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# Introduction



The 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the long range vision for the North Front Range regional transportation system. The Planning Council is a 17-member transportation policy body consisting of elected or appointed officials from the member agencies. The 2045 RTP guides the implementation of multimodal transportation improvements, policies, and programs in the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) region.

## A. Background

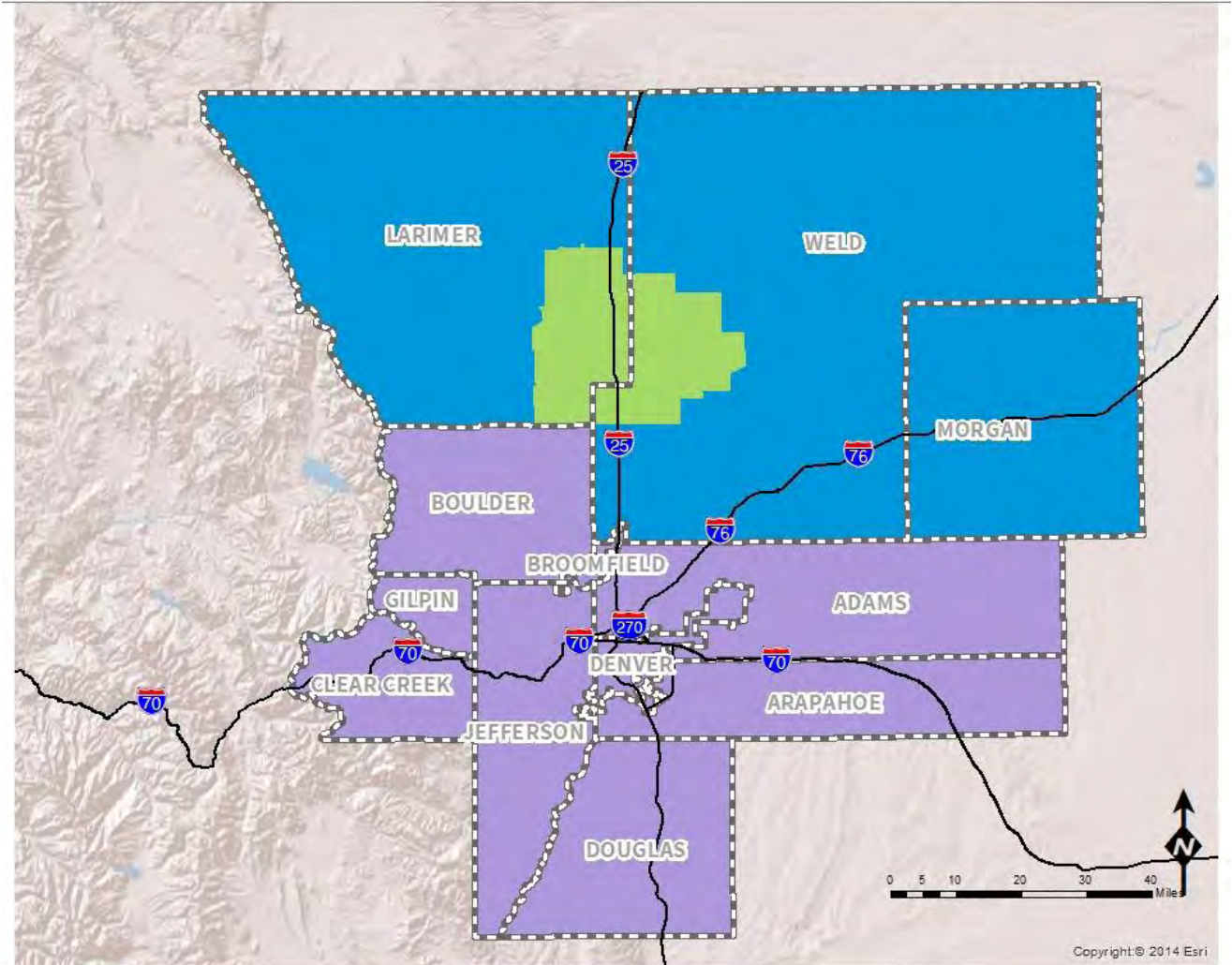
In 1991, Congress enacted the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), directing each state to prepare a multi-modal transportation plan. This directive was continued with the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21), and most recently the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, signed into law on December 4, 2015. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has divided the State into 15 transportation planning regions (TPRs), including the North Front Range (NFR), each of which is required to prepare an RTP. These RTPs are used as the basis for CDOT's long range Statewide Transportation Plan.

