

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

February 5, 2026

Virtual Meeting

Voting Members Present:

Kristin Stephens – Chair	-Larimer County
Liz Heid – Vice Chair	-Eaton
Julie Cline	-Windsor
Dan Dean	-Milliken
Matt Fries	-Severance
Cecil Gutierrez	-Transportation Commission
Scott James	-Weld County
Bill Jenkins	-Timnath
Will Karspeck	-Berthoud
Patrick McFall	-Loveland
Chris Conway	-Fort Collins
Brain Rudy	-Greeley, Alternate

Voting Members Absent:

Fil Archuleta	-Garden City
Jeff Crabtree	-Evans
Paula Cochran	-LaSalle
Andrew Paranto	-Johnstown
Jessica Ferko	-APCD

MPO Staff: Elizabeth Relford, Executive Director; Becky Karasko, Transportation Planning Director; Tanya Trujillo-Martinez, Mobility Director; Jonathan Stockburger, Transportation Planner I; Mykayla Graalum, Transportation Planner I; Tahjiba Tarannum, Transportation Modeler; Aaron Hull, Mobility Planner.

In Attendance: Brad Buckman; Rich Christy; Hanna Feldmann; Will Jones; Mallo; Dee McIntosh; Scott Pearson; Lynette Peppler; Justin Stone; Denise Staley; Josie Thomas; Ron Steinbach; Eric Tracy; Jim Eussen; Ray Cundiff; Robin Keen.

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

Public Comment

No comments were submitted.

Announcements

Chairman Stephens introduced the new Council member from Fort Collins, Chris Conway, to the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

James **moved to** *APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA*. The motion was **seconded** by Karspeck and **passed** unanimously.

Lead Planning Agency for Air Quality Agenda

Chair Stephens opened the Air Quality portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Air Pollution Control Division (APCD)

Written Report was provided.

NFRMPO Air Quality Program Updates

Wojtach noted the January AQCC meeting focused on recent air quality rulemaking highlights and their implications for the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO). She stated the importance of improving air quality performance to support progress toward attainment status, while acknowledging ongoing negative air quality challenges within the region. Wojtach discussed several legislative and regulatory updates, including Senate Bill (SB) 26-22, which would provide extensions to utilities subject to the 80 percent reduction for GHG emissions, as well as SB 26-21, which expands the Clean Fleet Enterprise Authority to support both public and private sector fleet support. She noted that SB-26-003 provisions related to electric batteries and their relevance to emissions reduction efforts.

Wojtach also discussed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) proposal to significantly recalibrate the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) program, including amending the USDOT's fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2022-2026 and 2027-2031. These potential changes to the CAFÉ standards and the implications to motor vehicle emissions budgets and maintaining conformity within the nonattainment area were discussed as well as possible unintended consequences and the need for additional mitigation strategies or budget adjustments.

Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC)

RAQC did not meet in January.

Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME)

NAAPME did not meet in January.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda

Chair Stephens opened the MPO portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Report of the Chair

No additional items were reported.

Executive Director Report

Relford noted staff submitted the Council letter supporting Bustang service through the Division of Transit and Rail. She stated that sustainable funding for Bustang service was discussed, along with whether any new N I-25 projects could move forward if additional funding becomes available. Relford also noted the comment period for the CDOT 10-Year Plan comments will close on Monday, February 9, at 4:00 p.m., and emphasized the importance of regional support and partnerships in advancing these efforts.

Relford stated the audit services RFP was awarded to a firm based in Washington, D.C., and that a kickoff meeting is scheduled for February 10, noting that this firm differs from the auditor used over the past five years and staff will evaluate whether the project schedule can be maintained. She noted appreciation for Council Member Jenkins' participation in the IT Services RFP review process, stating 16 proposals were received, scored, and narrowed to three firms, with interviews scheduled and the goal of executing a contract by mid-March.

Relford further noted staff met with the Intermountain West MPO air quality team to discuss the opportunity to host a regional background ozone air quality conference in northern Colorado in 2026. She stated the conference would focus on unique regional air quality issues, with a draft agenda already developed, outreach underway to intermountain west state partners and agencies, and preliminary discussions occurring on the cost of hosting a two-day conference. Relford noted other MPOs expressed support and willingness to attend, and the EPA indicated interest in participating, with potential partnerships involving Colorado State University and the University of Northern Colorado.

Relford noted that the Mobility Team shared handouts and presented a new poster highlighting their mission of "Mobility for All". Relford stated the team is currently participating in joint outreach efforts and events, with materials and promotional items available for engagement. Relford also noted the mobility team identified opportunities for budget savings by transitioning the RideNoCo website to a new platform, which will allow staff to manage the site internally, reduce reliance on third-party vendors, and improve efficiency. Relford mentioned the Mobility Team applied for an \$8,125 CDOT Mini Safety Grant with no local match requirement to support a community safety fair planned for this summer, emphasizing transportation safety will remain a priority topic throughout the year and also additional safety grant opportunities are being pursued, including a CDOT highway safety office grant which will open later this month and close in March, with outreach planned to communities, first responders, schools, and school districts across northern Colorado to address safety and fatality reduction goals.

Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO)

Canonico provided updates from the January CTIO discussion regarding funding allocation and coordination between the Transportation Commission and CTIO. She discussed the review of projects within the CDOT 10-Year Plan for Regions 1, 2, and 4, with emphasis on coordination and funding discussions between CTIO and CDOT. The discussion included Region 4 projects such as Colorado SH 14

intersection safety improvements, operational improvements along key corridors, the I-76 overlay project, Colorado SH 52 north corridor improvements, and US 287 corridor improvements. Intersection safety improvements at US 34 and US 287 were also highlighted, along with improvements to segments of I-25 and related corridor enhancements. Intersection safety was discussed as a multimodal improvement effort. Canonico also noted coordination efforts related to matching funds and allocation adjustments associated with these projects.

Front Range Passenger Rail District

Mallo provided an update on recent Passenger Rail Board activities, noting three meetings have occurred since late November, including a meeting in January with Colorado Rail. Highlights included continued coordination among 13 Front Range counties regarding the proposed passenger rail service between Trinidad and Fort Collins, with discussion of a full-service plan that would include multiple daily round trips. The full-service plan remains contingent upon RTD providing funding for a starter service, with future service expansion anticipated. Station planning efforts continue in Denver, Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, and Fort Collins. Mallo noted the full-service plan will not advance to final implementation planning until the starter service is operational. Preliminary cost estimates were discussed, including an estimated \$885M for the concept of service, with RTD's financial contribution still to be determined. Mallo added negotiations are underway with BNSF regarding shared rail access and operating agreements, acknowledging the coordination required with freight rail operators. Additional communities have expressed interest in expanded service, with planning efforts ongoing in various communities, including station area coordination and development of partnership frameworks. Mallo noted at the January District Board they discussed station area planning and partnership frameworks necessary to support future rail implementation. A board retreat is scheduled for February 29, 2026, which will further address station area planning, community partnerships, governance, outreach, board engagement, and branding options for the service.

Canonico added she is actively working with the Front Range Passenger Rail outreach team and mentioned the suggested branding options, including potential names such as "Colorado Connector", "Colorado Ranger" and "FRED". Further updates will continue as planning progresses.

Finance Committee

A written report was provided.

TAC

A written report was provided.

Quarter 4 2025 TIP Modifications

A written report was provided.

VanGoTM Dashboard Quarter 3 2025

A written report was provided.

2026 Colorado Legislature Updates

A written report was provided.

Mobility

A written report was provided.

ACTION ITEMS:

January 2026 TIP Amendment Resolution 2026-03

Stockburger stated the January 2026 TIP Amendment includes one project addition submitted by Transfort, for the purchase of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. He noted the project is funded with \$4,838,610 in Federal Transit Administration §5339-C funds and \$852,875 in Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE) funds, all programmed in Fiscal Year 2025, and will support the purchase of six CNG buses. Stockburger stated the public comment period for the Amendment opened on January 15 and will close on February 17, and that approval of the Amendment is contingent upon no public comments being received. Stockburger noted staff identified no disadvantages associated with the Amendment and TAC recommended Council approval of the January 2026 Amendment to the Fiscal Years 2024–2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at their January 21 meeting.

James **moved** to approve RESOLUTION 2026-03 APPROVING THE JANUARY 2026 AMENDMENT TO THE FY2024-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) The motion was **seconded** by Cline and **passed** unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

MMOF and RMS Funding Deadlines

Karasko provided an update to ensure project sponsor awareness of upcoming MMOF and RMS project deadlines. She noted MMOF and RMS projects funded with ARPA–SLFRF funds have a work completion deadline of December 11, 2026, and an invoice submission deadline of January 4, 2027. Karasko clarified that these deadlines apply specifically to projects receiving ARPA–SLFRF funding. She stated only one North Front Range project has been identified under this funding category, and staff conducted outreach with the impacted project sponsor.

Karasko further noted the second funding notification applies to MMOF and RMS projects funded with HB 1466 funds, which have a work completion deadline of December 31, 2026, and an invoice submission deadline of January 31, 2027. She stated five North Front Range projects were identified under this funding category. Karasko indicated coordination occurred with CDOT and the respective project sponsors, and feedback confirmed the projects are either completed or remain on track to meet the established deadlines. She emphasized the purpose of the update was to maintain transparency, confirm project status, and proactively avoid any potential issues related to project closeout or invoicing requirements.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Transportation Commission

