

2050 Regional Transit Plan

Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Meeting #1
Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 1:30 – 3 p.m. MT

Overview

Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) held the first 2050 Regional Transit Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. Stakeholders were identified and invited based on the plan's boundaries to represent a cross-section of jurisdictions, community organizations, state and county representatives, military installations, businesses, and educational institutions.

The meeting objectives were to create a common understanding of:

- Project goals and objectives
- Planning landscape and intersections
- Roles and expectations of Stakeholder Advisory Committee members
- Stakeholder engagement conducted to date and what we've heard
- Existing conditions
- Project schedule and major technical milestones

This document summarizes the presentation delivered and the themes shared by meeting participants. The accompanying PowerPoint presentation is available for review upon request and features enlarged maps.

Welcome & Introductions

Jacob Matsen (MMT) and Lan Rao (MMT) welcomed stakeholders and thanked them for their involvement in the regional transit planning process. The 2050 Regional Transit Plan is the planning process that explores how to allocate current resources and create a visionary plan. They both emphasized that this plan looks to find the right service model to serve as much of the community as possible by meeting their needs and preventing future gaps.

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West), meeting facilitator, introduced project team members, reviewed the agenda, and invited participants to introduce themselves and one goal for the Regional Transit Plan. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members shared the following goals:

- Explore how transit can act as a catalyst for housing and affordable housing opportunities.
- Create a transit plan that is aspirational, actionable, and responsive to the region's population growth and development.
- Increase the use of transit to and from military installations.
- Understand the planning process to educate and inform others.
- Explore opportunities to ensure integration with higher education institutions.
- Connect transit to regional destinations, like the airport.
- Create a network that works with other modes of transportation.
- Explore the challenges and opportunities for transit within the larger system.

- Improve connectivity to Downtown Colorado Springs for other modes beyond single-occupancy vehicles.
- Include partnership opportunities.
- Ensure residents have access to transit when commuting to and from quality jobs to help grow the region's workforce.
- Listen to local voices throughout the planning process.

Multiple stakeholders emphasized creating a plan that is both actionable and responsive to the region's population growth and development, particularly focusing on funding. Participants who joined virtually introduced themselves through the Zoom chat function. A table of participants is included in Appendix A.

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) reviewed stakeholder committee roles and clarified the stakeholder commitment for this planning process. Given the shorter planning window, stakeholders can expect two meetings over six to nine months. The stakeholder committee accepted their role and agreed to have the committee roster posted to the website.

Before discussing the project in more detail, the committee asked to clarify the larger transportation plan's goals. Nelson\Nygaard explained that the goal of these planning efforts is to use the near-term information and data to identify 2050 strategies that are both visionary and practical to identify incremental steps toward a long-term goal. Since these plans are updated every five years, this allows the inclusion of actionable items now, and the ability to be responsive as things change between now and 2050.

Project Overview

Jonathan Mosteiro (Nelson\Nygaard) introduced the transit plan as part of the larger Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Both plans are visionary documents with a great opportunity to chart out short- and long-term policies and programs. The previous iteration of the plan was last completed before the pandemic, where a lot has changed in how people travel throughout the region.

Jonathan Mosteiro (Nelson\Nygaard) explained that the project team is looking to understand existing conditions, including ridership and on-time performance, and is analyzing existing gaps and opportunities for improvement and funding. While the technical side is a plan component, the team seeks to engage the community for feedback to inform the plan's projects, programs, and strategies. Additionally, this planning effort looks to build upon the previous planning effort, which had the following four themes:

- Maintain focus on existing service area.
- Improve service hour frequency and reliability.
- Improve user experience and access.
- Plan for innovation.

The committee was interested in discussing what innovation could mean for MMT and transit in the region. Stakeholders encouraged MMT to be innovative and consider applying emerging technologies to its vehicles, routes, operations, and accessible transportation options. Stakeholders suggested improvements to bus tracking, including more accurate real-time updates. MMT currently offers this service to its riders. It was also recommended that transit

services be expanded beyond fixed route service, especially in geographic areas with lower population density.

Innovation was also expanded to consider future transit partnerships and how housing and multimodal options could be part of a larger transportation system. When discussing the nexus of housing and transit, stakeholders shared how future state policy could create more of a partnership and relationship between housing, population density, and public transportation.