The NFRMPO region, which is coterminous with the metropolitan planning area (MPA), is bordered on the east, west, and north by the Upper Front Range (UFR) TPR and by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) on the south. The NFR region includes 13 incorporated communities, including: the cities of Evans, Fort Collins, Greeley, and Loveland; the towns of Berthoud, Eaton, Garden City, Johnstown, LaSalle, Milliken, Severance, Timnath, and Windsor; and portions of unincorporated Larimer and Weld counties.

The North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Council (NFRT&AQPC), also known as the NFRMPO, is responsible for long range regional transportation planning. The NFRMPO has undertaken this current effort to extend the 2040 RTP planning horizon to the year 2045. The NFRMPO region has two air quality maintenance areas for carbon monoxide (CO): Fort Collins and Greeley. The entire NFRMPO region is also included in the nine county Denver-North Front Range 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area. Due to this air quality nonattainment status, the NFRMPO is required to update its long range transportation plan every four years.

This planning process was conducted under the direction of the NFRMPO Planning Council, composed of one representative from each of the 15 member governments, the Colorado Transportation Commission (CTC), and the Colorado Department Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) Air Pollution Control Division (APCD). A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of representatives from the jurisdictions within the region, CDOT, CDPHE-APCD, and the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC), make recommendations to the Planning Council. This 2045 RTP was developed by NFRMPO staff, with technical input from TAC.

**Figure 1-1: NFRMPO Metropolitan Planning Area and Surrounding TPRs**



**Legend**

- DRCOG
- Upper Front Range TPR
- County Boundary
- NFRMPO
- Interstates

May 2019  
Sources: CDOT, NFRMPO



North's Front Range  
Metropolitan  
Planning  
Organization

**B. Planning Process**

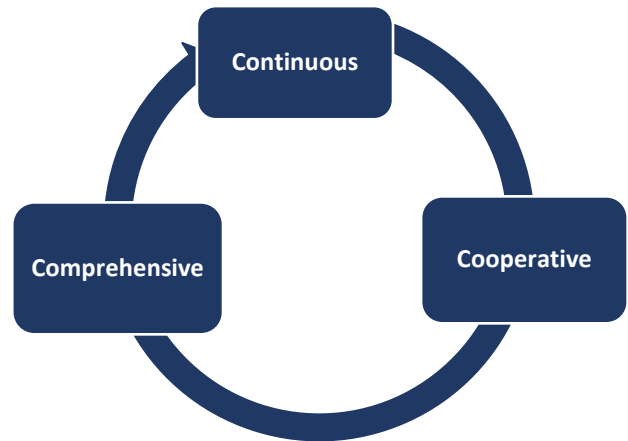
The NFRMPO develops its transportation plans and programs using the continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) planning process, as required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 23 CFR § 450.306 and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 49 CFR § 613.100. The 2015 FAST Act legislation is the current comprehensive federal legislation

addressing surface transportation and guides the long range planning process.

The FAST Act contains 10 planning factors that must be addressed by the 3C metropolitan transportation planning process. The relationships between the 2045 RTP and the planning factors are shown in **Table 1-1**.

### FAST Act Planning Factors:

1. Support the **economic vitality** of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the **safety** of the transportation system for all motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the **security** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the **accessibility and mobility** of people and freight;
5. Protect and enhance the **environment**, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the **integration and connectivity** of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient **system management and operation**;
8. Emphasize the **preservation** of the existing transportation system.
9. Improve the **resiliency and reliability** of the transportation system and **reduce or mitigate** stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance **travel and tourism**.<sup>1</sup>



This 2045 RTP is corridor-based and the projects included are those analyzed during the determination of conformity with air quality regulations for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) budgets outlined in the Colorado State Implementation Plan (SIP). The vision plan and financial plan are at the corridor-level, with the exception of the first four years of the plan which includes the adopted FY2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the project programming list which must be included in CDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). A corridor based RTP provides greater flexibility for financial constraint and in project selection at the TIP level.

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<sup>1</sup>23 CFR 450.306:  
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2011-title23-vol1/CFR-2011-title23-vol1-sec450-306>

**Table 1-1: NFRMPO Planning Factors**

| Chapter/Section                 | Economic | Safety | Security | Accessibility & Mobility | Environmental & Energy | Multimodal Connectivity | Management & Operations | Preserve the Existing System | Improve resiliency & reliability of system & reduce stormwater | Enhance travel & tourism |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------|----------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 Introduction                  |          |        |          | X                        |                        | X                       | X                       | X                            |  |                          |
| 2-1 Existing Conditions         |          | X      | X        | X                        |                        | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 2-2 Socio-Economic Profile      |          |        |          | X                        |                        | X                       |                         |                              |  |                          |
| 2-3 Performance-Based Planning  | X        | X      |          | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 2-4 Environmental Profile       | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 2-5 Safety and Resiliency       |          | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 3-1 Technology                  | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 3-2 Vision Plans                | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 3-3 2045 Forecast and Scenarios | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 3-4 Fiscally Constrained Plan   | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 3-5 Plan Projects               | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |
| 4 Public Outreach               | X        |        |          | X                        |                        |                         |                         |                              |  |                          |
| 5 Implementation                | X        | X      | X        | X                        | X                      | X                       | X                       | X                            | X  | X                        |

