

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

**August 3, 2023
Hybrid Meeting in Johnstown, CO**

Voting Members Present:

Scott James – Chair	-Weld County
Jon Mallo – Vice Chair	-Loveland
Will Karspeck – Past Chair	-Berthoud
Frank Baszler	-Severance
Kathleen Bracke	-Transportation Commission
Shirley Peele	-Fort Collins- Alternate
Mark Clark	-Evans
Paula Cochran	-LaSalle
Dan Dean	-Milliken
Jessica Ferko	-APCD
Liz Heid	-Eaton
Troy Mellon	-Johnstown
Paul Rennemeyer	-Windsor

Voting Members Absent:

Fil Archuleta	-Garden City
Lisa Laake	-Timnath
Johnny Olson	-Greeley
Kristen Stephens	-Larimer County

MPO Staff:

Suzette Mallette, Executive Director; **Becky Karasko**, Transportation Planning Director; **Alex Gordon**, Transportation Planner III; **AnnaRose Cunningham**, Transportation Planner II; **Jerome Rouser**, Transportation Planner I; and **Michael Saunders**, Transportation Planner I.

In Attendance: Chrissy Breit; Bill Becker; Brad Buckman; Jason Elkins; Jim Eussen; Nicole Hahn; Omar Herrera; Hannah Hill; Will Jones; Andy Karsian; Katrina Klobberdanz; Dee McIntosh; Mark Peterson; Evan Pinkham; Elizabeth Relford; David Singer; Josie Thomas; Eric Tracy;

Chair James called the MPO Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment:

No comments were submitted.

Move to Approve Agenda and Minutes

Heid **moved** to *APPROVE THE AUGUST 3, 2023, MEETING AGENDA*. The motion was **seconded** by Baszler and **passed** unanimously.

Mallo **moved** to *APPROVE THE JULY 6, 2023, MEETING MINUTES*. The motion was **seconded** by Baszler and **passed** unanimously.

Lead Planning Agency for Air Quality Agenda

Chair James opened the Air Quality portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Air Pollution Control Division (APCD)

A written report was provided.

Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC)

A written report was provided.

NFRMPO Air Quality Program Updates

A written report was provided.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda

Chair James opened the MPO portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Report of the Chair

No reports this month.

Executive Director Report

Malette noted Via Mobility has begun service in Southwest Weld County and provided flyers. An update on HB1101 was provided and noted there is a survey out that will close at the end of the month, a link was provided. LinkNoCo Phase Two will look deeper into transit service on US34 and the RFP for that project is out and will close on September 15th. Weld County will be the applicant for a MEGA grant for I-25 Segment 5 and will send an email to all Councilmembers that may want to provide a letter of support. Malette and James asked if the Council is supportive of Malette drafting a letter to the EPA about the proposed changes to the national Ozone standards and ramification of background ozone.

TAC

A written report was provided.

Mobility

A written report was provided.

Community Advisory Committee

A written report was provided.

Q2 2023 TIP Modifications

A written report was provided.

ACTION ITEMS:

2023 Call for Projects Guidebook – Cunningham noted the Call for Projects is scheduled to open August 4th with the call closing on October 6th with final approval at the January Planning Council meeting. The changes in anticipated funding were outlined which now includes funds that were rolled forward from the previous Call for Projects. The \$400,000 set-aside is for the TMO Incubator fund and will be \$100,000 per year. Change in the eligible applicant and the requirements for all funding projects was outlined. If a project impacts a state facility or is an ITS project, they must get CDOT concurrence. TAC recommended changing the STBG request limits for small communities are now \$1,632,177 and large communities \$3,168,343.

Rennemeyer **moved** to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2023-13 ADOPTING THE 2023 CALL FOR PROJECTS PROCESS AND GUIDEBOOK. The motion was **seconded** by Baszler and **passed** unanimously.

FY2022-2023 UPWP FY2023 Task Amendment #2 – Karasko stated Transfort requested to add two FTA-funded tasks to the FY2022-2023 UPWP. The tasks are for the Transfort Onboard Ridership Survey and the Transfort Onboard Passenger Surveys.

Rennemeyer **moved** to approve *RESOLUTION NO. 2023-14 APPROVING THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE FY2023 TASKS OF THE FY2022-2023 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)*. The motion was **seconded** by Heid and **passed** unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Cunningham outlined the changes in the FY2024-2027 TIP, which include adding a section for the process of additional allocations and the process for project overages. Cunningham added information on the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Transportation Report and added clarification on air quality significant projects by saying “two through lane miles” rather than just two-lane miles. There is an updated equity section including the new system reliability performance measures. The FY2024-2027 TIP will be released for public comment after the August Planning Council meeting. The FY2024-2027 TIP is scheduled to be adopted by Planning Council at their September meeting.

2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – Gordon noted the 2050 RTP is updated every four years, has at least a 20-year planning horizon and must look at the multimodal transportation system to meet the region’s economic, transportation, development, and sustainability goals. Projects identified in the Plan must be fiscally constrained. The Plan is divided into four sections: planning context, trends, visioning and scenario planning, and funding and financing. Gordon outlined the regionally significant corridors (RSCs) for roadways, trails and transit and plan projects. Gordon noted the funding estimates for the fiscally constrained projects with 68 percent of funding being flexible. Gordon described the scenarios evaluated in the plan: Baseline, No Build, Unconstrained, and High Density-Fiscally Constrained. The public comment period will close on August 9, and the Plan is scheduled to be adopted by Planning Council at their September meeting. The NFRMPO has received public comment with most of the comments noting the plan is too car-centric.

