



Weld County Mobility Committee (WCMC)—MINUTES
June 27, 2023
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

1. Call Meeting to Order, Welcome and Introductions

- Ann Rajewski, CASTA
- Leiton Powell, Greeley-Evans Transit
- Margie Martinez, United Way Weld County
- Valorie Echard, School to Work Alliance Program Weld Re-4
- Desiree Sandoval, School to Work Alliance Program Weld Re-4
- Lisa Bitzer, Via Mobility Services
- Celeste Ewert, Envision
- Abdul Barzak, Town of Severance
- Amy Threewitt, 60+ Ride
- Hanna Johnson, City of Greeley
- Nichole Seward, Weld County AAA
- Steve Teets, WAND
- Kyle Holman, Weld Trust
- Janet Bedingfield, 60+ Ride

NFRMPO Staff: Cory Schmitt, Brooke Bettolo

2. Review of Agenda

3. Public Comment (2 minutes each)

None.

4. Approval of March 2023 Meeting Minutes

Teets moved to approve the minutes Threewitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

PRESENTATION

1) CASTA Overview

Rajewski

CASTA Executive Director Ann Rajewski provided an overview of the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) as well as the Zero Fare for Better Air campaign. If you have technical questions, training needs, and resource requests for transit or micro-mobility, consider reaching out. Slides can be found [here](#).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2) CDOT Contracting Delays & Service Updates

All

The group discussed the delays associated with CDOT for transit contracts including the impacts locally and statewide, along with steps being taken to resolve the backlog. Rajewski reported that the new director of the CDOT Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) is starting July 31. CDOT staff estimate that DTR is 60% done with administrative and operating contracts. There is concern that there are current Calls For Projects for 2024 when 2023 and even some 2022 grants have not been contracted, so CASTA



is continuing to put pressure on CDOT to ensure they work through their backlog. Kay Kelly, Chief of the Office of innovative Mobility, is working closely with CASTA during the contracting crisis. DTR has received special permission to do partial reimbursement in the meantime to fill some of the gaps until the contracts are ready.

Rajewski is working with Jan Rowe at CDOT for a session for CDOT grantees at CASTA conference, and a follow-up from CDOT listening sessions from around the state.

Schmitt asked participants if there were any agencies in attendance—or known—that have also been impacted by CDOT’s contracting delays:

- Via Mobility Services: Bitzer reported that they have received \$5311 and \$5310 contracts within the last month, submitted reimbursement from January onward, and received reimbursement rather quickly. Via is still waiting on contracts for buses and fixed-route software. Bitzer reported that the contracts have been signed for the Weld pilot, which should be ready to begin in the next few weeks. Via was able to draw on reserves to pay staff but has heard from smaller companies that had to lay off drivers and stop service, and they may not be able to begin service again. With the loss of the RTD Access-a-Ride contract, a total of 88 drivers were laid off.
- 60+ Ride: Bedingfield stated that 60+ Ride is still anticipating delivery of a 2022 wheelchair-accessible vehicle that has been sitting at a dealer lot in Denver since February, already converted and ready to go. 60+ Ride had to reduce the hours for a new employee that would handle scheduling for that route by 50% and pay them out of reserves for the foreseeable future until the contacting issues are resolved. This has caused a significant delay in service access for wheelchair-using clients in the Greeley-Evans area.
- Envision-Ewert has not seen an effect on the rides provided since they have been making sure to prioritize direct billing to Medicare and HCPF. Ewert stated that they planned their budget to accommodate for the delays but still had restricted cash flow agency-wide until reimbursements became available.

Rajewski also mentioned the State Management Plan that holds CDOT accountable to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for timely contracts and other operational benchmarks and talked with Kay Kelly to create new procedures and potentially additional staff in the Business Office to prevent this type of crisis from repeating in the future.

3) Mobility Case Studies

All

Schmitt and Bettolo shared RideNoCo Call Center Case Studies:

Case Study 1:

60-year-old man in Evans using crutches needs temporary transportation to Greeley three times a week for medical appointments and rehab.



Powell suggested that he might be in the GET service area for paratransit service, Johnson confirmed. There is a 21-day processing period for applications, but GET staff are typically getting those completed in 2 weeks, so long as the applicant has an application and doctor's note. Currently, GET is fare free, but cost would be about \$3 per ride once fares resume. Teets mentioned that the cost could be prohibitive for some residents, and Powell expressed that the service is much less than Uber or Lyft, but ultimately the rider decides whether to use the service.

