

Meeting Summary

Project:	LINKNoCo
Subject:	Governance and Finance Policy Advisory Committee Meeting (GFPAC)
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022
Meeting Time:	10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual

LINKNoCo GFPAC Meeting #2 Presentation

This summary reflects the general notes for this meeting to the best of the knowledge of the note taker. If you have any questions or find any errors, please contact Cavan Noone at cavan.noone@hdrinc.com. The presentation slides can be found on the project website at nfrmpo.org/transit/linknoco.

Welcome, Agenda Review, Introductions, and Meeting Goals

Carla Perez, Governance Lead Consultant for HDR, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Carla introduced Alex Gordon, Project Manager for the NFRMPO, who thanked everyone for attending and spoke briefly about the project. Carla led the group through self-introductions and then discussed the primary purpose of the meeting, which included key takeaways from the small group meetings, seeking input on roles and responsibilities, exploring thresholds for governance structures, and introducing the funding and financing options and methodology.

GFPAC Purpose and Roles

Carla gave an overview of the GFPAC's primary purpose and role, which includes guiding the consideration of governance structures, reviewing funding and finance options, helping the project team identify red flags, and identifying strategic opportunities as the team begins to prepare recommendations for the Planning Council.

Committee Updates

Carla updated the group on the activities that have occurred since the last meeting. Small groups discussions were held with Weld County, Larimer County, and CDOT where some key themes emerged, most notably that the GFPAC should focus on the funding component over potential governance structures. Carla explained how this feedback was helping to shape the GFPAC Analysis and that the team was open to additional discussions as desired.

LINKNoCo Project Status

Chris Proud, Consultant Project Manager for HDR, briefly discussed the primary goals of the LINKNoCo project, which include defining the premium regional transit network in the North Front Range, advancing the most promising corridors, and continuing to engage with stakeholders and transit users.

Chris discussed the project process graphic, explaining that the team is currently at the analysis and prioritization process step. A self-driven public meeting website will open at the end of the

month to gather additional feedback from the community, with the team moving towards unveiling final recommendations at the end of the summer.

Chris provided an overview of the Level 1 & 2 screening process and the range of technologies being considered before detailing the Level 2 alignments. He mentioned that the stop locations and service plans may evolve through further stages of planning, but that the team needed to make some assumptions for the purpose of the evaluation.

- **Greeley to Loveland (US 34)** – this alignment would operate from the UNC area in Greeley to the Civic Center area in Loveland at 30-minute frequencies, primarily along the US 34 corridor. The proposed technology is enhanced bus, similar to the Poudre Express. This project is in the NFRMPO 10-year plan and assumes the extension of Kendall Parkway under I-25 in Loveland.
- **Windsor to Loveland (WCR 17/US 34)** – this alignment would operate from the Windsor High School area to the Civic Center area in Loveland at 30-minute frequencies. The proposed technology is enhanced bus, similar to the Poudre Express. This alignment connects to major existing and future employment and residential areas and assumes the extension of Kendall Parkway under I-25 in Loveland.
- **Greeley to Loveland (Great Western)** – this alignment would operate from the Greeley Evans Regional Transportation Center area to the Old Town Fort Collins area along the Great Western corridor. A phased approach is recommended for this alignment, with additional service on the Poudre Express in the interim to build the travel market before advancing to commuter rail.

Discussion pertaining the Level 2 Alignments

Loveland to Greeley

- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) commented that there are a lot of stops on this alignment. Could we work with communities to provide local transit connections to some of the key points and remove some of the stops to improve travel time?
- Will Jones (GET) agreed with Johnny's comment and noted that there is a balance between providing enough stops to serve greater populations and having too many, which negatively affects travel time and makes the service less attractive to potential riders. He continued that UNC is an important stop to connect to with a one seat ride, but maybe the team should reevaluate the stops at Aims or the Greeley park-and-Ride to determine if they are warranted.
- Mark Jackson (City of Loveland) agreed with the previous comments and added that the western portion of the route repeats a lot of the mistakes of the previous US 34 express route. He mentioned that Loveland is looking to implement a new circulator service that would serve a lot of the same areas, adding that we should let the mobility hubs serve their purpose and have local transit services connect at those sites.
- Jon Mallo (City of Loveland) said that he agreed with the comments questioning the number of proposed stops.
- Chris Proud (HDR) said that the project team would continue to work with group to determine how far west into Loveland the route should go based on some of the feedback.

