

# POLICY AGENDA

## Northwest Mayors & Commissioners Coalition and Commuting Solutions

**Approved on January 14, 2022**

The Northwest Mayors and Commissioners Coalition (“MCC”) and Commuting Solutions (CS) support federal, state and regional policy that is consistent with the positions identified in this Policy Agenda. These positions were informed by the 2014 consensus achieved during the Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS). The projects identified in the NAMS were designed to reliably, safely and efficiently provide mobility solutions, reduce congestion, respond to Denver’s designation as “serious nonattainment” for ozone under the Clean Air Act, and help combat climate change.

The NAMS agreement was captured in an April 7, 2014 “NAMS Local Stakeholder Consensus Document” (**Attachment A**) which should be read in conjunction with this Policy Agenda in order to understand the specifics on funding sources, projects, timing and order of priority in which they are each supported.

The Policy Agenda provides representatives of the Northwest MCC and CS with the ability to advocate on behalf of the coalition for the stated positions as opportunities arise, be they before legislative, regulatory or administrative bodies and individual leaders. Any potentially controversial or high-profile policy communication made on behalf of the MCC and CS should receive prior-approval from the full MCC and CS, when possible. Regardless, all such communications should subsequently be brought to the attention of the full MCC and CS at the earliest opportunity.

The Policy Agenda is approved by each of the individual governing bodies of the members that make up the MCC and CS. It may be revisited and revised at any time to reflect changing circumstances or to provide specific interpretation of these positions as they apply to any one policy question.

- **Multimodal Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)/ Enhanced Bus Service Projects** - Seek non-FasTracks funding and support for capital and operating improvements necessary to implement an arterial BRT/Enhanced Bus Service network, as identified in Attachment A and RTD's August 14, 2014 Northwest Area Mobility Study Report, including supportive multimodal system enhancements, including commuter bikeways and pedestrian facilities, and First and Final Mile connections/TDM.

CO 119 - between Longmont and Boulder, including the mobility hub at CO 119 and I-25 - is the highest priority arterial BRT corridor. While advocating for improvements to CO 119, the MCC and CS will concurrently look for opportunities to advocate for completion of the remaining corridors, listed below, based on further refinement of regional priorities, project scopes funding availability and leveraging opportunities:

- CO 7 between Brighton and Boulder, connecting CO 7/North I-25 Mobility Hub, North Metro Station Park-n-Ride in Thornton, with Broomfield, Lafayette and US 287 BRT station in Erie
- US 287 connecting Longmont, Lafayette, Erie and Broomfield to the US 36 BRT Corridor, providing connections to CO 7 BRT stations
- CO 42/95<sup>th</sup> Street connecting Erie at the US 287/CO 7 BRT Station to Louisville and Lafayette along CO 42 to the US 36 BRT stations in Broomfield. South Boulder Road connecting Lafayette and Louisville to Boulder

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- 28<sup>th</sup> Street (US 36)/Broadway (CO 93) (connecting CO 119 BRT, US 36 BRT and South Boulder Road BRT and other local and regional transit routes to Boulder Junction/Downtown Boulder Station)
- 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue between US 36 & Broomfield Station and Adams County Government Center, providing connections to the Westminster I-25 Wagon Road Park N Ride and the N-Line Station at Eastlake
  
- **Northwest Rail** – Support full funding, construction, and operation of the Northwest Commuter Rail Line (aka, the “B Line”) between Denver Union Station (DUS) and Longmont, inclusive of stations in Boulder, Louisville, Broomfield and Westminster. Also, support creative and alternative rail implementation strategies (including level of service phasing) as circumstances effecting feasibility, such as change in BNSF position, costs, ridership, and funding sources, evolve.
  
- **Front Range Passenger Rail** - Support the funding, construction, and operation of the Front Range Passenger Rail Line (FRPR) along the BNSF/NW Rail alignment to facilitate RTD’s ability to complete the B Line.
  
- **I-25 Bi-Directional Managed Lanes** – Seek funding and support for the construction of additional managed lanes between US 36 and downtown Denver to facilitate bi-directional service to benefit the broader region (both North I-25 and US 36 connections to/from Denver).
  
- **Managed Lanes** – Support implementation of permanent congestion-free managed lanes as a practical, cost-effective, long-term strategy for improving corridor mobility for all users, including drivers and transit users, be they in managed or general-purpose lanes. These managed lanes should be allowed to remain uncongested through variable, dynamic pricing of non-HOV vehicles resulting in drivers choosing to use the lane at a level that ensures unrestricted travel in the managed lane by all users, provides incentives for energy efficient travel, and benefits all travelers using the entire facility.
  - Support the free-flowing operation of managed lanes.
  - Support managed/tolled express lanes as part of multimodal improvements along NAMS BRT corridors as appropriate.
  - Support funding for education and incentives to promote full utilization of the HOV/Toll lanes.
  - Support increased transparency and public involvement in decisions to create future managed lanes, especially those involving private partners.
  - As a general policy, support the requirement that any significant new highway (freeway/expressway) lane-capacity (public or private) built with state or federal funds be required to be managed (priced/tolled) to maximize the person-carrying capacity of the facility and to encourage free HOV and transit usage unless reasonable exceptions apply.

