



# Transportation Department

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## **BOULDER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM # 4**

**September 15, 2010**  
**Afternoon Session – 1:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Hearing Room, Third Floor  
Boulder County Courthouse

### **BOULDER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN**

*Informational Item – No Action Requested*

Public Testimony will not be taken.

Transportation Staff: Julie McKay, Transportation Planning Manager

### **SUMMARY**

In December 2009, the Boulder County Planning Commission adopted the updated Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) Transportation Element. It provides policy direction for the County's multimodal transportation facilities, programs, and services; incorporates countywide sustainability goals and principles into its transportation policy framework; and includes policies to encourage the integration of transportation and land use decision-making within the County and with other local, state, and regional agencies. The 2009 BCCP Transportation Element is the result of a yearlong effort that included extensive stakeholder and community outreach.

The Transportation Department is now beginning a planning process to implement the policy direction included in the BCCP Transportation Element. The purpose of the Boulder County Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is to describe the County's planned multimodal transportation system and examine how it can best meet future travel needs through both demand management and the development, operations, and maintenance of its multimodal facilities, in a manner consistent with BCCP policy direction. The plan will identify improvement strategies and recommendations and will also include sections on system performance, implementation, and funding. The Transportation Department would like the Planning Commission to play an active role in the planning process, serving as an advisory body for the development of the TMP and facilitating formal public review of the draft plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

Since the adoption of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan in 1978, Boulder County has focused on developing, operating, and maintaining the County transportation system in an environmentally sustainable, multimodal, and cost-effective manner. Over the past ten years, Boulder County has added 55 miles of new shoulders to the roadway system, constructed 26 miles of new regional trails, and supported several new transit routes to the public transportation

system. The County has emphasized maintaining and improving the current system over the adding of new roads and roadway capacity. Simultaneous to the capital and operational improvements made over the past decade, Boulder County has engaged in numerous planning activities to enhance and maximize the use of its existing roadway infrastructure and off-road facilities. These efforts include, to name a few, the report developed by the Consortium of Cities Regional Transportation Task Force (1998), the Boulder and Broomfield Counties Transit Service Enhancement Plan (2006), and the County's capital planning and regional trails prioritization process. (A list of existing transportation plans and studies is attached to this memo.)

Boulder County does not, however, have an integrated, strategic, and comprehensive plan for the transportation facilities, services, and programs within the unincorporated areas of Boulder County. The TMP will be Boulder County's first-ever long-range multimodal transportation plan.

#### *Local Context*

Boulder County is semi-rural and most of its residents live in the incorporated urbanized areas. Given this, a primary function of the county multimodal transportation system is to move people between communities within the county and region. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) indicates that 57% of Boulder County residents leave their communities to access employment (2000). Travel that originates in surrounding counties is also significant. A technical analysis commissioned by Boulder County estimates that in 2035 approximately 32% of all trips by vehicle and transit will either originate or end outside of the county (2009). A key challenge for the Transportation Master Plan is to determine how to facilitate this movement in a manner that is responsive to anticipated needs and changes, affordable, and consistent with County goals and policies.

Boulder County's historic orientation and current policies emphasize transportation's role in creating sustainable ways of living from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. They include actions to be taken to ensure that the transportation system itself is sustainable, emphasizing the performance and maintenance of existing multimodal facilities. They also recognize that working with local communities and other agencies is an essential component of transportation planning and suggest that transportation and land use decisions should be coordinated.

#### *Regional and National Context*

In developing its TMP, Boulder County's focus on transportation sustainability aligns with regional and national activities that are seeking integrated solutions to transportation, housing, environment, health, social, and economic issues:

**Regional Planning:** In February 2010, DRCOG adopted a Sustainability Work Plan that includes six measurable draft goals. They seek to increase alternative transportation mode facilities, locate new growth within urban centers, reduce per capita water use, decrease work trips by single-occupant vehicles (mode share), reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled, and reduce green house gas emissions. DRCOG will incorporate policy language to achieve these goals into the updated 2035 Metro Vision Plan and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will also consider these goals in allocating federal transportation funding.

Federal Initiatives: In June 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency formed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This interagency initiative seeks to coordinate federal housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help to address the challenges of climate change. Six Livability Principles guide the Partnership's efforts through which funding, technical assistance, and other resources will become available to local communities for planning, program development, and project implementation.

As the federal partnership demonstrates, national and regional planning efforts are increasingly of a collaborative and multidisciplinary nature. Boulder County would like its master plan to reflect a similar approach to position itself to pursue funding and other opportunities in partnership with others.

### **MASTER PLANNING PROCESS**

Boulder County would like its TMP to include strategies to manage supply (transportation services and multimodal facilities, operational systems) and demand (pricing, transportation demand management programs, land use). Implementation of these types of strategies would, in many cases, require the cooperation and commitment of multiple communities and agencies. Transportation staff has designed the master planning process to facilitate the active engagement of Boulder County's communities, surrounding counties, and other transportation agencies and organizations that may play a role in implementing specific aspects of the plan.

The planning process will include a robust public outreach component, close collaboration with stakeholders, and early and ongoing interaction with decision-makers. The planning process for the TMP will occur in four phases, each with a specific purpose and outcomes. A graphic illustrating the planning process and timeline is attached to this memo.

In addition to ongoing interaction with the BOCC, Planning Commission, and Consortium of Cities, the decision-making and public involvement process for the TMP will be structured around two other components:

#### *Sustainable Transportation Task Force*

The TMP planning process will include a stakeholder group, the Sustainable Transportation Task Force, consisting of transportation and other staff from Boulder County communities along with representatives from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Regional Transportation District (RTD), Special Transit, Boulder County Transportation Mobility Organizations (TMO), and surrounding counties. The Consortium of Cities convened the task force and it will meet on a regular basis throughout the planning process. It held its first meeting on August 26 and the second one will be on September 23.

#### *Public Involvement*

Public involvement for the TMP will include multiple opportunities for citizens to engage in the planning process. Public workshops will be held in Phases 1, 2, and 3, in addition to Public Hearings at the time of Planning Commission review of the draft plan and BOCC adoption of the final plan. Note that these activities are in addition to ongoing public communication through the website, email contact list, small group meetings, and other outreach methods.

Public and stakeholder involvement activities will be sequenced so that they support the purpose of each planning phase and inform plan development and decision-making. A graphic illustrating the proposed TMP decision-making and public involvement process is attached to this memo.

### **ROLE OF PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is the adoption body for the TMP. As the adoption body for the BCCP, the Transportation Department would like the Planning Commission to provide guidance on the development of the plan, review the draft plan, and consider public comment prior to BOCC adoption. The Consortium of Cities will play a similar role, although its focus will be on bringing feedback to the planning effort from the communities each member represents.

*Staff request:* Transportation Department planning staff would like the Planning Commission to consider whether it would like to play an advisory role in the development of the TMP. If so, planning staff will update the Planning Commission at the end of Phases 1, 2, and 3 and any other key milestones, if they arise. At each update, planning staff will present the products of the planning phase to the Planning Commission and ask whether the effort is moving in the appropriate direction. Staff will also request Planning Commission feedback on the upcoming phase and address any issues that the Planning Commission wishes to raise. During Phase 4, the Planning Commission will conduct a Public Hearing to formally collect input on the draft plan. At the conclusion of the planning process, the Planning Commission will consider whether the plan is ready to be forwarded to the BOCC for adoption.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If the Planning Commission would like to serve in the role proposed in this memorandum, Transportation Staff will provide an update in December, at the conclusion of Phase 1.