- Suzette Mallette (NFRMPO) inquired about the travel time of the route as shown. How competitive would it be with automobile travel time?
 - Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the project team is working through that analysis currently.

Windsor to Loveland

- Chris Proud (HDR) said that the comments received on the last corridor are relevant for this corridor as well, as they share some common segments.
- Will Jones (GET) asked if the project team will be looking at some of the other tools that can improve bus travel times (e.g., signal priority, dedicated lanes, etc.).
 - Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the team is currently working on detailed operating plans and evaluating conditions in the corridor, including looking at congestion at a high level and making some recommendations for spot improvements like TSP, queue jumps, exclusive lanes, etc. He reiterated that this will be a high-level review, not looking at specific intersections. Chris also mentioned that Alex Gordon (NFRMPO) has been reaching out to and presenting to relevant city councils and associated groups so they are aware of the projects and not caught off guard.
- Carla Perez (HDR) asked Mark Jackson (Loveland) if the proposed alignments should avoid duplicating local services and instead focus on making connections at mobility hubs. Mark responded that in his opinion they should.

Greeley to Fort Collins

- Chris Proud (HDR) mentioned that the team initially looked at extending the rail alignment to UNC, but this was more challenging considering rail ROW and ownership.
- Will Jones (GET) inquired as to whether there is a reason the team is proposing going from express bus to rail? (e.g., what about express/BRT along rail ROW?).
 - Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the ROW needed to build a parallel guideway would likely be even more challenging. The rationale with this alignment is to continue to build demand by adding service to the Poudre Express and then transition to rail when appropriate.
 - Will Jones (GET) responded that it still seems like we might be missing a step, considering the high costs associated with rail.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) stated that he agrees with Will Jones' comments and that the team should look at implementing BRT within the rail ROW.
- In the group chat, Mark Jackson (Loveland) commented that after the experience with the Fort Collins MAX, he would need to be shown that a BRT hybrid would not be more cost-effective option
 - Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) agreed with Mark's comment.
- Chris Proud responded that each of the alignments would undergo further evaluation in the future to determine what is the best technology/phasing.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) asked where the BUSTANG options are in these analyses?
 - Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the team is having ongoing discussions with CDOT, but they have yet to determine who would operate any of these services.

- Mayo Jeni Arndt (City of Fort Collins) asked if a passenger taking these services feel would feel like they are on one unified system.
 - Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the goal is to have it feel like one system. This could be achieved through consistent branding and design elements, which would make these services feel like part of a unified system, regardless of who is funding or operating it behind the scenes.
 - Mayor Arndt (City of Fort Collins) reiterates that having consistent branding across the services is important.
- Alex Gordon (NFRMPO) stated that the Planning Council has approved \$250K for the next steps of the LINKNoCo effort, so there is funding to keep this process moving and to help determine answers to some of these questions.

Governance

Carla Perez (HDR) reviewed the governance options and summarized the key takeaways the team had heard thus far, including that the stakeholders do not want a new regional body at this point and prefer to examine each corridor governance need independently. Carla discussed the initial approach, which would focus on utilizing Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) to their limit but stressed the need to define thresholds and alternative approaches for when this limit has been reached.

- Carla asked Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) if the ongoing Intercity Regional Bus plan update would have any impact on the US 34 alignment.
- Johnny responded that the city would have to work with the NFRMPO to determine the best approach moving forward. He said there also needs to be a better understanding of the function of Bustang service (e.g., connecting to local service at mobility hubs).

Jennifer Ross-Amato, Consultant Finance and Governance Advisor for WSP, discussed the decision-making process, which is broken down into 4 phases: Project Planning, Project Development, Project Implementation, and Operations and Maintenance. She stated that while there is no need to determine the governance process in the project planning phase, some decision-making structure would need to be identified when moving into project development phase (i.e., an IGA at the very least, which requires a project sponsor). Jennifer explained that the structure can evolve over time, but as the project gets more complex, an independent organization with the sole purpose of delivering the project may be needed.

Jennifer discussed the details of the corridor approach and stated that an IGA would need to identify the sponsor agency. She identified some core questions that could guide discussions moving forward, including:

- What are the thresholds that will require a more sophisticated decision-making structure?
- Do we need a dedicated, dependable source of funding instead of perioding funding commitments from project partners?
- Is a cohesive regional approach more appropriate?
- How are improvements viewed as a shared-cost?