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- **Rail/Transit Stations and Mobility hubs** – Support funding and implementation of station investments, First and Final Mile infrastructure, and programs that serve both BRT and future rail.
- **Railroad Crossing Quiet Zones** – Support funding for and completion of quiet zones along the length of the Northwest Corridor, with a priority on crossings that benefit the greatest number of residents in the most cost-effective manner.
- **Transportation Funding** – Support federal, state or regional transportation funding that includes a commitment for a substantial percentage of multimodal (i.e., transit, bicycle and pedestrian) investment. By way of example of what “substantial” means, the MCC has in the past supported a measure that would have resulted in a minimum of 30 percent of the new funding revenue being used towards multimodal projects. The following are examples of approaches to securing funding that the MCC could support:
  - Fees tied to road use, fuel consumption, vehicle miles traveled, and commercial vehicles such as ride-sharing and delivery services, with rate differentials based upon vehicle occupancy.
  - New bonding or other borrowing for transportation projects so long as there are new or existing designated sources of funding identified to pay off those obligations.
  - Simplification of existing tools (e.g., Regional Transportation Authorities) or creation of new ones (e.g., Metropolitan Transportation District) that our local governments can consider to jointly generate funding to address transportation solutions, so long as local governments are not giving up control over decisions on whether to use such tools or over how funding should be spent.
- **US 36 Bus Rapid Transit System** – Seek funding and support for the full implementation and restoration of the US 36 BRT system (branded as “Flatiron Flyer” routes) as committed to in the 2004 FasTracks ballot measure, the US 36 Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, the TIGER (now referred to as “RAISE”) and TIFIA funding applications and additional elements approved by the RTD Board on September 17, 2013, including relocation of the Church Ranch boarding platforms and a second parking structure and pedestrian bridge extension at Broomfield Station. Support Flatiron Flyer BRT service restoration and improvements and station area enhancements to more fully serve existing and new Transit Oriented Development in each of the US36 MCC communities.
  - Support increased Flatiron Flyer service to meet the growing ridership demand, including increased SkyRide service to the airport.
  - Seek funding for implementation of the US 36 First and Final Mile study recommendations that provide a tangible benefit to residents, employees and commuters in the corridor.
- **Vision Zero Safety Objective** - Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. It reflects a local, regional, national and worldwide approach to innovate and use a data driven, interdisciplinary approaches to improving safety for people using all forms of transportation throughout the community. The MCC supports local, regional, state and federal plans and policy changes in

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furtherance of this objective, including ones that prohibit use while driving of mobile electronic devices unless through a hands-free device.

- **Electric Vehicles** – The Front Range, including the US36 corridor, is currently within an area classified as being in “Serious Non-Attainment for Ozone” under the Clean Air Act.. The region may be further downgraded to Severe Non-Attainment in the foreseeable future. Vehicle emissions are a significant contributor to the region’s poor air quality. The fees established by SB21-260, which will generate an estimated \$734M in revenues for this purpose, are an important but insufficient step to address the contribution of mobile source pollution. Accordingly, the MCC supports the goals of “Colorado EV Plan 2020” as well as the identification of new policies and initiatives that will bring about the accelerated build-out of EV fast-charging stations and adoption of electric vehicles throughout Colorado.
- **Bus-on-Shoulder Use** - Support RTD authority to authorize bus-on-shoulder use on limited corridors to expedite local bus service.
- **Transportation Demand Management** - Support Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and initiatives that help people know about and use all their transportation options and that counterbalance the incentives to focus solely on single occupant vehicle travel. In particular, the MCC and CS support policies that result in free transit fare.
- **Deployment of New Technologies: Connected and Autonomous Vehicles** -Support changes that enable and encourage the deployment of new and advanced transportation technologies. Deployment of advanced technologies in transportation may include connected vehicles, transportation systems and infrastructure, and autonomous vehicles, which have the potential to improve safety, reduce congestion, improve air quality, and achieve Colorado’s greenhouse gas emission goals. This should include a flexible framework that:
  - Encourages deployment for shared purposes for public and private transit use or shorter, first and final mile connections;
  - Results in increased accessibility and equity;
  - Leads to a decrease in parking demand;
  - Increases safety for people using all modes of travel; and,
  - Decreases vehicle miles driven

## Attachment A

### NAMS LOCAL STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS DOCUMENT

#### US36 Mayors and Commissioner Coalition 36 Commuting Solutions

April 7, 2014

The local stakeholders thank RTD and our other regional partners for working with us through Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS) on this challenging consensus process. Collectively, we believe that the priorities reached through this consensus approach are realistic and equitable, while respecting the will of the voters in 2004.

