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

June 4, 2026
Hybrid Meeting in Berthoud, CO

Voting Members Present:

Kristin Stephens – Chair	-Larimer County
Liz Heid- Vice Chair	-Evans
Nicholas Bashford	-Johnstown
Julie Cline	-Windsor
Matthew Fries	-Severance
Cecil Gutierrez	-Transportation Commission
Scott James	-Weld County
Bill Jenkins	-Timnath
Will Karspeck	-Berthoud
Patrick McFall	-Loveland
Anne Nelsen	-Fort Collins Alternate

Voting Members Absent:

Paula Cochran	-LaSalle
Jeff Crabtree	-Evans
Jessica Ferko	-CDPHE-APCD
Johnny Olson	-Greeley
Michael Orcutt	-Milliken

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

In Attendance: Samson Aflabi; Brad Buckman; Ed Cannon; Tricia Canonico; Rich Christy; Michelle Edgerley; Hanna Feldmann; Bob Gowing; Meaghan Johnson; Will Jones; Katrina Kloberdanz; Peterne Koukpesso; Jon Mallo; Lynette Peppler; Evan Pinkham; Denise Staley; Justin Stone; Josie Thomas; Eric Tracy; Keith Wakefield; Dena Wojtach.

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

Public Comment

None.

Councilmember Announcements

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

James **moved to** *APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.* The motion was **seconded** by Heid 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 provided an update on activities occurring in May related to the upcoming ozone conference. She reminded members that, while she serves on the Regional Air Quality Control (RAQC) Board, she was providing updates in her role as a consultant. Wojtach noted the AQE previously awarded $100,000 to NFRMPO and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) to support planning and hosting the ozone conference. She explained the AQE invited the project team to return with a supplemental funding request based on recommendations provided during the award process. Those recommendations included expanding the conference duration, improving public communication on air quality issues, identifying research gaps to support future AQE funding efforts, and publishing conference outcomes. Following discussions with AQE staff, the project team elected to incorporate three of the recommendations, including expanding the conference to three days, enhancing public communication efforts, and identifying future research needs, while opting not to pursue a formal publication process beyond the final conference report. Wojtach stated a supplemental request for an additional $150,000 has been submitted and a decision is expected in June following AQE Board action.

Wojtach noted expanding the conference from two days to three days significantly increased estimated conference costs from approximately $450,000 to $670,000. She explained the largest cost increases are associated with food and beverage services, speaker stipends, scholarships, interpretation services, and efforts to maintain affordable registration fees while encouraging participation from researchers, government agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders. Wojtach further explained, if approved, the additional funding would increase total AQE support to $250,000 and help maintain registration costs at approximately $300 per attendee based on an estimated 500 participants, including approximately 475 paid registrants.

Wojtach reported the call for abstracts has been released, with submissions due by June 23, 2026. Topics include wildfire impacts, air quality research, planning and management strategies, public communication, and emerging air quality issues. She noted staff continues to promote the conference and have received several abstract submissions to date. Two conference town halls were held, each attracting approximately 18 attendees outside of the planning team. Participants included individuals from Colorado, as well as Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California. Wojtach stated additional outreach is needed to increase participation from environmental organizations and community groups.

Wojtach also provided an ozone monitoring update, noting several monitoring stations had already recorded 8-hour ozone concentrations above the 70 parts per billion (ppb) standard as of June 1, 2026. The Greeley-Weld, LaSalle Tower, and Timnath monitors had each recorded three exceedances ranging from 71 to 77 ppb. She explained that ozone attainment determinations are based on the fourth-highest eight-hour average value over a three-year period and cautioned anticipated hot summer conditions could result in additional high-ozone days. Wojtach encouraged members to continue promoting ozone awareness programs and outreach efforts to help reduce emissions and minimize ozone formation throughout the region.

Commissioner James asked whether all ozone exceedance days shown in the monitoring summary were associated with wildfire smoke impacts. Wojtach explained that RAQC recently implemented a smoke impact probability assessment for high ozone days. She noted the current exceedances shown in the report were identified as having no smoke impact. Wojtach stated as the summer season progresses; future reports may include classifications indicating low, medium, or high smoke influence to help identify whether elevated ozone concentrations were significantly affected by wildfire smoke.

Jenkins asked whether real-time ozone monitoring data for individual monitoring stations is available online. Wojtach responded ozone monitoring data is continuously collected and updated through rolling eight-hour averages, with data generally uploaded on an hourly basis. She noted that online access to this information is available, and indicated staff would provide follow-up information on how to access the monitoring data.

Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC)

Stephens provided an update on Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) activities. She noted a white paper and one-page summary addressing health impacts related to air quality are expected to be completed by the end of June and presented to the RAQC Board in July 2026. Stephens also reported a future ozone impact analysis is scheduled for completion by June 30, 2026. The analysis will evaluate emission control strategies, calculation assumptions, and associated ozone reduction estimates based on the Fall 2025 Blueprint control strategies.

Stephens noted a series of Blueprint workshops will be held throughout the summer and fall to discuss ozone reduction strategies. Scheduled workshops include a July 15 session focused on point sources and oil and gas, a July 28 session addressing non-road and non-point sources, and an August 12 session focused on on-road transportation sources.

Stephens further reported that RAQC staff will support and participate in the upcoming Ozone Exchange Conference and will develop abstracts highlighting ongoing work being conducted by RAQC staff and consultants. She also noted the Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise did not meet in May, and the next meeting is scheduled for June 20, 2026.

Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME)

Stephens mentioned Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Enterprise (NAAPME) did not meet in May, the next meeting scheduled for June 20, 2026.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda
REPORTS:

Report of the Chair
Stephens provided an update on federal transportation funding discussions related to the proposed Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill (Build America 250 Act), which had recently advanced through its first committee. She noted that the bipartisan proposal contains more overall transportation funding than initially anticipated, despite earlier concerns funding levels could decrease.

Stephens highlighted several notable provisions of the proposal, including increased funding for bridge programs and additional bridge formula funding directed to local governments. She reported discretionary grant funding would be reduced compared to current levels, while transit funding would decrease modestly but not significantly. She also noted the federal Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) is proposed for elimination; however, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding would remain available to support projects in ozone and nonattainment areas.

Additional updates included increased funding opportunities for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), particularly for planning activities, as well as a reduced local match requirement, which is expected to improve access to federal funds. Stephens also noted additional investments proposed for freight-related projects, including truck parking, and stated the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program would continue, providing local governments with direct access to transportation safety funding opportunities.

Stephens also announced the completion of the final segment of the Poudre Trail, a project more than 50 years in the making. She reported a ribbon-joining ceremony will be held at Timnath Community Park on June 13 at 9:00 a.m. to celebrate completion of the trail connection. The completed trail now provides a continuous regional connection from Bellevue, northwest of Fort Collins, to Greeley. Additional community activities were planned following the ceremony. Stephens noted the project represents a significant regional achievement by connecting communities throughout the corridor.

Executive Director Report
Relford provided a written report of organization updates in the packet and used this time to provide a legislative recap. She reported, based on a recent CDOT presentation, there is optimism that the current surface transportation reauthorization bill will advance through the U.S. House of Representatives before the September 30, 2026, deadline, although additional discussion and potential modifications are anticipated in the Senate. Relford noted MPO executive directors met following the presentation and generally agreed that the proposed Act is more favorable than initially anticipated, with funding levels expected to remain relatively stable. She stated that NFRMPO staff will continue to monitor developments and share updates as additional information becomes available from CDOT and national transportation organizations.

Relford discussed House Bill 26-1398, which modifies the distribution of Retail Delivery Fee revenues. She explained the previous allocation of 85 percent to local communities and 15 percent to CDOT was changed to 70 percent for local communities and 30 percent for CDOT. Relford noted local agencies are interested in understanding how the additional CDOT share may be utilized, including potential support for Bustang and other statewide transportation services.

Relford also discussed House Bill 26-1399, which eliminates the General Fund transfer previously allocated to MMOF program. She noted that the bill removes the approximately $10.5 M General Fund transfer and limits the funding transfer to a three-year period while retaining the Retail Delivery Fee. Relford stated NFRMPO staff are evaluating the impacts of the legislation on the organization and regional transportation funding and will provide a detailed update at a future Technical Advisory Committee meeting before presenting the information to Planning Council.

Relford discussed House Bill 26-1430, legislation introduced in response to Initiative 175, which proposed redirecting General Fund revenues to transportation purposes. She explained, if enacted, House Bill 26-1430 would reduce the state gasoline tax from 22 cents per gallon to 14 cents per gallon while maintaining overall transportation funding at a net-neutral level. Relford noted the bill would establish a Transportation Funding Work Group, appointed by the Governor and legislative leadership, to evaluate long-term transportation funding needs and funding strategies for Colorado. She added the legislation also creates a new Road Enterprise Cash Fund supported through oversized and overweight vehicle permit fees. While the initial funding level is estimated at approximately $14.2M, CDOT believes the framework could provide future opportunities to support roadway asset management and maintenance programs.

Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO)

Canonico provided an update on the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO) meeting held on May 20, 2026. She reported the Pikes Peak region requested CTIO support for an Express Toll Lanes study, which is moving forward. While the study is outside the NFRMPO region, Canonico noted its importance for travelers utilizing the I-25 corridor through the Pikes Peak area.

Canonico reported the Transportation Commissioner raised concerns regarding speeding and tailgating within the I-25 Express Lanes system. Board members discussed whether future legislative action may be needed to address safety concerns and expressed support for further evaluation of potential solutions.

The Board also reviewed annual toll policy updates and proposed toll rate adjustments. Canonico explained toll rates are evaluated annually to balance traffic throughput, reliable travel times, debt obligations, and maintenance requirements. For North I-25 Segments 6, 7, and 8, toll rate increases will be deferred because tolling operations have not been in place long enough to establish sufficient performance trends. However, CTIO anticipates transitioning those segments to dynamic pricing in the future.

Canonico noted I-25 Segment 2 southbound continues to experience speeds below the target threshold of 45 miles per hour during peak travel periods. To improve performance, CTIO approved a 4.5 percent toll rate increase based on the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Consumer Price Index (CPI) and adjustments to peak-period pricing schedules. Operations and maintenance costs are expected to increase by 3.6

percent. No toll adjustments were recommended for vehicles with four or more axles, which are currently subject to a $25 surcharge and represent less than one percent of express lane users.

The Board also discussed CTIO's 10-Year Plan and ongoing conversations regarding funding for bus-on-shoulder operations. Members agreed these discussions should be evaluated separately from the 10-Year Plan and emphasized the need for a comprehensive analysis of toll revenue sources, corridor-specific expenditures, enforcement costs, user travel patterns across multiple corridors, and restrictions governing toll revenue use. Board members also identified a need for improved public communication regarding how toll revenues may be spent.

Finally, Canonico reported CTIO reviewed the West Metro Station Study associated with the Mountain Rail initiative. The study includes evaluation of a future station location in the Arvada area and represents continued progress toward implementation of Colorado's passenger rail network.

Cecil Gutierrez added Board members discussed concerns regarding the proposed 4.5 percent inflation-based toll increase and its potential impact on users given current fuel costs and other transportation expenses. CTIO staff were asked to further evaluate the proposal and return with potential policy recommendations regarding future toll-setting practices and equity considerations.

Relford commented on current utilization of the North I-25 Express Lanes, noting despite significant congestion in the general-purpose lanes between Greeley and Fort Collins; she has observed relatively low use of the express lanes. She questioned whether lower toll rates could potentially encourage greater utilization, improve corridor throughput, and generate additional revenue. Relford also expressed interest in understanding the relationship between pricing levels and user behavior as additional operational data becomes available.

In response, Gutierrez stated the North I-25 Express Lanes have been operational for less than a month and additional time is needed before meaningful conclusions can be drawn regarding travel behavior and pricing effectiveness. He noted similar usage patterns were observed following implementation of the South Gap Express Lanes and suggested that a six-month evaluation period would provide a more reliable assessment of utilization trends.

Councilmember Jenkins asked whether CTIO adjusts toll prices to evaluate changes in traveler behavior and determine optimal pricing levels. In response, Gutierrez explained current technology limitations prevent dynamic pricing on North I-25 Segments 6, 7, and 8. However, CTIO expects to implement dynamic pricing once system upgrades are completed and plans to evaluate the first six months of operational data before making future pricing adjustments.

Gutierrez further explained dynamic pricing is currently used on I-25 Segments 2 and 3 in the Denver region, the South Gap corridor, and the Central I-70 corridor. He noted the primary objective of managed lanes is to maintain reliable travel speeds and consistent trip times within the express lane system. While traffic conditions in adjacent general-purpose lanes are monitored, managed lane performance is primarily measured by the ability to provide a predictable and reliable travel experience for users.

Front Range Passenger Rail District

Jon Mallo provided an update on Front Range Passenger Rail District activities. He reported SB 26-172 was signed into law on May 26, 2026, in Fort Collins. The legislation establishes district boundaries, authorizes administration of the consolidated election by the Secretary of State, allows subdistricts, and revises director eligibility requirements.