Discussion pertaining the Governance Options

- Carla Perez (HDR) asked representatives from agencies that have experience with the IGA process if they had thoughts on the threshold discussion.
- Drew Brooks (Transfort) replied that the current IGA process for FLEX works well but has its deficiencies. He mentioned that the agency is in the process of quantifying the administrative process to determine if a committed staff person is needed. More than anything, the issue is the time it takes to administer/manage approvals.
- Chris Proud (HDR) asked Drew if there was a limit to the number of IGAs the city could handle, considering those they are dealing with currently. Is there a tipping point?
- Drew responded that there is definitely a limit. Fort Collins manages the process for Flex, and it is built into current staffing levels. If we added to it, the city would need to look at adding additional staff or possibly an outside contractor.
- Carla asked Will Jones (GET) if he thought the process might change depending on the alignment/technology?
- Will responded that the primary issue with IGAs is the staffing implications. Regarding thresholds, he asked if customer experience was part of the discussion (e.g., fare payment, etc.).
- Chris Proud (HDR) responded that customer experience needs to be considered and that these issues get more complicated as projects move forward.
- Jennifer Ross-Amato (WSP) commented that the current IGAs are strictly about funding. If partner agencies want to be more involved in the day-to-day decisions and issues, they must rely on the lead/sponsor agency.
- Mayor Arndt (Fort Collins) mentioned the Platte River Power Authority as a potential governance model that could be replicated here and volunteered to send the bylaws to the GFPAC members.

Funding/Finance Options

Liz Neeley, Consultant Finance Lead for WSP, discussed what the team has been working on so far, including researching various federal, state, regional, and local funding financing options and feeding the findings into an Excel tool that generates applicable funding sources based on user input (agency type, transit mode, etc.). Liz reviews some example Federal, State, and Local funding sources and the pros & cons associated with each.

Discussion pertaining the Funding/Finance Options

- Suzette Mallette (NFRMPO) commented that one of the primary funding issues is the difference between capital expenses and operating expenses. Is that something the tool can help with?
- Liz Neeley (WSP) responded that the tool identifies whether the funding source is intended for capital or operating expenses. She added that there are more funding options available for capital expenses.
- Chris Proud (HDR) responded that this is the reality of transit; there are numerous funding sources available to offset the capital elements (e.g., buses), but the hard part is identifying a committed, sustainable funding source for operations.
- Suzette agreed with Chris, adding that there are some funding options out there like CMAQ, but those are temporary. The question is what do you do beyond the 3-5 year period?

- Carla Perez (HDR) said the project team is having ongoing conversations with DTR and have stressed the need for support on the operating side, as that is the main problem with sustaining transit services.
- Liz Neeley (WSP) said the team will continue to refine this tool specific to the North Front Range and advance options based on scope of work, proponent/applicant, and other pros/cons.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) asked if this could be viewed as a Go/No-go analysis, similar to what is used in private sector.
- Liz Neeley (WSP) responded that it is similar but not as black and white
- Chris Proud (HDR) agreed, adding that in the private sector, a firm can choose not to pursue a project, but in public sector these problems still exist and need to be solved.
- Carla Perez (HDR) said that the tool will help build a strategy for each corridor.
- Mayor Arndt (City of Fort Collins) commented that someone must be in charge of updating the tool, as funding specifics/availability is always changing.
- Chris Proud (HDR) replied that there is a planning continuum, and the team doesn't have all the answers now. But each successive step will become more focused and detailed. The funding options being reviewed now represent a snapshot in time, so the tool will need to be continually updated.
- Carla Perez (HDR) asked if the tool would be given to the MPO.
- Liz Neeley (WSP) replied that it would be given to the MPO along with guidance on how to update the tool.

Polling and Discussion

Chris Proud (HDR) gave an overview of how the real time polling would work using menti.com. Meeting participants were then encouraged to vote on a series of questions (described below)

Discussion pertaining to the question “Do you generally agree with the project phases (planning, development, implementation, operations/maintenance)?”

Results: Yes, fully agree = 3; Maybe, but we need more information = 5; No, we have other suggestions = 0.