Transportation Commissioner Gutierrez provided an update on CDOT's 10-Year Plan and noted the plan is currently available online for public comment and encouraged members to review the plan on CDOT's website and submit comments. He stated at the prior meeting Regions 1, 2, and 4 presented projects, and he noted that he serves on the 10-Year Plan subcommittee and the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) committee, which reviewed the presentations and provided comments and suggestions. Gutierrez reported during the N I-25 corridor overview, information regarding Bustang service funding was presented which had not been shared with the subcommittee in advance. He referenced language indicating that any new N I-25 improvement projects in the plan would be predicated upon fully funding Bustang mainline services at expanded service levels on routes serving I-70 and I-25. Gutierrez noted the presentation also included positive performance information, including approximately 353,000 trips in FY2025 and a 245 percent increase in ridership since the program launched in 2015, and the North Line recovered approximately 31 percent of operating expenses through farebox revenue in FY2025. He stated, given these performance figures, he questioned why additional N I-25 projects would be predicated on funding Bustang service on other corridors and noted CTIO members were asked about their intentions to fund improvements on I-25 and I-270, as well as support funding for Bustang. Gutierrez expressed support for funding Bustang, but conveyed concern that the framing of the plan language could be connected to potential upcoming legislation which may seek to amend CTIO's authorizing documents to allow CTIO funding to be used for Bustang operations, and he stated additional details are expected as the budget and funding numbers are finalized.

Gutierrez reported, based on his experience with CTIO budgeting, he believes it may be possible to fully fund N I-25 improvements using revenue from tolling, although he noted full revenue projections are expected in March and he will provide an update following the March meeting. Gutierrez also stated I-270 remains a larger funding challenge that may require additional CTIO resources and expressed the opinion it could be difficult to advance I-270 without first completing planned N I-25 improvements. Gutierrez noted adoption of the 10-Year Plan is anticipated in April, and indicated it may be delayed further, potentially to allow related legislative actions to be addressed prior to plan approval. During discussion, James asked about the guardrails governing the CTIO enterprise dollars and whether the Legislature has authority to modify those requirements. Gutierrez responded CTIO operates within significant statutory guardrails and the Legislature can change provisions; however, he noted constitutional and TABOR-related issues must be considered to avoid jeopardizing CTIO's enterprise status. James commented on the importance of maintaining transparency regarding the use of toll revenues and expressed concern redirecting enterprise funds away from the facility generating the revenue could be perceived as disingenuous to users. Additional discussion noted that N I-25 toll revenues are a major funding source for the enterprise and a joint CTIO and Transportation Commission workshop is expected to provide more detail regarding Bustang funding needs to address an estimated \$30-\$40M shortfall. Gutierrez stated he intends to request additional information on farebox recovery across Bustang corridors, including comparisons among N I-25 and I-70 segments.

Relford asked whether Gutierrez's comments should affect the NFRMPO's approach to submitting comments on the 10-Year Plan, including whether opposing the "predicated" language could negatively affect N I-25 project advancement. Gutierrez stated the term "predicated" was interpreted as requiring Bustang funding to be addressed before additional N I-25 projects move forward. Relford suggested the NFRMPO's comments could express support for Bustang service while recommending operations be supported through an appropriate funding source that does not delay or condition improvements N I-

25. Stephens noted Bustang's value in reducing roadway demand and encouraged careful wording in the NFRMPO's comments. Gutierrez reiterated he supports Bustang but expressed concern regarding the use of conditional language as a tool to influence legislative outcomes. The Council agreed that each community would submit their own comments and the MPO comments would reflect support of the 10-year plan.

STAC Report

Stephens added regional updates were provided for Regions 1, 2, and 4, and acknowledged the ongoing coordination efforts related to funding and policy matters. She noted discussions are underway regarding potential updates to the PD 1601 interchange approval process. Relford added CDOT is beginning discussions on revisions to the PD 1601 Policy Directive and Procedure Directive, and there will be future opportunities for stakeholder input and comment.

Host Council Member Report

Cline provided updates on recent and upcoming construction projects within the community. She noted the meeting was being held at the new Community Development Building, which includes the following divisions: water resources, economic development, engineering, building and planning staff. Cline outlined several upcoming and ongoing transportation projects. The Colorado Boulevard and Crossroads Boulevard roundabout project which includes utility relocation and widening to four lanes. The Town received official notification of approximately \$500k in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for the project, along with approximately \$1.1 Min STBG funding. Utility work is underway, with construction anticipated in spring 2026. She also discussed the 13th Street and Colorado Boulevard realignment project near Kaiser Reservoir, with an estimated cost of approximately \$2.2 million, with construction anticipated to begin this summer. Additional improvements include the Crossroads Boulevard railroad crossing project in coordination with Great Western Railway near SH 257, which includes replacement of crossing panels, track work, railway approaches, striping, sidewalks, and related safety improvements, with work anticipated this spring. Three additional projects are currently in design and study phases, including County Road 70 extension connecting County Road 19 to SH 257, which will create a new roadway connection and provide improved access to the Police Department while reducing traffic on Main Street. Final design is expected to be completed within the next year, with construction anticipated in 2027–2028. Cline also provided an update on the SH 392 corridor safety study from County Road 21 to N I-25, building upon the community's roadway action plan, and noted ongoing concerns regarding safety at the SH 392 and N I-25 interchange. The SH 392 widening design from Highland Meadows to Colorado Boulevard remains under development, with an estimated construction cost of approximately \$34M due to bridge and river-related constraints. The Town is pursuing federal grant opportunities, including a BUILD grant application for replacement of the bridge.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Next Month's Agenda Topic Suggestions – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Tahjiba Tarannum, NFRMPO Staff