

**MEETING MINUTES of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)
North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Council**

Virtual Meeting

September 16, 2020

1:01 – 3:08 p.m.

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mitch Nelson, Chair – Severance
Eric Tracy, Vice Chair – Larimer County
Dawn Anderson – Weld County
Allison Baxter – Greeley
Amanda Brimmer – RAQC
Stephanie Brothers – Berthoud
Brad Buckman – Fort Collins
Aaron Bustow – FHWA
Eric Fuhrman – Timnath
Omar Herrera – Windsor
Dave Klockeman – Loveland
Mark Oberschmidt – Evans
Karen Schneiders – CDOT
Ranae Tunison – FTA

TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Marco Carani – Johnstown
Rick Coffin – CDPHE-APCD
Pepper McClenahan – Milliken
Jeff Schreier – Eaton
Town of LaSalle

IN ATTENDANCE:

Abdul Barzak – Severance
Darren Davis – GET
Candice Folkers – COLT
Jamie Grim – CDOT
Katie Guthrie – Loveland
Josie Hadley – CDOT
Myron Hora – WSP
Katrina Klobberdanz – CDOT
Elizabeth Relford – Weld County

NFRMPO STAFF:

Medora Bornhoft
Ryan Dusil
Alex Gordon
Becky Karasko
Suzette Mallette

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 19, 2020 TAC MINUTES

Klockeman moved to approve the August 19, 2020 TAC minutes. Buckman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

No items this month.

ACTION ITEMS

September TIP Amendment – Bornhoft stated Greeley Evans Transit (GET) is requesting a scope change for their two CMAQ-funded bus replacement projects. The revised scopes allow the purchase of buses for fleet expansion in addition to bus replacements. The new buses will serve the Poudre Express. Klockeman moved to approve the September TIP Amendment. Baxter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

FY2019-FY2021 CMAQ & FY2021 STBG Additional Funding Allocations – Bornhoft stated the most recent CDOT reconciliation identifies \$3,302,036 in unprogrammed CMAQ funds and \$2,029,115 in unprogrammed STBG funds. At the August 19, 2020 TAC meeting, TAC members indicated support for the proposed allocations of these funds and toll credits based on the available information. Prior to the September 3, 2020 Council meeting, GET verified they could obligate an additional \$1.6M in CMAQ, including \$551,312 in toll credits, contingent on an approved scope change allowing bus fleet expansion in addition to the currently approved bus replacement. All additional sponsors of projects with proposed allocations have verified their ability to obligate the proposed awards. Bornhoft stated NFRMPO Staff recommends TAC approve a recommendation to Planning Council to allocate additional funding, approve toll credit requests, and advance funding as identified in the TAC packet. Schneiders moved to approve the FY2019-FY2021 CMAQ & FY2021 STBG Additional Funding Allocations. Buckman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

No items this month.

DISCUSSION

Local Match Assistance: Project Funding Year Swap Discussion – Bornhoft stated this is an opportunity to sponsors of projects funded with CMAQ, STBG, or TA funds awarded through the NFRMPO to discuss whether they have the need and/or ability to either advance or delay their project by swapping funding years with another project.

Baxter asked if swapping funding years would impact fiscal constraint. Bornhoft stated it does not and is just meant to help communities and get funds obligated sooner.

Anderson asked if there were any updates on Buy America waivers as they relate to Weld County's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Vehicles CMAQ project. Bustow stated there are no updates. Schneiders added the November election may impact Buy America waivers, but no resolutions are likely in 2020 or early 2021.

Klockeman asked if an agency could swap CMAQ funding years with Weld County to avoid another delay. Anderson stated Weld County would be open to discussions.

Mallette asked how swapping funding years affects the TIP Delay Policy. Bornhoft stated milestone years for delay review are also swapped.

Klockeman stated Loveland would like to advance FY2023 funding for the US34 Widening STBG project.

Weld County, Greeley, Loveland, and Evans agreed to discuss opportunities to swap project funding years offline for further discussion at the October TAC meeting.

CDOT Boundary Guidebook – Karasko stated CDOT is currently developing a Guidebook for Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs) and MPOs considering boundary changes. The NFRMPO Planning Council has asked NFRMPO staff to present boundary change recommendations by the end of 2020, laying out the impacts on funding, governance, and responsibilities for the agencies involved. A subcommittee consisting of representatives from the NFRMPO, Upper Front Range TPR, Eastern TPR, and DRCOG are working together to discuss various boundary change scenarios and will meet later this month.

Preliminary Call for Projects Considerations – Bornhoft stated NFRMPO Calls for Projects for CMAQ, STBG, and TA funds are typically held biennially. Following the most recent Call in 2018, feedback was provided by various stakeholders regarding regional priorities, regional equity, and CMAQ emissions benefits.