Mallo reported the District has completed most Phase I activities and is transitioning into Phase II. Key accomplishments include development of a joint service agreement among the six participating entities, initiation of station coordination efforts with municipalities, selection of a preferred route alignment, commencement of financial modeling, and expansion of public outreach efforts. He noted financial modeling is expected to be completed within the next several weeks and will be used to establish the final tax rate assumption for future consideration.

Mallo also reported the District identified Sterling Ranch as a replacement for Douglas County representation and adopted a special events policy. Potential future special-event rail services discussed include service to Broncos games, Denver Summit events, and destinations associated with the Air Force Academy, Colorado State University, and the University of Colorado. He noted these opportunities remain long-term possibilities and would depend on future service implementation.

Mallo highlighted extensive public outreach activities conducted during Phase I, including attendance at numerous city council meetings, development of polling plans, approximately 500 media stories, more than 40,000 digital contacts, and 20 public town halls. He noted the train's name, Colorado Connector, has received positive public feedback, and additional branding efforts are underway to distinguish the Colorado Connector (CoCo) passenger rail service from the Front Range Passenger Rail District organization.

Mallo reported on recent municipal coordination efforts. He noted the Fort Collins City Council held a work session on May 26 to discuss passenger rail station planning, and additional discussions are expected at a future meeting. He also reported the Loveland City Council unanimously approved a resolution confirming the proposed Loveland passenger rail station concept. The resolution provides a written framework for future station development and will assist the District in communicating specific station plans to voters if a ballot measure is pursued. Mallo added because the resolution was approved before June 30; the project is expected to qualify for a 10 percent bonus incentive associated with the program.

Mallo briefly noted ongoing statewide discussions regarding Initiative 175 and its potential transportation funding implications, indicating the District will continue monitoring developments. Canonico added the timeline for a potential ballot measure has changed because of the recently adopted legislation. Mallo explained because election administration will now occur through the Secretary of State rather than individual county clerks; the District has additional time to determine whether to proceed with a ballot measure. As a result, the traditional pre-election quiet period is expected to begin around August 15, with the District Board's anticipated final decision on whether to proceed to the ballot at its late-August meeting.

Finance Committee

A written report was provided.

May 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:

May 2026 TIP Amendment

Stockburger presented the May 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment, which includes two project modifications and one project addition. The first modification is for the Larimer County project at Weld County Road (WCR) 13/Larimer County Road (LCR) 1 and WCR 54/LCR 18 roundabout, adding $10,614,122 in local overmatch funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. The second modification involves the City of Fort Collins Foothills Transit Station Roundabout project. The project scope is being revised from final construction to final design. As part of the modification, $10,714,000 in Federal RAISE Grant funding is being removed following the withdrawal of the grant award by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Additionally, $389,835 in NFRMPO funds is being removed from FY 2025 and $96,019 from FY 2026 as the City of Fort Collins declined its second NFRMPO funding award. The project will also remove $400,000 in FASTER funds, which will be re-scoped for a future project. Further funding reductions include $1,587,110 in local funding and $732,371 in local overmatch funding. The remaining local funds will be retained to satisfy NFRMPO match requirements.

Stockburger noted the project addition is the City of Greeley's 35th Avenue Intersection Improvements project. The project includes $850,000 in federal discretionary funding, $298,694 in Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding, and $256,799 in local funding, all programmed in FY 2027.

Stockburger reported the public comment period for the Amendment opened on May 18, 2026, and will close on June 16, 2026. Approval of the Amendment is contingent upon the receipt of no public comments during the comment period. He also noted an environmental and demographic impact analysis was conducted for the Greeley project and is included in the meeting packet. The TAC reviewed the Amendment on May 20, 2026, and recommended approval, finding no disproportionately adverse impacts to disadvantaged populations.

Chair Stephens asked whether the removal of construction funding from the Fort Collins Foothills Transit Station Roundabout project would result in a significant delay to project implementation.

Stockburger responded he had not received an updated project schedule from the City of Fort Collins and indicated additional information may become available through the upcoming TIP development process later this year.

Relford added NFRMPO staff have discussed the project with City of Fort Collins representatives. She explained the City intends to continue advancing project design while evaluating alternative funding opportunities to replace the withdrawn federal funding. Relford noted maintaining project design progress will allow the City to remain prepared to advance construction once replacement funding is secured. She further explained the TIP Amendment was required to formally remove the previously programmed funding from the project.