- Carla Perez (HDR) asked those that answered “maybe” to provide the group with more feedback.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) commented that he does not disagree with the process, but that he needed a better understanding of the anticipated costs/performance in the planning phase (e.g., cost/benefit of each route). He added that he wants transit where it will be utilized, not just anywhere for the sake of expansion/coverage.
- Chris Proud (HDR) responded that the team is working on that now at a high-level and explained that cost estimates will be based on general per miles costs, high-level unit costs for improvements, etc. In terms of performance, the team is looking at both modeling data and travel market data.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) added the team should specify a framework of what will be done in each phase, in which case he would vote “fully agree”.

Discussion pertaining to the question “Do you agree with the alignment-by-alignment approach, or should we package all three alignments together?”

Results: Yes, keep them separate = 2; Maybe, but we need more information = 1; No, keep them as a package = 3.

- Mayor Arndt (City of Fort Collins) commented that it would be easier to get regional support if they are packaged together versus separate.
- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) said that he views the alignments as one package, but that they will be implemented/prioritized separately
- Mayor Arndt said she agreed as long as there is a regional vision in place.

Discussion pertaining to the question “Is there an existing jurisdiction interested in taking a leadership role for any of the alignments?”

Results: Yes, count us in! = 5; Maybe, but we need more information = 1; Not interested = 0.

- Johnny Olson (City of Greeley) commented that looking at the organizations that Greeley/Fort Collins/Loveland have in place, they are the communities that would likely take the lead.
- Chris Proud (HDR) added that although every community involved would need to take part, one agency will need to take the lead.

Next Steps

Carla Perez discussed the next steps in the project, which include refining the governance options, refining the funding options, and promoting the online public engagement. She mentioned that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for July before turning it over to Alex Gordon who provides closing comments.

Attachments

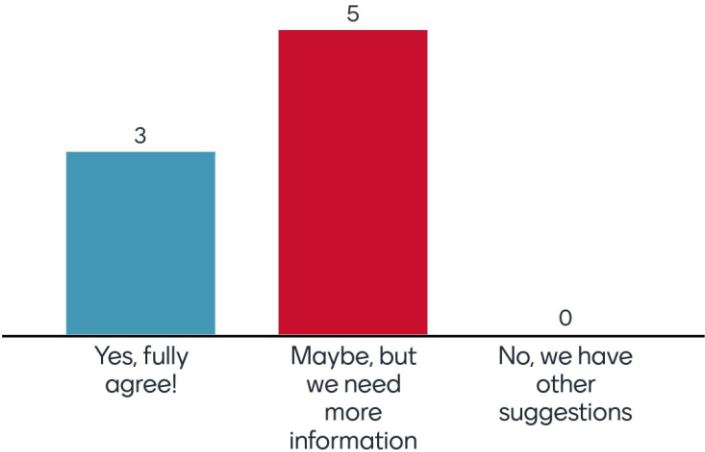
The polling results, chat box comments, committee membership and attendance, and project team attendance are included as attachments to this document.

GFPAC Meeting # 2 Attachments

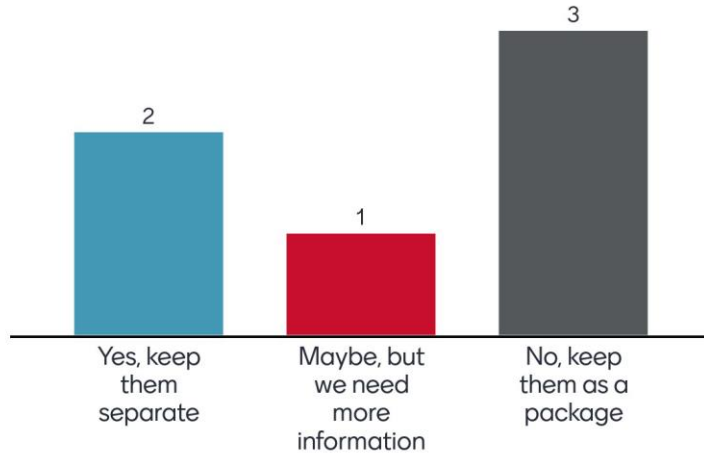
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Polling Results