Local stakeholders actively participating in the NAMS have spent significant effort working together to develop a path forward on transit investments in the Northwest Corridor. Following much discussion, debate and deliberation we have come to a consensus predicated on the information received to date through the NAMS that regional transit operating and infrastructure improvements in the Northwest region should include the following elements.

- **Completion of the US 36 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System:** Completion of the US 36 BRT system as committed in the 2004 FasTracks, US 36 Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, TIGER and TIFIA funding applications and additional elements approved by the RTD Board on September 17, 2013, including relocation of the Church Ranch boarding platforms, improvements to the Westminster Center pedestrian bridge and structured parking in Broomfield. Local stakeholders also support implementation of the US 36 First and Final Mile study recommendations that provide a tangible benefit to residents, employees and commuters in the corridor. In order to leverage these capital improvements and show a true net FasTracks benefit to the corridor, service enhancements and a robust operating plan that includes increased bus frequencies must be implemented.
- **Arterial BRT/ Enhanced Bus Service Projects:** Arterial BRT/Enhanced Bus Service system capital and operating improvements should be implemented as soon as feasible. No FasTracks funds should be utilized for these arterial BRT investments.
  - State Highway 119 from Longmont to Boulder is the highest priority arterial BRT corridor.
  - The remaining corridors should be implemented based on further refinement of regional priorities, project scopes funding availability and leveraging opportunities.
  - State Highway 7 connecting North I-25/North Metro Park-n-Ride/Northglenn, Broomfield, Erie, Lafayette and Boulder
  - State Highway 287 connecting Longmont, Lafayette and Broomfield to the US 36 Corridor
  - South Boulder Road connecting Lafayette and Louisville to Boulder
  - 28<sup>th</sup> Street/Broadway (connecting US 36 BRT and South Boulder Road BRT to Boulder Junction/14<sup>th</sup> & Walnut)
  - Improved transit connection from Louisville/Lafayette/Superior/Broomfield to US 36 via SH 42/95<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Broomfield Park-n-Ride and Adams County Government Center

## Attachment A

- **I-25 Bi-Directional Managed Lanes:** Construction of two additional managed lanes between US 36 and downtown Denver to facilitate bi-directional service that will benefit the broader region (both North I-25 and US36 connections to Denver). Identified interim measures should be implemented as quickly as possible, including bus on shoulder service and downtown Denver circulation improvements, with long term measures to follow.
- **Railroad crossing quiet zones** should be implemented along the length of the Northwest Corridor, with a priority on crossings that benefit the greatest number of residents in the most cost effective manner.
- **Early Action Rail/Transit Stations:** Station investments and US 36 First and Final Mile infrastructure and programs that serve both BRT and future rail should be implemented. \$17 million has already been identified from EAGLE P3 savings for the Downtown Longmont station that will serve both BRT and future rail. Similar investments should be made at other stations that will serve both future rail and BRT/Enhanced Bus Service such as Boulder Transit Village, Gunbarrel, East Arapahoe, Downtown Louisville, Broomfield at Flatirons Crossing and 116th, and Westminster at 104<sup>th</sup>/Church Ranch and at 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- **Northwest Rail:** The local stakeholders recognize the commitment made to voters in the 2004 FasTracks election and the ongoing public expectation that rail will be built in the corridor from FasTracks revenue. Local stakeholders support full completion of the Northwest Commuter Rail Project to Longmont. Considering costs, lack of revenues, ridership projections, uncertainty with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and other challenges, completion of Northwest Rail is a longer term goal. Local stakeholders support periodically exploring creative and alternative rail implementation strategies (including phasing) as circumstances effecting feasibility, such as change in BNSF position, costs, ridership, and funding sources, evolve.

**Re-evaluation of Priorities:** We believe that the public expects and deserves visible cost effective mobility improvements in the short term that form the foundation of our long term transportation system while honoring the vision of rail connecting the corridor communities to each other and the Denver region expressed in the 2004 FasTracks plan approved by the voters.

To that end:

- We support regular monitoring of the factors influencing the costs, revenue and feasibility of the implementation options identified above, including phasing, and, should they significantly change, the reconsideration of investments priorities.
- We recognize that FasTracks funding should be targeted towards those Northwest corridor improvements identified in the FasTracks system approved by the voters in 2004. FasTracks funding should therefore be used to build and operate the US 36 BRT system as well as those improvements that are consistent with implementation of Northwest Rail from Westminster to Longmont and other, nonFasTracks funding sources should be targeted toward those improvements that are not consistent with the FasTracks plan.
- We also firmly believe that the RTD should focus any further FasTracks investments in the Northwest Corridor prior to using FasTracks funds for improvements, or equipment replacement, in any other corridor.