James **moved** to approve *RESOLUTION 2026-11 APPROVING THE MAY 2026 AMENDMENT TO THE FY2024-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).* The motion was **seconded** by Heid and **passed** unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

2025 NFRMPO Audit

Koukpesso, of STA PLLC, presented the Fiscal Year 2025 audit results and thanked NFRMPO management and staff for their cooperation throughout the audit process. He provided an overview of the audit approach, which included review of federal grant revenue recognition, cash and investments, lease accounting under GASB 87, compensated absences under GASB 101, compliance with Uniform Guidance requirements for federal awards, and required fraud risk procedures. Koukpesso reported all areas were tested extensively with no compliance issues, exceptions, fraud findings, or indications of management override identified during the audit.

Koukpesso reported NFRMPO received an unmodified audit opinion, indicating the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). He further noted auditors identified no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies in internal controls, and no federal compliance findings or questioned costs.

Koukpesso stated NFRMPO remains in a strong financial position. Total net position at year-end was approximately $7.26M, a decrease of approximately $238,000 (3.3 percent) from the prior year. Total assets were approximately $8.30M, while total liabilities were approximately $1.03M, primarily consisting of lease liabilities and accumulated leave obligations. Cash and investments totaled approximately $6.30 M, representing a slight increase from the previous year. Federal awards expended increased to approximately $1.53M, exceeding the federal Single Audit threshold and representing a significant increase from the prior year.

Koukpesso noted the MPO General Fund reported total revenues of approximately $1.83M and expenditures of approximately $2.16M, resulting in a net decrease in fund balance of approximately $325,000. The year-end General Fund balance was approximately $276,810, including an unassigned fund balance of approximately $264,242. He also reported the VanGo™ Vanpool Program ended the year with a net position of approximately $6.99M and experienced a positive change in net position of approximately $87,500, supported by investment and nonoperating revenues. The VanGo fare recovery ratio increased to approximately 21 percent in FY 2025.

Koukpesso reported there were no disagreements with management, no significant difficulties encountered during the audit, and no material misstatements requiring reporting. One adjustment of approximately $3,925 related to a bank reconciliation difference was recorded by management and was below the audit materiality threshold. He further confirmed STA PLLC remains independent with respect to NFRMPO and concluded by highlighting upcoming Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements may affect future financial reporting.

2026 NFRMPO Budget Update

Burshek presented the proposed FY 2026 budget and explained a revised budget adoption approach. Historically, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) budget and the NFRMPO organizational budget were adopted together through a single resolution. Burshek explained the UPWP budget reflects estimated planning revenues by task, while the NFRMPO budget includes revenues and expenditures for the entire organization. Following the recent federal certification review, federal partners confirmed the two budgets do not need to be combined for adoption.

Burshek noted adopting the UPWP and NFRMPO budgets separately would provide greater flexibility and reduce the need for frequent budget amendments when actual state or federal contract amounts differ from estimates. Under the proposed process, budget amendments would only be required for significant changes such as unanticipated revenues exceeding budget estimates, emergency fund transfers, expenditure limit exceedances, or substantial changes to grant scopes or project schedules. Any necessary changes could be addressed through a supplemental budget process.

Burshek reported the Finance Committee reviewed the budget on May 21, 2026. Following review, staff identified formula errors that resulted in revisions to projected net gain and loss calculations. Despite these adjustments, staff does not anticipate utilizing Colorado Trust Fund reserves during FY 2026. She noted NFRMPO operated at an approximate $233,000 deficit in FY 2025, which was covered through Colorado Trust interest earnings rather than withdrawals from principal reserves. Burshek further stated approximately $130,000 has already been approved for NFRMPO local match requirements and staff will continue refining year-end projections as actual revenues and expenditures become available.

Relford reviewed the organization’s overall financial outlook and highlighted the importance of the budget format changes in improving transparency. She noted FY 2025 actuals reflected an overall deficit of approximately $385,000 , which was supported through Colorado Trust interest earnings; however, staff currently does not anticipate needing similar support in FY 2026 due to additional funding secured for organizational operations. Relford reported the Colorado Trust balance increased from approximately $6.1M at the end of 2025 to approximately $6.3M as of May 2026.

Relford stated staff intends to return with a proposed FY 2027 budget later in the year using the revised format. She also provided an update on implementation of the new financial management system, noting staff are currently operating in both the existing and new systems during the transition period. A soft launch of the financial module has occurred, and staff continue to reconcile data and processes. Relford expressed optimism regarding the organization’s financial position, noting the NFRMPO is trending in a positive direction financially, and the new financial system is expected to improve future reporting and audit processes. She also thanked staff for their efforts in completing the FY 2025 audit on schedule and supporting the organization’s overall financial management.

