

Meeting Minutes of the North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Council

November 7, 2024
Hybrid Meeting in Loveland, CO

Voting Members Present:

Jon Mallo – Chair	-Loveland
Johnny Olson – Vice Chair	-Greeley
Scott James – Past Chair	-Weld County
Tricia Canonico	-Fort Collins
Mark Clark	-Evans
Julie Cline	-Windsor
Dan Dean	-Milliken
Jessica Ferko	-APCS
Matthew Fries	-Severance
Liz Heid	-Eaton
Bill Jenkins	-Timnath
Will Karspeck	-Berthoud
Andrew Paranto	-Johnstown
Kristen Stephens	-Larimer County

Voting Members Absent:

Fil Archuleta	-Garden City
Paula Cochran	-LaSalle
Jim Kelly	-Transportation Commission

MPO Staff: **Paul Sizemore**, Executive Director; **Becky Karasko**, Transportation Planning Director; **Cory Schmitt**, Mobility Director; **Mark Northrop**, Transportation Planner II; **Jonathan Stockburger**, Transportation Planner I; **Mykayla Marek**, Transportation Planner I.

In Attendance: Richard Christy; Piper Darlington; Jim Eussen; Gina Fox; Cecil Gutierrez; Nicole Hahn; Omar Herrera; Dana Hornkohl; Mark Jackson; Annamarie Jazwick; Will Jones; Jacob Kershner; Victoria Leonhardt; Jodi Lessman; Dan Meyers; Evan Pinkham; Elizabeth Relford; Mike Silverstein; Ron Steinbach; Justin Stone; Josie Thomas; Eric Tracy; Keith Wakefield; Dena Wojtach

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

Move to Approve Agenda and Minutes

James **moved** to *APPROVE THE OCTOBER 3, 2024 MEETING MINUTES*. The motion was **seconded** by Karspeck and **passed** unanimously.

Lead Planning Agency for Air Quality Agenda

Chair Mallo opened the Air Quality portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Air Pollution Control Division (APCD)

A written report was provided.

NFRMPO Air Quality Program Updates

Wojtach provided an overview of the NFRMPO Air Quality Program Updates. Wojtach mentioned the end of the Summer 2024 ozone tracking. Wojtach noted it was a poor summer for air quality in the region. Wojtach showed the overview of the 2024 4th max values across the NFR region and, how they compare to 2023, 2022, and what was estimated from 2022-2024. There were two spreadsheets, with one excluding air quality impacts from wildfires. Every 4th max value on both spreadsheets was above 70 parts per billion (ppb) except for the Highlands monitoring center without wildfire impact.

Wojtach noted the RAQC is in the process of refining the emissions inventory. The RAQC identified potential sensitivity tests or ways to reduce emissions to understand how potential control strategies might affect projected ozone levels. If these tests result in significant changes in the model, it may shape the RAQC emission reduction strategies. Wojtach encouraged council members to understand how to track their vehicle miles traveled and emissions for the new Moves model.

RAQC also held an Indirect Sources Work Group, where changes were discussed that could be made to the regulations around indirect emissions sources based on what other nonattainment areas have been implemented. Wojtach noted that the RAQC is currently trying to identify stakeholders. Wojtach encouraged council members to reach out if they know any stakeholders relating to large commercial and retail facilities.

Wojtach noted that the Greenhouse Gas Subcommittee of the Air Quality Control Commission is currently updating its greenhouse gas resolution. Wojtach noted this resolution calls for particular attention to sectors not reaching their greenhouse gas emissions goals. She also noted the subcommittee is looking into expanding their Clean Miles policies and expanding energy efficiency reporting for buildings with large footprints and eventually using that data to set their performance standards.

The Air Quality Control Commission also scheduled a January rulemaking hearing to revise current vehicle inspection and maintenance requirements for all vehicles in ozone nonattainment areas. Wojtach noted the request for party status for the rulemaking is due the following week.

Lastly, Wojtach mentioned an Air Quality Enterprise meeting earlier that week, which called for soliciting input for ozone-benefitting projects for 2025 funding. Wojtach noted there were no comments from large fee payers and encouraged the council to reach out to any of those fee payers.

Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC)

Stephens provided an update from RAQC. Stephens mentioned a retreat RAQC took to Adams County to discuss governance, its role in the legislative process, and how emission control strategies are developed by staff and stakeholders. The RAQC board reaffirmed the need for regional compliance with the RAQC's set ozone standards. The workplan and budgeting will be discussed at RAQC's December meeting.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda

Chair Mallo opened the MPO portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Report of the Chair

Chair Mallo noted Jaclynn Streeter was recently hired as the executive director for the GoNoCo34 TMO.

Executive Director Report

Sizemore noted the policy developments in PD 14. The letter was drafted based on a discussion from the previous council meeting to reincorporate considerations of regional roadway connections and roadway capacity projects. The language was drafted and put into a letter to the October Transportation Commission meeting and was supported by several STAC members. Sizemore mentioned this letter was referred to a subcommittee of the Transportation Commission that works with statewide planning issues along with STAC. If the committee approves the language, the letter will go back through STAC and eventually back to the Transportation Commission. Sizemore noted this process is likely to take a couple of months. Chair Mallo asked if the subcommittee comprises members from the Transportation Commission, which Sizemore confirmed.

Sizemore noted that the NFRMPO is in the final rounds of hiring a mobility planner. Sizemore also mentioned the difficulties of hiring an accountant and noted that the position is being retooled as a controller. Recruitment for the controller is expected to begin the following week.

Sizemore mentioned the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies conference. The NFRMPO received the Transit Project of the Year award for the transactional data specifications project, which allows agencies across the region to share mobility data. Jenkins asked if the source code for the program is being shared across organizations. Sizemore was unsure but offered to follow up when more information is available.

Karspeck asked if the new controller position comes with a salary increase. Sizemore confirmed the position will come with a higher posted salary. Karspeck asked if the NFRMPO needed any help hiring for the position. Sizemore responded that the interviews will be conducted at staff level.

CONSENT AGENDA:

PRESENTATION: Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO) – Gutierrez started by introducing himself and then introduced Piper Darlington, the director of the CTIO. Darlington provided an update from CTIO and the passage of SB24-184. Darlington provided background on CTIO, which was started in 2009 as part of the FASTER legislation. Darlington mentioned that most people know the program as the operator of the express lanes. Darlington also mentioned how CTIO is required to pursue innovative means for efficiently financing transportation projects.

Darlington discussed SB24-184. Darlington mentioned this is an opportunity to modernize Colorado's transit and help the state grow, given the historical federal funding opportunities available this year,

especially with rail. Darlington noted there are 66 billion dollars of federal funds for passenger rail through CRISI and RRIF grants.

Darlington mentioned that SB24-184 clarifies the scope of CTIO powers and duties to explicitly prioritize reducing traffic congestion and pollution through multimodal transportation projects. SB24-184 authorizes CTIO to administer a new fee of \$3 per day for all rental vehicles. The addition of this fee is expected to generate \$92 million in revenue for the state over the next 25 years. Darlington discussed the bill's deliverables, including reports, implementation plans, a Multimodal Strategic Capital Plan, a Federal Funding Assessment, and a Mountain Rail Development Plan.

Darlington highlighted two long-term programs for CTIO. Darlington discussed the expansion of the Mountain Rail project going from Denver to Craig, a project for which CTIO has been tasked with developing the financial plan. Regarding the Front Range Passenger Rail, CTIO has been directed to partner with various regional and national rail stakeholders to explore how to deliver the Northwest Corridor as Phase 1 of the project. Darlington then highlighted two two-term opportunities for CTIO. Darlington noted the Winter Park Ski Train, which now has expanded service days on the route, and the prices of tickets have been cut by around 40% for adults and 50% for children. Darlington then discussed CTIO's work with CRISI grants, which are rail-specific. She mentions the state has already successfully secured this grant for various rail safety projects. Darlington mentioned that SB24-194 provides an opportunity to expand the reach of partners and stakeholders with whom to work.

