhoods, not just "desirable" ones	Example: Make it easier to travel from Greeley to Fort Collins if you don't have a car (regional mobility)	increased sense of community and connection	Improved mobility for vulnerable populations		and worse. A big	the NFRMPO and po	pected pulation growth	park and rides/ neighborhood transit to train and other transit options	
decreasing segregation- cities have historically been separated by transit systems to facilitate movement and upward mobility for only certain populations	Working Towards solutions for inequity of movement	increased utilization of local businesses	System that makes it easy to shift away from personal vehicles	Increased access to services, businesses, etc		Increasing cost of living pricing out residents, increasing commuting distances less confusion with schedules and timing Address the increasing population's effect on	Increased Frequency		d ensuring	
	increase social cohesion and ability to connect with loved ones	improved access for historically marginalized populations	Identify priority corridors for premium transit development	Better land use decisions			of stops Aging population	continued ecol growth and development, as it relates to regions.	particularly	
	healthy transportation choice is the easy choice for all	improved health- less chronic disease, more physical activity	Make public transit at least as desirable a transportation choice as SOV regionally	Seamless mobility for transportation access and economic vitality			Movement of people to smaller towns	Traffic congestic	Reduce sprawl, preserve natural resources	
	Traffic mitigation	A Service options	onnecting various systems (transit, ransportation, or otherwise) in a complementary way	Improved air quality resulting in healthier population		Enhanced regional identity and cohesion Coordination with future rail projects do h reduce recordination	With housing costs do high, can we reduce household expenditures by reducing car	an we those with usehold disabilities g car	FARE FREE	
systems to make the public transit and the actual contract of transportation design of the alternative to the systems to make the public transport of the systems to make the public transport of the systems to make the public transport of the systems to make the public transition of the systems to make the			Interconnect cities through popular travel patterns (ie connect destinations, not streets)			Ridership will not grow until you take people to places they want to go We need other ways to get around		ownership costs		