Chair Stephens asked about the long-term outlook for the VanGo™ program, including whether farebox recovery is expected to increase and whether service levels should be reevaluated if ridership does not return to pre-pandemic levels.

Burshek responded that staff continues to monitor fare recovery levels and ridership trends while maintaining competitiveness with other regional vanpool programs. She noted increasing fares too aggressively could reduce program accessibility and ridership growth.

Relford reported VanGo™ operated approximately 99 routes prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and currently operates 22 routes. She noted ridership has begun to stabilize and increase in recent years, driven in part by rising fuel costs. Relford also highlighted potential future opportunities to coordinate vanpool services across regional boundaries through partnerships with neighboring MPOs, including DRCOG.

Jenkins observed the farebox recovery trend has increased steadily over the past several years and suggested continued evaluation of strategies could further improve program efficiency and utilization.

Edgerley added changes in remote and hybrid work patterns have permanently altered commuting behavior, making a return to pre-pandemic ridership levels unlikely; however, staff remain encouraged by recent ridership growth trends.

Relford emphasized that staff will continue monitoring the program's financial performance and reliance on reserve funding. She noted current projections do not anticipate the need to draw from Colorado Trust Fund reserves to support VanGo™ operations in FY 2026.

Jenkins further noted customer-focused improvements, including enhancements to the VanGo™ application and user experience, may help support future ridership growth and program awareness. Relford encouraged local communities to continue helping promote the VanGo™ program and noted that NFRMPO staff are available to provide presentations and outreach to local elected officials, employers, and community members regarding available vanpool services.

Commissioner Gutierrez commented VanGo™'s approximately 21 percent farebox recovery rate compares favorably with national transit industry averages and reflects relatively strong performance for a commuter transportation service.

2026 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Stockburger presented the draft 2026 Public Involvement Plan (PIP) and provided an overview of the document, its updates, and the schedule for adoption. He explained the PIP is updated every four years and establishes how NFRMPO and its programs engage the public and stakeholders in transportation planning and air quality processes. The Plan outlines engagement schedules, strategies, and methods intended to ensure all community members can participate meaningfully and remain informed throughout planning activities.

Stockburger highlighted several new elements included in the 2026 PIP. These additions include an executive summary to improve accessibility of technical information, outreach location maps documenting engagement activities across the region, information regarding NFRMPO's GIS Open Data resources, and descriptions of the organization's public contact forms, including general inquiries, website comments, and data requests. The Plan also further distinguishes between public engagement and stakeholder engagement activities and includes results from the 2026 PIP survey, which received responses from 22 participants.

Stockburger reviewed updates made since the 2022 PIP. He noted the NFRMPO revised its engagement strategies to focus on smaller-scale community events where staff have experienced more meaningful interactions with participants. Examples include farmers markets, student welcome events, and similar community-based activities. Additional updates include revised outreach methods, identification of engagement levels, updated website and webpage references, updated accessibility information, revised branding standards reflecting NFRMPO's new logo and color palette, updated social media platforms, incorporation of recent federal legislation, and an updated inventory of NFRMPO plans and programs. Staff also updated performance measures used to evaluate successful engagement efforts.

Stockburger further noted several maps and demographic resources were updated within the plan, including focus community maps, limited English proficiency (LEP) information, broadband service availability, internet access information, and environmental and demographic impact analysis resources.

Stockburger reported the public and stakeholder comment period opened in early May and will remain open through June 21, 2026. He encouraged Council members and stakeholders to provide comments through email or the NFRMPO website. Assuming no significant changes are required due to comments received, staff anticipate Planning Council consideration and approval of the final document at the next meeting, followed by release of the adopted 2026 Public Involvement Plan in early July.

Chair Stephens asked whether any themes emerged from the survey results regarding public awareness of NFRMPO and whether respondents provided suggestions for improving public engagement. Stockburger reported many survey respondents indicated they were uncertain about their familiarity with NFRMPO, with "maybe" being the most common response regarding awareness of the organization. He further noted that respondents were most familiar with NFRMPO programs such as VanGo™ and GoNoCo, indicating strong public recognition of those services and programs.

GHG Transportation Report 2050 RTP Amendment

Karasko provided an update on the NFRMPO's GHG Transportation Report and noted the report is scheduled to be presented to the Colorado Transportation Commission (TC) later in June. She explained the report is being completed as part of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Amendment process, which is also tied to development of the new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The RTP amendment is necessary due to the addition of a regionally significant roadway capacity project involving approximately 4 lane miles on Weld County Road 66. Staff have been working on the amendment and associated analysis since December 2024.