Darlington discussed the Safety and Toll Enforcement Program (STEP). STEP is the technology CTIO uses to enforce safety violations on express lanes, including crossing double white lines, oversized vehicles in the lane, and driving in the lane express lane when it is closed. Any violations come with a \$75 civil penalty if paid within 20 days and a \$150 civil penalty if paid after that. This technology is being used along I-70, C-470, and parts of I-25 and is expected to continue to be implemented across the state. Tolling on the north I-25 corridor from Berthoud to Fort Collins will begin in the Spring. Darlington mentioned returning to discuss the implementation process with this group closer to the start date. Darlington showed examples of the advertising campaigns CTIO has launched on various social media platforms to encourage the public not to cross double white lines, noting positive public response. CTIO is also working on distributing warnings on specific corridors before fines for unsafe practices are implemented. There have been 82,149 total warnings and 540,586 total violations in Colorado.

Jenkins mentioned that he frequently sees double line crossings throughout all times of the day. Jenkins also noted the weaving vehicles often drive at higher speeds, including in construction zones. Jenkins called for automated ways to slow vehicles down, citing state patrol's limited resources along I-25. Darlington noted that CDOT now has jurisdiction to monitor speed enforcement in work zones, which will use the same technology CTIO does for toll enforcement. Gutierrez added that this would be a good test to see how well CDOT can enforce its rules before potential program expansion.

Karspeck discussed the current Front Range Passenger Rail plans and how Berthoud is not a location for a stop. Karspeck noted that he struggles to understand the benefits of not having a stop in Berthoud despite the town's historical significance with rail and the residents being in the tax district paying for rail. Karspeck cited a Colorado State University Future Center study about the negative economic impact a lack of rail stop would have on Berthoud.

TAC

A written report was provided.

Mobility

A written report was provided.

3rd Quarter 2024 TIP Modifications

A written report was provided.

VanGo 3rd Quarter 2024 Dashboard

A written report was provided.

PRESENTATION: I-25 & Mulberry Interchange – Gina Fox, CDOT, provided an overview of the I-25 and Mulberry Street/State Highway 14 Interchange Improvements Plan. Fox noted that the project has previous design plans but no construction funding. Fox noted that this should be viewed as more of a Mulberry Street project than an I-25 project. Fox discussed the project location between MP 269 and 271 on I-25, including the Mulberry Street interchange and the frontage road connections in Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins. Fox noted that she is challenged to think beyond the boundaries of this project, such as the interchange being the gateway to Fort Collins, Ault, and Wellington.

Fox discussed the proposed improvements, including unconventional traffic operations, flooding concerns, aging infrastructure, traffic growth, regional population growth, and safe and multi-modal-friendly connection points for pedestrians and cyclists. Regarding flooding concerns, Fox noted that Cooper Slough has previously caused flooding to the site's infrastructure. For safety concerns, Fox noted that there have been three fatalities on this site along Mulberry Street/SH14 since the RFP was first put out. For regional population growth, Fox mentioned the various large developments being implemented near the site.

Fox discussed the 2011 North I-25 EIS Report, which recommended three general-purpose lanes and one express toll lane from Denver to Mulberry Street/SH14. Fox noted that the main takeaway from this report should be that the project already has a large footprint cleared by environmental protections. Fox noted the project will still have to go through Fort Collins' 1041 process. Fox also noted that the new design for the interchange will be different from what is seen in the report, although aspects of the 2011 EIS report are likely to be incorporated in new ways.

Fox discussed the Interchange Type Selection Report, which evaluated various intersection types. Fox noted Fox also discussed the major movements at the intersection based on a 2035 traffic forecast. The highest forecasts include going straight on Mulberry Street/SH14, turning right onto Southbound I-25, and turning left onto westbound Mulberry Street/SH14. Fox noted the numbers on Mulberry Street have significantly increased since the last report. Johnny Olson, Benesch, added that the high volume of left turns at the site makes it more dangerous for pedestrians. Fox added that CDOT expects the Level of Service and the quality of the infrastructure to decline in the coming years.

Fox discussed the existing conditions the new interchange would seek to address and outlined the project's goals of enhancing safety, supporting equitable transportation connections across all modes, improving projected levels of service, bridge replacement, improving riding surfaces, addressing

floodplain issues, modernizing the site for electric vehicles, coordinating with stakeholders, and securing construction funds. Fox noted the importance of working jointly with Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins in addressing floodplain issues, given past problems with a frontage road being closed due to flooding. Fox ended by noting the importance of council members keeping this high on the priority list to ensure funding.