## C. Values, Visions, Goals, and Objectives

As a part of this Plan, and to comply with the requirements in the FAST Act, NFRMPO staff, TAC, and the Planning Council developed Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures, and Targets, adopted on October 4, 2018. A more in-depth discussion of these can be found in **Chapter 3**.

### VISION STATEMENT:

*We seek to provide a multi-modal transportation system that is safe, as well as socially and environmentally sensitive for all users that protects and enhances the region's quality of life and economic vitality.*

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal 1: Economic Development and Quality of Life**

Foster a transportation system that supports economic development and improves residents' quality of life

- Objective 1: Conform to air quality requirement.
- Objective 2: Maintain transportation infrastructure and facilities
- Objective 3: Increase investment in infrastructure

#### **Goal 2: Mobility**

Provide a transportation system that moves people and goods safely, efficiently, and reliably

- Objective 4: Reduce number of severe traffic crashes
- Objective 5: Reduce congestion
- Objective 6: Improve travel time reliability

#### **Goal 3: Multi-Modal**

Provide a multi-modal system that improves accessibility and transportation system continuity.

- Objective 7: Support transportation services for all, including the most vulnerable and transit-dependent populations
- Objective 8: Increase mode share of non-single occupancy vehicles (SOV) modes
- Objective 9: Develop infrastructure that supports alternate modes and connectivity

#### **Goal 4: Operations**

Optimize operations of transportation facilities.

- Objective 10: Optimize the transportation system
- Objective 11: Enhance Transit Service in the NFR region
- Objective 12: Reduce project delivery time frame

## D. Other Plans and Studies

During the development of this 2045 RTP, several regional transportation planning efforts influenced its development. Numerous transportation studies have been or are being prepared by individual counties, cities, and towns within the NFRMPO, all of which served as input for this Plan. Brief descriptions of some of the regional plans and studies follow; however, this is not an exhaustive list.

### North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began in fall 2003. The study analyzed potential environmental impacts, identified mitigation measures, and prepared the environmental decision document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The study addressed roadway widening, upgrades, new alignments, interchange modifications, and transit alternatives between Denver Union Station and Northern Colorado. A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed by FHWA in December 2011. ROD 2 was signed in September 2015, ROD 3 was signed in June 2016, ROD 4 was signed in April 2017, and ROD 5 was signed in December 2017.

### 2017 Coordinated Public Transit/Human Service Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan)

The 2017 Coordinated Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) brings together representatives from human service agencies and transit agencies to set strategies, goals, and objectives for the two Mobility Committees within the NFRMPO region over the next four years. Bringing groups who serve older adults and adults with disabilities together with the transit agencies allows for each agency to better serve those in need. SAFETEA-LU and subsequent transportation legislation requires Coordinated Plans to identify the transportation needs of individuals with

disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes; provide strategies for meeting those needs; and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. The Coordinated Plan was adopted in December 2017.

### 2045 Regional Transit Element (RTE)

The NFRMPO Planning Council approved the 2045 Regional Transit Element (RTE) in November 2018. The 2045 RTE replaces the 2040 RTE and is part of this 2045 RTP. The purpose of the 2045 RTE is to guide the development of regional transit in the NFRMPO. Corridors were recommended for the study of future transit and are discussed in **Chapter 3, Section 2: Vision Plans**.

### 2016 Non-Motorized Plan (NMP)

The 2016 Non-Motorized Plan (NMP) provides a consolidated summary of existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the NFRMPO region, provides the 15 member communities tools to support their non-motorized planning activities, positions the NFRMPO communities to pursue state and federal funding opportunities, and fulfills federal requirements to address bicycle and pedestrian planning as a component of the 2045 RTP. The NMP was adopted by the NFRMPO Planning Council in February 2017.

### Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

The CTC adopted the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan in August 2018. The Plan proposes strengthening rail coordination, addressing freight rail needs and issues,

advancing Front Range Passenger Rail, integrating planning processes, and enhancing economic connections. Implementation activities include ongoing action and partnership on priority strategies, creation of the Freight Rail Committee of the Freight Advisory Council (FAC), integration into future planning efforts, continued partner involvement through the State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), FAC, Transit & Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC), and the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission (SWC&FRPRC), and support for communications and education efforts through Colorado Delivers.

