

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

April 2, 2026

Hybrid Meeting in Weld County, CO

Voting Members Present:

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| Kristin Stephens – Chair | -Larimer County |
| Johny Olson – Past Chair | -Greeley |
| Chris Conway | -Fort Collins |
| Dan Dean | -Milliken |
| Julie Cline | -Windsor |
| Paula Cochran | -LaSalle |
| Matthew Fries | -Severance |
| Cecil Gutierrez | -Transportation Commission |
| Scott James | -Weld County |
| Bill Jenkins | -Timnath |
| Patrick McFall | -Loveland |

Voting Members Absent:

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|----------------|--------------|
| Fil Archuleta | -Garden City |
| Jeff Crabtree | -Evans |
| Jessica Ferko | -CDPHE-APCD |
| Liz Heid | -Eaton |
| Will Karspeck | -Berthoud |
| Andrew Paranto | -Johnstown |

MPO Staff: Elizabeth Relford, Executive Director; Tonja Burshek, Controller; Becky Karasko, Transportation Planning Director; Jerome Rouser, Transportation Planner II; Mykayla Graalum, Transportation Planner I; Jonathan Stockburger, Transportation Planner I; Aaron Hull, Mobility Planner; Lisa Joyner, Mobility Specialist.

In Attendance: Darin Barrett; Bill Becker; Brad Buckman; Tricia Canonico; Tom Christian; Rich Christy; Bill Cruise; Jim Eussen; Hanna Feldmann; Will Jones; Jon Mallo; Sandra Hagen Solin; Denise Staley; Sal Pace; Lynette Pepler; Evan Pinkham; Bert Smith; Justin Stone; Steve Teets; Josie Thomas; Eric Tracy; Dena Wojtach.

Chair Stephens called the MPO Council meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Public Comment

Steve Teets, Greeley, encourages the region to work towards creating a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) due to the growth and need for connectivity in Northern Colorado. Teets mentioned the Weld County Mobility Committee agenda includes case studies on the challenges for people to get where they need to go, with getting to medical appointments being the hardest trip purpose to meet. Teets mentioned that in Greeley, the buses with squeaky brakes need to be repaired. Teets gave an open invitation for the Planning Council to attend the Northern Colorado Mobility Committee meeting that happens quarterly in Windsor. Teets stated the proposed transit route between Greeley and Loveland needs to be improved so the route provides better connectivity.

Councilmember Announcements

Olson announced the City of Greeley is starting a West Greeley Oversight Committee. They are currently accepting volunteers for the committee board, and the board will meet once a week and report solutions and recommendations to Greeley's City Council. Olson explained why it would be important to get involved in the West Greeley Oversight Committee from a transportation perspective.

CONSENT AGENDA

James **moved to** *APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA*. The motion was **seconded** by Olson 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)

A written report was provided.

NFRMPO Air Quality Program Updates

Wojtach reported that the EPA has approved Arizona's 179B analysis for the Phoenix-Mesa Ozone Nonattainment Area, allowing their region to be classified as a moderate nonattainment area and avoid future downgrades. She noted that the approval was based solely on international contributions, as the EPA did not act on other factors included in the analysis, such as wildfire and biogenic contributions. Wojtach provided an update on planning for the upcoming Intermountain West 2026 Ozone Exchange. The conference is anticipated to be held over two or three days, and Council members were encouraged to reserve October 12 through October 14, 2026, to attend. She added that the NFRMPO will need to begin securing partnerships and sponsors to help offset event costs.

Olson stated that the group would benefit from additional information on Section 179B, including the cost and level of effort required to complete such an analysis, and suggested it could be a valuable topic for a presentation at the conference. He also noted that Weld County has made significant progress on air quality in recent years and encouraged submission of an abstract. Olson added that the oil and gas industry has also made notable improvements and should be included in the conversation. Wojtach responded that Arizona invested substantial resources into its 179B analysis, including contractor support, staff time, and coordination with EPA, representing a significant financial commitment. She noted that demonstrating international contributions becomes more difficult farther inland, such as in Colorado. Wojtach added that the conference is planned to include a panel discussion on the 179B analysis and emphasized that these analyses ultimately require approval from the governor. She also highlighted the importance of including environmental groups in the discussion, even if their ability to contribute financially is limited.

Relford emphasized the importance of using the conference as an opportunity to bring stakeholders together to foster discussion and begin developing a coordinated communication strategy moving forward.

Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC)

Stephens explained that the Clean Air Auto Repair program assists individuals with vehicle repairs needed to pass the state's emissions test. She noted the program is expanding into the NFRMPO region using NAAPME funding, pending execution of a contract with CDOT. Stephens also outlined eligible repair costs and the process for receiving assistance.

Fries stated that a constituent had inquired whether small businesses would be eligible for the Clean Air Auto Repair Program. Stephens responded that she would follow up on the question and noted that a separate program exists to support the replacement of older diesel vehicles with cleaner alternatives.

Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME)

Stephens explained that NAAPME is funded through sources such as the retail delivery fee and rideshare revenue. She noted that rideshare revenue has fallen below projections, requiring adjustments to NAAPME's budget. Stephens also announced that the next NAAPME meeting will be held on April 23, 2026.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda

Chair Stephens opened the MPO portion of the meeting.

REPORTS:

Report of the Chair

Stephens awarded Canonico a certificate of appreciation to thank her for serving on the NFRMPO Planning Council.

Executive Director Report

Relford explained that as part of the MPO's Certification Review, the public is invited to provide feedback on their experience with the MPO through a survey available on the website through May 1, 2026. She noted the MPO has updated its logo and color palette to improve digital accessibility, and the MPO submitted a SIPA microgrant to purchase digital accessibility software. Relford reported the Highway Safety Office grant application was submitted, with award announcements expected on April 20, 2026. She also shared that the MPO completed its IT transition to a new service provider, resulting in cost savings that will be reinvested into technology improvements. Relford explained ongoing audit efforts, which have identified outdated policies that may result in an audit finding. She noted the Finance Committee's actions to affirm the mileage reimbursement process and support updates to job position descriptions. Relford shared the Acumatica financial module go-live date will be May 4th with the payroll module being delayed.

Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO)

Canonico shared they received an update on Mountain Rail service at their last meeting. She announced they plan to start year-round service in November, so they voted on allotting \$500,000 of funding towards early procurement for a layover facility in Granby. Canonico stated they are also looking into a West Metro Station in Arvada for the Mountain Rail service. Canonico provided an overview of the 10-Year Plan project strategy for I-25 and I-270.

Transportation Commission

Gutierrez shared that the TC has been involved in a significant number of joint meetings with other organizations, including another joint CTIO meeting on Bustang service. He shared there will be a meeting on April 28, 2026, to discuss the joint service agreement between RTD, CTE, TC, and CTIO regarding Front Range Passenger Rail.

Front Range Passenger Rail District

Mallo reported that at the March 26, 2026 meeting, the District discussed a resolution to identify the primary station location in Douglas County as Sterling Ranch. He explained the proposed site is near US 85 and Titan Road along the Santa Fe Drive corridor between Castle Rock and Highlands Ranch. Mallo also noted discussion of a potential special events station at Burnham Yard in Denver. Mallo shared that the District has hosted town halls in Pueblo, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Fort Collins, with additional meetings planned in Longmont, Denver, Loveland, and Westminster. He added that the Boulder town hall will be rescheduled. Mallo reported that more than 25,000 votes were cast in the “Name the Train” contest, with the governor scheduled to announce the winning name on April 6, 2026, at Union Station. He also provided an overview of the District’s marketing and outreach efforts. Mallo stated that the District boundary will be realigned, resulting in Timnath, Windsor, and Johnstown being removed from the District and no longer subject to taxation.

James asked about the cost of consultants supporting the District. Mallo responded that he was unsure. Canonico clarified that to place a measure on the ballot, the District is statutorily required to conduct outreach. She stated many consultants are supporting those efforts, which include town halls and boundary planning. He added that the District currently has three full-time employees and limited staff capacity relative to the workload. McFall requested additional documentation on the District’s budget and funding sources.

Finance Committee

A written report was provided.

March 2026 TAC Executive Summary

A written report was provided.

2026 Colorado Legislature Updates

A written report was provided.

Mobility Program Updates

A written report was provided.

ACTION ITEM:

March 2026 TIP Amendment

Stockburger noted the March 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment included two project additions from Transfort. The first project addition was the *Transfort MAX BEB Purchase* with \$4,979,250 State CDOT CTE funding and \$553,250 Local funding in FY26. The second project addition was the *Transit Operations Program* with \$2,666,024 State CDOT CTE funding and \$296,225 Local Funding in FY26. Stockburger stated the public comment period opened March 5, 2026, and will close on April 6, 2026. He added staff noted no disadvantages, and TAC recommended approval of the two additions.