ACTION ITEM:

NFRMPO-CDOT Traffic Congestion Performance Measures Update – Karasko discussed the FHWA PM3 System Performance Updates to adjust 4-year target changes for Non-Single Occupants Vehicle Travel (SOV) and Annual Hours of Peak hours Excessive Delay (PHED) in the Fort Collins’s TMA area. Karasko noted that this was discussed at the October Planning Council meeting with Jared Kershner, CDOT. This update set the NFRMPO’s SOV from 25.6% to an adjusted target of 31.1% and the PHED from 3.7 to an adjusted target of 3.9. Karasko noted that this change only applies to the Fort Collins TMA area.

James **moved to** approve *RESOLUTION 2024-017 TO ADJUST THE NON-SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE TRAVEL AND PEAK HOURS OF EXCESSIVE DEALY (PHED) FOR THE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE: CMAQ TRAFFICE CONGESTION PERFORMANCE MEASURES*. The motion was **seconded** by Karspeck and **passed** unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

NFRMPO 10-Year Priority List Update – Karasko mentioned sending out a project list, which included 54 projects across three tiers of roadway, non-motorized, and transit projects. She added five communities that requested adding projects, including Fort Collins, Weld County, Greeley, Berthoud, and Windsor. James. Those communities will present their projects at the November TAC and December Planning Council meetings. Karasko noted she is still seeking a location to hold the 10-Year Priority List workshop. James volunteered to hold the workshop in Weld County. The group agreed unanimously.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

STAC Report – A written report was provided.

I-25 Coalition – James noted the coalition continues to meet virtually and that conversations have been good.

US34 Coalition – James noted that the US34 Coalition is determining when and where it should meet in the future. James asked members of the coalition to email Evan Pinkham with availability. James noted that Evan Pinkham will be stepping in as the Weld County representative in various transportation coalitions.

Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME) – Stephens noted that NAAPME had a budget review and a BRT study in CDOT Region 1, particularly on Federal Blvd in Denver. Stephens noted that the Community Clean Transportation Assistance Small Grant Funding is from November 4th to February. Stephens noted that around 17 million dollars were available, and the minimum award is

\$500,000. These funds will be limited to multimodal projects that can prove they are lowering ground-level ozone. Stephens noted that NAAPME will be looking at large grant funding mid-year 2025.

Front Range Passenger Rail District – Karspeck noted the district had its annual retreat on October 17th and 18th. Karspeck noted that the district’s general manager resigned, and the district held an executive session to decide how to proceed after the end of 2024. Karspeck noted that on day one, the district discussed acceptance into the FRACIPD program, the total cost of the project, and 2026 ballot measures to secure funding. On day two, the group discussed immediate budget stability, rail program development, and private funding for the project. Canonico added that the district recognized that it needed to speed up the processes to determine rail station locations. Canonico mentioned a meeting with ColoRail on November 16th to engage stakeholders.

Host Council Member Report – Mallo presented current and future projects in Loveland. Mallo noted the 4th Street Revitalization Project. This project includes updating infrastructure and providing new pedestrian-focused amenities. This project is set to begin construction in early 2025. Mallo noted that the US 34 will be widened to six lanes from Boyd Lake to Rocky Mountain. Mallo noted the US 287 Flood Mitigation project. This project involves raising a bridge by a few inches and providing channel improvements to the Big Thompson River to reduce the scope of the floodplain. Mallo noted the city is currently seeking grant opportunities to construct this project. Mallo noted other projects, including the US 287 and US 34 Intersection Improvement Project, the COLT North Transit Center Building construction, and the location search for a Front Range Passenger Rail station.

Nicole Hahn, the principal engineer with Loveland, and Keith Wakefield, an engineer with Loveland, continued the Council Member Report. Hahn noted the city received a \$400,000 Safe Streets for All grant, for which Loveland will do some planning and demonstration projects. One demonstration includes studying a potential lane reduction along US 287 downtown.

Jenkins inquired if it is worth setting up a time for each NFRMPO community to share what they have done with Safe Streets for All funding. Hahn noted the TAC would be a good place to start these discussions.

Wakefield noted the progress with the Taft and US 34 Improvement Project, which is now open to traffic.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Jonathan Stockburger, NFRMPO Staff