### **Colorado Freight Plan**

The Colorado Freight Plan (CFP) was completed by CDOT in 2019 and guides improvements and investments on the freight systems and supports Colorado’s vision of a safe, efficient, coordinated, and reliable system for the movement of goods. The CFP integrates highway, rail, air, intermodal, and pipeline policies and strategies. The CFP addresses issues

such as aviation, passenger rail, transportation system management and operations, transportation safety, and other freight specific studies and analyses. Ongoing freight planning and implementation efforts will be supported by the FAC and public agency and private industry partners.

### **Freight Northern Colorado (2019)**

The NFRMPO developed Freight Northern Colorado (FNC) to guide the improvement of the overall freight system within Northern Colorado. FNC provides a holistic view of freight and industry in the region. The overarching goal of FNC is to enhance the safety, mobility, and air quality of regional freight movements by creating a comprehensive freight system review within Northern Colorado. FNC provides an overview of the current freight system, analyzes the system’s performance, and summarizes major trends emerging regionally, nationally, and internationally in freight.



## E. Public Participation Process

The 2045 RTP reflects community input on the issues and concerns for the transportation future of the North Front Range region. Multiple opportunities for feedback were implemented into the 2045 RTP. During the 2045 RTP development, NFRMPO staff used a variety of public involvement tools to gather input, as set out in the NFRMPO's 2019 Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The NFRMPO reached out to those who live, work, recreate, and/or spend time in the region, and established a regional plan for the future based on feedback received. Public outreach is explored in further detail in **Chapter 4**.

### Process

Staff divided the outreach process into three phases corresponding to the needs of the plan. As the 2045 RTP was developed, the outreach methods evolved. The phases included:

- 1) **Plan Development** – staff engaged the public for community concerns, needs, and issues with the existing transportation system. Activities included online and in-person surveys, public meetings, and public events.
- 2) **Public Review** – The public provided feedback as staff completed draft chapters of the 2045 RTP. Activities included releasing chapters as part of the TAC packet, which is posted on the NFRMPO website.
- 3) **RTP Adoption and Conformity Determination** – After a 30-day public comment period for the Plan and public hearing for the Air Quality conformity determination, the 2045 RTP was adopted by the Planning Council. Dates of these Planning Council meetings and the conformity determination were posted on the NFRMPO's social media sites and website.

### Public Involvement Strategies

As outlined in the 2019 PIP, the public was notified of and involved in the development of the Plan through:

- Posting on the NFRMPO's [website](#), [Twitter](#), and [blog](#);
- Attendance and presentations at local meetings and events throughout the region.
- Publication of events, dates, and updates in the quarterly [On the Move](#) Newsletter;
- Creation of the [2045 RTP website](#); and
- the [Community Remarks website](#).

The NFRMPO used a variety of online tools to reach out to the public, ensuring up-to-date and interactive tools were made available.

- Events and meetings were posted as they were scheduled and were tweeted on the NFRMPO's Twitter account (@NFRMPO).
- The NFRMPO posted draft chapters, meeting schedules, and contact information on its website. The website was updated often to ensure the most current information was available.
- The Community Remarks site allowed the public to provide comments on a Google Maps-based website and “vote up” and “vote down” comments, which streamlined comments and provided additional interactivity.

## Air Quality Conformity

The NFRMPO issued a public hearing notice in regional newspapers and on the NFRMPO website on August 1, 2019 to meet the 30-day notice requirement for air quality conformity. All Transportation Plans in nonattainment and maintenance areas are required to demonstrate air quality conformity, including the RTP and TIP. The boundaries and pollutants for air quality conformity in the NFRMPO are detailed in **Chapter 2**.

The Planning Council opened the public hearing on September 5, 2019 for public comment; there were no public comments during the hearing. After the hearing, the Council approved **Resolution 2019-21** making a positive air quality conformity determination for the 2045 RTP and FY2020-2023 TIP. The Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) concurred with the Council adoption on September 19, 2019. FHWA and FTA concurred with the air quality conformity determination, effective October 17, 2019.

## F. Summary

The 2045 RTP is the culmination of a regional 3C planning effort. The regional transportation system is intended to strengthen the region's mobility and accessibility for all residents. A system which does not provide this enhancement will not be effective in improving the quality of life for residents and ensuring the economic vitality of the region. NFRMPO staff used a variety of outreach tools from the PIP to collect input from the public about regional transportation priorities and issues. The feedback received was reviewed, categorized, and integrated into the 2045 RTP. The Planning Council Resolutions adopting the 2045 RTP and the Air Quality Conformity Determination are included at the beginning of this document.