James **moved** to approve *RESOLUTION 2026-08 APPROVING THE MARCH 2026 AMENDMENT TO THE FY2024-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)*. The motion was **seconded** by Cline and **passed** unanimously.

PRESENTATION:

Front Range Passenger Rail District Update

Pace provided an overview of the Front Range Passenger Rail District. He noted that the project is advancing in phases, with initial starter service between Fort Collins and Denver funded through RTD and state enterprises anticipated as early as 2029, with expanded service planned over time. Pace noted that initial service is being designed to maximize cost-effectiveness by using existing rail infrastructure and avoiding the need for significant new right-of-way. Pace discussed ongoing coordination with freight rail partners, development of a service plan, and efforts to refine station locations and local partnerships. Pace shared that the District is exploring a 2026 ballot measure and is currently advancing public engagement, financial planning, and implementation strategies to support that effort. He added that proposed funding and governance approaches emphasize collaboration with local communities, including opportunities for municipalities to play a role in station development and receive funding support.

James calculated the estimated operating cost per passenger based on the figures presented and stated it would be approximately \$54.75 per passenger, compared to a proposed fare of \$8.75. He asked whether the roughly \$46.00 difference would be subsidized through sales tax revenue. Pace responded that feedback from voters indicates a preference for funding the service through a sales tax rather than alternatives such as a property tax and emphasized that the service represents an investment in an alternative transportation option. Pace added that the presentation reflects a high-end operating cost estimate and a low-end ridership projection.

Stephens asked for clarification on whether the measure would be placed on the ballot this year. Pace responded that this is the current plan, noting that notification to the Secretary of State would be required by the end of July, with ballot language to be finalized in August.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

Rouser provided an update on the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and adoption timeline. He provided an overview of the Plan's purpose, summarized the chapters and key content, summarized ATP survey responses, provided examples of Regional Active Transportation Corridor (RATC) profiles and segment-level information, and presented the action steps recommended in the Plan. Rouser noted the public comment period opened March 20, 2026, and will close on April 20, 2026. The Plan will go to TAC in April for recommendation, followed by Planning Council consideration for adoption in May.

Relford mentioned the MPO is in the process of making the Rouser, the MPO staff member involved with the NoCo Bike & Pedestrian Collaborative, a participant in the Collaborative instead of the facilitator. Relford explained that by doing this, the MPO will have more time to focus on implementing ATP action steps and development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

COUNCIL REPORTS:

STAC Report

Stephens reported that a group called Truckers Against Trafficking provides training to help drivers recognize and report human trafficking. She noted that she can connect interested businesses or organizations with a contact that can give presentations or provide additional information. Stephens shared that STAC received updates on Bustang and tolling, though no definitive decisions have been made at this time. She also noted there has been limited movement on the Transportation Reauthorization Bill. Stephens stated that the Bridge Enterprise will be receiving additional funding to support improvements to bridges in poor condition and provided an update on electric vehicle sales and related funding efforts. Stephens reported that STAC received a presentation on roadside fire mitigation. She explained that, due to lower-than-expected snow removal expenditures this year, additional funding is available for fire mitigation efforts, which is particularly important given current drought conditions.

Host Council Member Report

James invited Evan Pinkham, Weld County TAC Representative, to provide updates on transportation projects in Weld County. Pinkham reported that the County has initiated an update to its Transportation Plan and will be forming a stakeholder group as part of that process. He also noted that the Planning Department is updating its Comprehensive Plan, with ongoing public outreach and stakeholder engagement, and that both plans are anticipated to be completed later this year. Pinkham shared that improvements are underway on High Plains Boulevard, which serves as a parallel route to I-25 between SH 119 and SH 66. The project includes construction of a one-mile roadway segment north of SH 66 between WCR 32 and WCR 34, which includes new roundabouts at both intersections. He also announced a roundabout project at CR 54 and CR 13 will begin construction soon. He noted the project received funding through the NFRMPO. Pinkham added that the roundabout project at CR 54 and CR 13 will be followed by corridor improvements along CR 54 to the east between the county line and SH 257.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Next Month's Agenda Topic Suggestions – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Mykayla Graalum, NFRMPO Staff