Threewitt mentioned that 60+ Ride would be an option, but it takes 3 weeks to get signed up. Bedingfield verified that the client came through them originally, but staff were unable to expedite the process in time for the client's appointments. The intake process is non-negotiable, and until the paperwork is signed and filed, they cannot safely conduct the ride due to liability issues. Clients must also be responsive to phone calls and emails to ensure that the process goes as expediently as possible.

Schmitt asked if providers had ideas on how to respond more quickly to these types of last-minute requests. Martinez suggested that Banner Health Ambulance (contracted through American Medical Response - AMR out of Denver) may be a resource for last-minute options. Schmitt suggested a page in Provider's Guide for last minute, last resort transportation options. Teets seconded the idea.

Ewert suggested a fixed route potential option if the client can manage the crutches for a block. Schmitt clarified that the exact location of the client was unknown but could be followed up upon.

Case Study 2: A Spanish-speaking resident of Dacono was looking for transportation resources to share with the older adults of her community. We were able to recommend 60+ Ride and Via but were not certain if calls could be taken in Spanish and if Spanish-speaking drivers were available.

Providers that provide services bilingually

- Via Mobility has a call center- option for Spanish-speakers, as well as Spanish-speaking drivers, but the driver servicing this area does not speak Spanish.
- 60+ Ride no longer has Spanish speaking staff but has some Spanish-speaking drivers. They report having a lot of monolingual clients that have an English-speaking friend or family member who sets them up for the appointment, and then the client and the driver do their best to communicate day-of. 60+ Ride has been actively looking for ways to increase interpretation ability for the last 2 years and have had some difficulty finding an option that works. They are constantly working on this and have a partnership with insurance person that specializes in Medicare to help them search for interpretation options. There is potential for a grant to hire someone on an on-call basis.
 - Threewitt agrees with the process mentioned by Bedingfield and that the Client Intake Coordinator arranges and schedules with family member who speaks English. In Dacono, there might be drivers that they might be able to call, on an as-needed basis.

Johnson mentioned the Language Link call number the NFRMPO uses and inquired if it was possible to share a contract with the agencies on the call. Schmitt answered that the NFRMPO and Envision have a contract with LanguageLink and that the NFRMPO has not needed to use the service in the 1.5 years it's been in place.



Schmitt mentioned that Johnson’s idea was great and committed to exploring the possibilities of sharing LanguageLink access with community partners, potentially beginning with existing NFRMPO Subrecipients.

Teets mentioned that it is important that the NFRMPO communicate the gaps in transportation access and options Weld County residents experience to County Commissioners, council members, Senators and Representatives. Schmitt responded that there is room for improvement in this area, but there are several ways the NFRMPO already communicates these gaps with elected officials, including presentations and handouts to NFRMPO Planning Council members. fact sheets and newsletter articles. Bedingfield expressed that she has noticed a heightened focus on transportation in recent months at the County-level and noted that the City of Greeley is putting in mobility concepts in their strategic planning.

RIDENOCO UPDATE

Schmitt shared updates regarding the NFRMPO mobility program and RideNoCo. Slides can be found [here](#)

WORK GROUPS

4) Outreach and Education Working Group –

Bettolo

Members discussed the various coalitions, meetings, and opportunities for spreading the word about RideNoCo in Weld County. Key suggestions were to register as a navigator with United Way of Weld County, to provide education to service providers, and to attend networking events. Bettolo suggested that the members reach out to her for additional meetings and resource sharing.

5) Recruitment Working Group –

Schmitt

There was not sufficient time for this update, the WCMC will revisit in September in conjunction with presentation from Shawn Walcott on Weld’s Way Home and Aging Well collective impact initiatives.

GREELEY EVANS TRANSIT NEWS AND UPDATES

GET is hosting two travel training courses in July, one of which is in partnership with the NFRMPO and the Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment.

WCMC MEMBER UPDATES

Martinez mentioned that there would be [free dental care in Greeley](#) on September 22nd and 23rd at Island Grove Regional Park 501 N 14th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80631 provided by the Colorado Mission of Mercy.

Final Public Comment (2 minutes each)

None.

Next Month’s Agenda Topic Suggestions

None.

Upcoming Meetings:

1. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Northern Colorado Mobility Committee – August 22nd– 1:00-3:30 pm**



b. Weld County Mobility Committee – September 26th – 1:30 to 3:00 pm