Bornhoft stated set-asides are one way of aligning funding with regional priorities identified in NFRMPO plans and the *2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures, and Targets (GOPMT). One set-aside of \$50,000 has been committed to the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) for ozone modeling. Other set-asides have been proposed for N I-25 Segment 5 and for bicycle and pedestrian projects. TAC members agreed the RAQC set-aside should be honored and showed support for deferring other set-aside discussions to the Planning Council. Mallette stated set-asides for large projects like North I-25 have not been popular with the Planning Council in the past.

Buckman and Mallette suggested a bicycle and pedestrian set-aside could be treated more as a funding target than a set-aside.

Bornhoft highlighted other potential changes to align funding with regional priorities. Buckman and Klockeman expressed support for revising scoring criteria and weights to emphasize regional connections and NFRMPO plan recommendations, as well as more objective, data-driven scoring.

Klockeman stated the TAC has worked on simplifying the Call for Projects in the past and that striving for further objectivity can overcomplicate the application and scoring processes.

Bornhoft highlighted several potential changes for improving regional equity, making it easier for smaller communities to apply and compete for CMAQ and STBG funding.

Nelson stated he would rather continue working directly with NFRMPO staff than with a consultant when preparing applications.

Schneiders stated a the guidelines for a small community CMAQ set-aside would need to ensure projects with the greatest benefits are not prevented from receiving awards. Mallette stated placing more weight on cost effectiveness of a project's emissions benefits may help smaller communities compete and award the best projects without the need for a set-aside.

Fuhrman stated Timnath has not pursued STBG funds due to the relative cost of federalizing a project compared with the small amount of federal funding they can request as a small community. Baxter asked if the STBG request limits can be adjusted. Bornhoft responded they can and suggested a limit based on a percentage of the available funds, as is done with CMAQ funds.

Anderson suggested reaching out to TAC members from smaller communities that do not typically apply to better understand the reasons and any barriers that may exist. Bornhoft stated she will send a survey out to TAC members.

Bornhoft highlighted potential changes to improve how CMAQ emissions benefits are considered, stating cost-effectiveness could be prioritized to remove large project bias.

Schneiders suggested continuing to automate the application where possible and asked if projects could be submitted for consideration under multiple funding programs. Karasko stated this could get complicated with CMAQ emissions calculations but could be feasible for STBG and TA projects.

Hora stated CDOT's CMAQ Working Group is updating their CMAQ Emissions Calculation Guidebook, which should help with consistency across agencies.

Bornhoft asked if it would be best to delay the Call beyond 2020 to make funds available closer to the date they would be obligated, stating this could give agencies more time to identify their needs, priorities, and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. TAC members expressed support for delaying the Call to allow local agencies more time to evaluate their situations.

Bornhoft stated the latest timeframe desirable would be holding the Call from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022. Buckman stated one benefit of not delaying the Call too long is that reducing funding uncertainty sooner helps with annual local budgeting efforts. Anderson stated delaying the Call allows time to help additional communities overcome barriers to applying.

Bornhoft suggested TAC members review the 2018 Call for Projects Guidebook to consider what changes would be most helpful.

FY2020 TIP Project Delay Review – Bornhoft requested TAC discuss whether to grant 1st extensions to four projects with a 1st delay and whether to recommend Planning Council grant 2nd extensions to two projects with a 2nd delay. Schneiders suggested postponing the discussion to allow project sponsors time to discuss swapping funding years. Karasko stated the item needs to go to Planning Council for Discussion no later than November. TAC members agreed to postpone the Delay Review Discussion to the October TAC meeting.

OUTSIDE PARTNERS REPORTS

Planning Council – Written report was provided.

NoCo Bike & Ped Collaborative – Written report was provided.

Regional Transit Agencies – Gordon stated Bustang recently held an open house about the Sterling to Greeley Bustang Outrider route, which is scheduled to begin service in early 2021 with one round trip per day.

Davis stated Poudre Express ridership is back to 20 - 25 riders per day.

Senior Transportation – Gordon stated the NFRMPO is set to receive \$115,000 from a State program called “Transportation Services for Vulnerable Populations, including Seniors.” How to spend the funds will be a Discussion Item at the October Planning Council meeting.

Gordon stated the Boulder County Local Coordinating Council (LCC) recently held a Discussion among many partners called the “Coordinating Meeting on Transportation Gaps Between Boulder, Larimer, and Weld.” Attendees agreed they would like to continue to meet quarterly.

Regional Air Quality Council – Brimmer stated wildfires contributed to one of the worst air quality years in a couple decades and she will provide more details to TAC in October. Steve McCannon has left RAQC for the Colorado Department of Health and Environment’s (CDPHE) Air Pollution Control Division (APCD).

ROUNDTABLE

No updates were provided.

MEETING WRAP-UP

Final Public Comment – There was no final public comment.

Next Month’s Agenda Topic Suggestions – Karasko stated the October agenda will include RAQC’s end of the 2020 ozone season update and Serious SIP update, updated pavement performance measures, and FY2021 UPWP task amendments.

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Ryan Dusil, NFRMPO Staff

The next meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 as a virtual meeting.