

POLICY AGENDA

Northwest Mayors & Commissioners Coalition and Commuting Solutions

Approved January 24, 2024

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 a specific interpretation of these positions as they apply to any one policy question.

NORTHWEST AREA PROJECTS

- **Multimodal Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)/ Enhanced Bus Service Projects** – Seek non-FasTracks funding and support for capital and operating improvements necessary to implement a regional BRT/Enhanced Bus Service network identified in the [Northwest Area Mobility Study](#) (NAMS), listed below, including multimodal safety improvements, commuter bikeways, pedestrian facilities, and First and Final Mile connections/Transportation Demand Management (TDM), 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 42/95th 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.

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- **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.
- **Rail/Transit Stations and Mobility hubs** – Support funding and implementation of station investments, First and Final Mile infrastructure, and programs that serve, and link together, 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.

GENERAL POLICY AND FUNDING

- **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.
- **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, vehicle weight, and commercial vehicles such as ride-sharing and delivery services, with rate differentials based upon vehicle occupancy.

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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.
- **Support Affordable Living Goals (Housing + Transportation)** – The MCC and CS supports encouraging state, regional, and local governments to work collaboratively together to develop solutions, with accompanying financial resources, to address regional goals for affordable housing, transit-supportive development and multimodal transportation options.
 - Focus on incentive-based approaches that are developed in partnership with local jurisdictions and that do not create undue financial burdens on local communities.
 - Create an environment for shared learning of successful implementations and models from other communities in Colorado, other states, and communities nationwide.
 - **Regional Transportation District oversight and governance** - The MCC and CS support changes that would improve RTD’s financial sustainability and effectiveness in delivering equitable access to transit services for underserved areas and transit-dependent people. Reforms to RTD oversight and governance should balance the needs of local and regional passengers and support social and racial equity needs for vulnerable populations within the NW metro area. The MCC and CS support structural changes that provide a greater role for Subregional Service Councils in making decisions on allocation of transit resources.

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
 - 28th Street/Broadway (connecting US 36 BRT and South Boulder Road BRT to Boulder Junction/14th & Walnut)
 - Improved transit connection from Louisville/Lafayette/Superior/Broomfield to US 36 via SH 42/95th Street.
 - 120th 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 104th/Church Ranch and at 88th 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.