Karasko reported staff have worked extensively through the modeling process and coordinated closely with CDOT staff and Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) staff to evaluate compliance with the State's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Planning Rule. She reviewed the modeled improvement categories and funding sources used in the analysis, including transit, transportation demand management (TDM), operations, and active transportation strategies. She noted these categories represent the primary methods used by the region to achieve compliance with GHG reduction requirements.

Karasko also discussed the GHG reduction strategies evaluated as part of the RTP amendment and reviewed progress made since adoption of the baseline plan. She reminded Council the GHG Planning Rule was adopted in 2021 and required MPOs to update their baseline plans by October 1, 2022. For the NFRMPO, the baseline plan was the 2045 RTP, adopted in September 2019. She noted numerous projects, programs, and investments implemented since adoption of the baseline plan contributed toward achieving compliance and provided emissions reduction benefits.

She explained the analysis evaluated compliance years through the end of the current TIP period in 2029. Initial modeling results indicated the region met required reduction targets in most analysis years but did not meet the target for 2030 when considering only the modeled measures. As a result, staff reviewed approaches used by DRCOG in its most recent GHG Transportation Report and identified additional programmatic investments which could be credited toward emissions reductions. Karasko noted these investments are difficult to represent directly within the travel demand model but are associated with projects and programs already being implemented throughout the region. She recognized Jerome Rouser, Mykayla Graalum, and Tahjiba Tarannum for their work identifying these additional reduction strategies. Among the programmatic investments evaluated, broadband expansion produced the largest estimated reduction benefit.

Karasko stated when the additional programmatic investments were incorporated into the analysis, the region achieved compliance with all required GHG reduction targets. She added staff were still working through several minor calculation discrepancies with partner agencies and hoped to resolve those issues the following day. Despite those remaining discussions, she reported the region was currently in compliance with the GHG Rule requirements.

Looking ahead, Karasko stated she would present the report at the Transportation Commission workshop on June 17 and anticipated seeking approval at the Commission meeting on June 18. If approved, the GHG Transportation Report and RTP Amendment would return to the Planning Council as an action item at the July meeting. Following local approval, the RTP Amendment would be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for final approval, allowing staff to fully transition their efforts to development of the 2055 Regional Transportation Plan. She concluded by noting the presentation shown to Council was the same presentation would be provided to the Transportation Commission later in the month.

During discussion, Relford emphasized the off-model calculations were developed to avoid the need for a separate GHG mitigation plan associated with the 2050 RTP Amendment, which was triggered by the addition of approximately four lane miles of capacity improvements. She noted the amendment process has required nearly two years of staff effort and extensive coordination among NFRMPO, CDOT, and CDPHE. Relford thanked CDOT staff for assisting with the development and review of the off-model calculations and highlighted the significant workload associated with demonstrating compliance for a relatively small roadway capacity amendment.

Relford further noted failure to obtain GHG compliance approval would delay adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), despite the region remaining in conformity with federally required air quality standards. She also expressed concerns regarding limitations within the current GHG policy framework, citing examples such as the inability to credit certain roundabout projects for emission reduction benefits unless they replace existing signalized intersections. Relford encouraged continued discussion of these policy considerations should CDOT revisit or update the applicable greenhouse gas policy directives in the future and noted the importance of providing MPO input during any future policy review process.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Transportation Commission

Gutierrez reported the Colorado Transportation Commission recently approved the State's Ten-Year Plan, including advancement of the I-25 North Corridor project without additional stipulations. He noted the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO) has begun coordination with the Build America Bureau regarding project financing, and CDOT staff are actively advancing project development activities.

Gutierrez stated current discussions indicate construction activities will likely begin with Segment 4 of the I-25 corridor because it is the most implementation-ready segment. He explained Segment 2 will require significantly more design and construction effort due to planned lane expansions and modifications to interchange ramps and auxiliary lanes. CDOT staff are currently working to advance design development and increase project readiness.

Gutierrez also provided an update on the I-270 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, noting completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) remains necessary before the project can advance. He reported discussions continue among local communities, Adams County, and project partners regarding potential project enhancements, including transit improvements and strategies to minimize impacts on surrounding communities.

Regarding Bustang funding, Gutierrez noted funding discussions remain ongoing and are expected to continue over the coming months. He explained the Multimodal Options Fund (MMOF) remains part of the overall funding strategy but does not represent a significant funding source for the service. Under the current funding structure, CDOT is projected to receive approximately $3.2M in MMOF funding in FY 2027, increasing incrementally to approximately $3.4M in FY 2028, $3.5M in FY 2029, and $3.7M in FY 2030.