Bracke asked if there were any comments surrounding safety. Gordon noted one of the comments we have received from Greeley is concerning the PM1 Safety targets. Bracke asked what the overall funding need in the region is. Cunningham stated many RSC and non-RSC capacity projects were included in the unconstrained plan, and more details about the unconstrained projects is in Chapter Four of the RTP. Bracke asked how trips will change due to the change in population and job growth. Gordon noted change in trips is considered in the Regional Travel Demand Model. Gordon stated the NFRMPO is working with the consultants for the Land Use Allocation Model and the Regional Travel Demand Model to better coordinate the two models. Bracke asked how the NFRMPO will meet GHG reduction goals if VMT is increasing by 66%. Gordon noted the MOVES model assumes many of these miles will be with electric vehicles and buses. Baszler asked if there are Park-n-Rides in the plan. Gordon stated many local plans are considering this.

PRESENTATIONS:

Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPR)– Karspeck introduced the Front Range Passenger Rail district Executive Director, Andy Karsian, and David Singer the CDOT project manager for the rail study. Karspeck noted that one of the major questions Planning Council has is the decision on the preferred alignment, and confirmed the Board of Directors will vote on the alignment. Karsian outlined I-25 congestion, safety and reliability is a major issue within the state. The initial service is Pueblo to Fort Collins with opportunities for expansion in the future using existing track shared with Freight. Singer differentiated between commuter rail and inter-city rail. Commuter rail serves one metropolitan area and usually stops frequently. Inter-city rail connects metropolitan centers across the state. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) covers commuter rail, and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) covers intercity. Singer outlined there are many kinds of trips this service will accommodate, including commuting, recreation, and students. Singer outlined the history of FRPR. Karsian noted the FRPR District was created by the Legislature in 2021 and functions as a new local government created to finance, design, construct, and operate a passenger rail service along the Front Range. Voters must approve the district to be able to levy taxes. The FRPR board is comprised of MPO/COG representatives, governor appointments, including CDOT, and other key stakeholders. Karsian noted there is a unique opportunity due to strong support from the state and substantial funding from the IIJA. Karsian outlined the Corridor identification and Development Program through the FRA and noted the District applied to be part of the program. If accepted, the district will receive around half a million dollars which will help advance the project. Singer outlined the Service Development Plan which is corridor planning for railroads. The Service Development Plan process defines station locations, service frequency, onboard amenities, infrastructure improvements, ticket prices, costs and financing plan, and railroad partnerships. This is a two-year long planning process and the FRPR is about halfway done.

Singer outlined the federal regulatory and funding criteria and the route analysis considerations. The district is looking to use existing freight lines. Karspeck asked if there have been considerations for spurs? Singer noted there could be opportunities for spurs in the future. The district is currently focused on initial service but intends on investigating spurs and additional connections in the future. Bracke asked if the alignment analysis is considering future changes in travel trips. Singer stated the district is using DOLA data and projections out to

2045 to determine activity centers which is fed into the statewide travel model which gives the district insight on activity centers in the future. Singer outlined the Service Development Plan process. Karsian outlined the four-year plan leading into a Ballot Initiative which is currently scheduled for 2026. Mallette asked how they will modify the timeline based on the Governor's desire for a 2024 ballot measure? Karsian noted the Governor is a major supporter of passenger rail and strong state support is key to the development of passenger rail and revisions to the timeline are yet to be determined. Karsian stated partnerships and local coordination are key for the success of this project, and the district will engage with local stakeholders throughout the planning, design, and implementation process. Baszler asked if the district has considered a route that does not go north of Boulder. Karsian stated that has been considered, but there is a required distance to be considered an inter-city rail by the FRA. Karspeck asked if from Colorado Springs to Boulder has been considered. Singer noted that has been considered, but the FRA may not consider that corridor to be long enough. James asked if the project is built in phases will the district be taxed in phases. Karsian noted the district is considering equity and timing in taxes. James asked if disproportionately impacted communities will be considered in station location. Singer noted the district will conduct a market analysis and where trips will begin and end which will consider demographic information as well as other factors.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Transportation Commission – Bracke noted TC did approve additional funding for FRPR technical analysis. Bracke stated she listened in on the HB1101 meeting on 7/31 and expressed gratitude in the fact that Northern Colorado communities are participating in the process. Bracke noted she hoped there are additional discussions on Wellington potentially joining the NFRMPO. Bracke requested Council let her know if there is anything she can do to assist with the RPP formula discussions. Bracke thanked Weld County for agreeing to be the applicant for the MEGA grant. Mallette noted the NFRMPO will be in front of the TC in August for the GHG Report approval.

CDOT R4 Update – Thomas outlined the Inactives Projects Report. Mellon noted Johnstown has not received their contract from CDOT on the SH60 & Carlson Blvd – Intersection Improvements project. Thomas stated she will connect Mellon to Bryce Reeves who can provide assistance.

CDOT Inactives Report– A written report was provided.

STAC Report – A written report was provided.

I-25 Committee- James noted Weld County is applying for a MEGA grant for I-25 and contributing \$5 million.

Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO) – A written report was provided.

Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME) – No report.

Front Range Passenger Rail District – no report.

Host Council Member Report – Mellon noted Johnstown is nearing completion of a design study on SH60 and noted Johnstown will have to do a realignment on the SH60 and Colorado Blvd intersection. Mellon stated the Charlotte Street project which includes a park should be done in about a month.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Next Month's Agenda Topic Suggestions

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Jerome Rouser, NFRMPO Staff