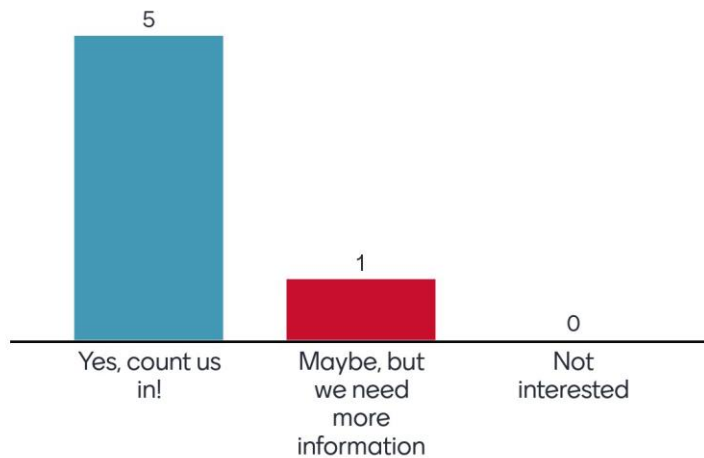
Do you generally agree with the project phases (planning, development, implementation, operations/maintenance)?



Do you agree with the alignment by alignment approach - or should we package all three alignments together?



Is there an existing jurisdiction interested in taking a leadership role for any of the alignments?



Chat Box Comments

AG 9:32 AM
We're working with Medora on modeling this so input on stops is very helpful!

Jim Eussen CDOT (Guest) left the chat.

Jim Eussen CDOT (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[Last read](#)

MJ 9:43 AM
After my experience with FC MAX, I would need to be shown that BRT or BRT/Hybrid Express is not more cost effective option.


JO 9:47 AM
I agree with Mark>
has DTR been in th econversation

AG 9:52 AM
JO 5/17/2022 9:51 AM
has DTR been in th econversation
Yes, we had a conversation with Amber, the DTR Director, and Heather, CDOT Region 4, and I'll be meeting with Region 4 engineers later this week.

JO 9:53 AM
I am hearing some rumors that DTR wants to expand their reach and services to help connect the communities while the communities are building their system to facilitate inter contention


SM 9:55 AM
What we have seen in our region is the expansion of the north I-25 service.

AG 9:56 AM
I hope they want to facilitate interconnection, not intercontention. We're trying to build relationships, not tear

JO 9:57 AM



SM 10:00 AM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZQZkpV14Hg>
This is the link to the last STAC meeting. About 1:27.

JO 10:09 AM
I would say that the NFR or CDOT need to be the sponsor at this point. They are already equipped and operate a system.

 Kevin Jones left the chat.


AG 10:42 AM
menti.com
2345 3957

SJ 10:47 AM
Folks - thanks for the conversation. I have a 12:00 appointment that I must leave for.

 Scott James left the chat.

AG 10:47 AM
Thank you, Commissioner James!

MJ 10:52 AM
With apologies, I need to run to my noon meeting. Good to see everyone working on this.

 Mark Jackson (Guest) left the chat.

AG 10:55 AM
Just a reminder, the full plan/study will be taken to Planning Council for discussion and approval later this summer/fall. Chris and Carla and the team will be incorporating what we hear in these meetings.

Governance and Finance Policy Advisory Committee

Organization	Member	Title	Attended
City of Fort Collins	Jeni Arndt	Mayor	Yes
City of Greeley	Johnny Olson	Councilmember	Yes
City of Loveland	Jon Mallo	Councilmember	Yes
Town of Berthoud	Will Karspeck	Mayor	No
Larimer County	Kirsten Stephens	Commissioner	No
Weld County	Scott James	Commissioner	Yes
CDOT Region 4	Heather Paddock	Region Director	No
CDOT Region 4	Jim Eussen	Environmental Manager	Yes
TRANSFORT	Drew Brooks	Director	Yes
Greeley Evans Transit	Will Jones	Deputy Public Works Director	Yes
Loveland Public Works	Mark Jackson	Public Works Director	Yes
Colorado State University	Aaron Fodge	Alternative Transportation Manager	No
University of Northern Colorado			No
Fort Collins Chamber	Ann Hutchison	President	Kevin Jones attended as the delegate
NFRMPO	Suzette Mallette	Exec. Director	Yes
NFRMPO	Becky Karasko	Transportation Planning Director	Yes

Project Team

Organization	Member	Role	Attended
NFRMPO	Alex Gordon	MPO Project Manger	Yes
HDR	Chris Proud	Consultant Project Manager	Yes
HDR	Carla Perez	Consultant Governance Lead	Yes
HDR	Cavan Noone	Consultant Transit Planner	Yes
WSP	Liz Neeley	Consultant Finance Lead	Yes
WSP	Ruby Lee	Consultant Finance Team	Yes
WSP	Jenifer Ross-Amato	Consultant Finance and Governance Advisor	Yes