Gutierrez reported projected FY 2027 Bustang operating costs total approximately $22.5M and are currently supported through a combination of MMOF funding, FASTER revenues, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 funds, farebox revenue, and other funding sources. He emphasized MMOF funding alone is insufficient to address the long-term funding needs of the service and additional funding discussions will likely continue.

During discussion, Relford asked whether ongoing discussions regarding revisions to the FTA Section 5311 funding formula were related to current Bustang funding conversations. Gutierrez responded he had not yet received information regarding any proposed revisions to the Section 5311 formula and indicated he would seek additional information.

Gutierrez concluded by noting the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was presented to the Commission during the previous month and is anticipated to be considered for adoption at the Commission's upcoming meeting.

STAC Report

Stephens provided an update on recent State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) discussions. She reported CDOT has transitioned to a new electronic State Transportation Improvement Program (E-STIP) platform, which will serve as the official STIP record moving forward. The online platform allows users to search projects and access current STIP information through a web-based system. Stephens note NFRMPO has submitted a grant application to implement a similar electronic Transportation Improvement Program (E-TIP) platform, which would improve coordination between regional and state transportation programming systems and reduce manual tracking and reporting efforts.

Stephens also reported recent reductions in NFRMPO funding were discussed. As a result, MPOs and Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs) are not expected to make new Multimodal Options Fund (MMOF) funding awards in the near term. Instead, available future funding is anticipated to be directed toward honoring existing commitments and making previously awarded projects whole. CDOT will manage the allocation process, and current MMOF funding is expected to remain constrained for approximately the next three years.

Additional discussion focused on transportation issues within Region 3 and CDOT's Transportation Asset Management Program. Stephens reported CDOT provided an overview of its process for evaluating roadway and bridge conditions, maintaining infrastructure inventories, and prioritizing maintenance and rehabilitation needs. While CDOT continues to identify and prioritize deficient facilities, funding limitations remain a significant challenge in addressing the statewide backlog of roadway and bridge improvements.

During discussion, Stephens emphasized the need for greater public and local agency involvement in identifying transportation infrastructure needs and priorities. She noted many communities, particularly in rural areas, continue to express concerns regarding roadway conditions and available maintenance funding. Stephens encouraged additional dialogue between CDOT and local communities regarding infrastructure condition assessments, project prioritization, and long-term transportation asset management needs. She stated these discussions may also be considered through future statewide transportation funding and policy conversations.

Host Council Member Report

Councilmember Karspeck welcomed Planning Council members to Berthoud and provided an update on several transportation and infrastructure initiatives underway within the community.

Karspeck reported the Town recently received Congressionally Designated funding to complete paving improvements on WCR 7 between Mead and Berthoud. He noted the project will improve connectivity between communities and provide an alternative route during North I-25 construction and traffic disruptions.

Karspeck stated the Town's Five-Year Sidewalk Improvement Plan is progressing successfully, including completion of downtown sidewalk improvements. He also reported the Five-Year Road Improvement Plan remains underway, with roadway expansion projects occurring on Berthoud Parkway and near the Grand Market Avenue interchange area.

Karspeck provided updates on several roundabout projects either under construction, nearing completion, or in the planning phase, including improvements near Grand Market Avenue and future development areas adjacent to the golf course. He also reported the Town is pursuing grant funding for transportation improvements north of Heron Lakes to strengthen connections with Loveland.

Additional active transportation improvements include trail expansion efforts associated with Berthoud Parkway and the Handy Ditch corridor. Karspeck noted recent improvements have created a continuous trail connection from the Little Thompson area to Mountain Vista Park, providing improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the community and reducing the need for users to travel on roadways.

Karspeck reported development-related transportation improvements at the WCR 1 and Highway 56 interchange area near North I-25 continue to face delays associated with private development obligations. The Town is actively working with developers to ensure completion of required infrastructure improvements and may pursue enforcement actions if project commitments are not met. He also noted another developer-led intersection improvement project near US 287 is expected to begin construction by July.

Finally, Karspeck highlighted Berthoud's continued efforts to support golf cart transportation within the community. He noted golf cart usage continues to increase and represents an emerging local transportation option that complements the Town's broader multimodal transportation goals.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Next Month's Agenda Topic Suggestions – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Tahjiba Tarannum, NFRMPO Staff