Before delving into what is known from the technical analysis, Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) reviewed the outreach and engagement done to date, which has included a website launch, the LRTP Digital Engagement Survey, presentations to the LRTP Regional Transportation Planning Advisory Committee (RTPAC), stakeholder interviews, and focus groups. Through these engagements, the team has learned the following:

LRTP Digital Survey – Transit Results

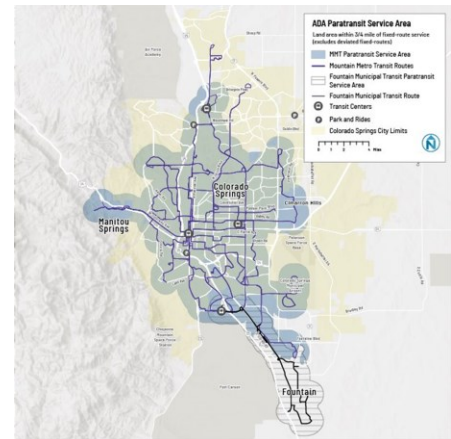
- 8% of respondents ride transit in a typical week to move around the region.
- 27% would ride transit more frequently if services or buses were expanded to more destinations.
- 51% are concerned with the lack of public transit coverage (bus/streetcar/light rail).
- 38% see the lack of transit frequency as a top transportation problem.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee paused when considering the survey results emphasizing that these results show a desire for public transit. Stakeholders shared that MMT should consider ways to be proactive and innovative when looking at current and future scenarios or recommendations to increase transit. They also emphasized that this might involve creative thinking or incentivizing people to ride public transportation over single-occupant vehicles. Jonathan Mosteiro (Nelson\Nygaard) clarified that transit can look many different ways, and strategies and solutions could be proposed to meet the various community or geographic needs.

For more information about the survey responses, the results are posted on the [PPACG 2050 Long Range Transportation website](#).

Existing Service Areas

Map 1



Map 2

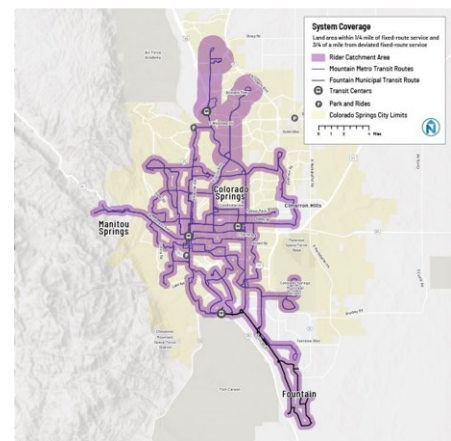


Figure 1: Maps show the existing service area (Map 1) and system coverage (Map 2).

Process

- Continue to engage with impacted communities.
- Explore additional opportunities for collaboration.
- Incorporate the region into the planning process.
- Plan for future population and job growth in the region.
- Consider regional rail improvements.
- Explore how to decrease car-dependent travel within the City.

Operations

- Continue to provide metro-to-metro services, access to outdoor recreation, and routes that include educational institutions.
- Increase salaries of bus drivers.
- Focus on funding opportunities to address gaps.
- Create pilot program demonstrations.
- Increase routes, stops, and frequency.
- Connect tourist destinations, job centers, the east-west side, and the Colorado Springs Airport.
- Improve safety features and bus amenities.

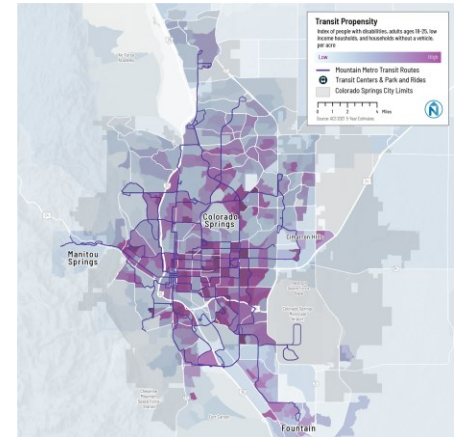
Partnerships

- Continue to offer housing and community vitality bus passes.
- Support for the no-fare months.
- Provide non-profit grant programs.
- Continue to offer the free downtown shuttle (ZEB).
- Offer bus passes as part of student ID programs.
- Coordinate with educational institutions to inform staff and students how to use the public transit system.
- Provide a larger CDL training program to find drivers for all buses.

Stakeholders expanded on comments previously heard to encourage MMT to consider creative funding streams. Transit can be seen as a community service, and stakeholders discussed how to create a sustainable and affordable transportation system. Stakeholders discussed creative funding opportunities, like farebox recovery ratios, which examine how much operating expenses are covered by passenger fares. Additionally, stakeholders were curious to learn about federal grant opportunities.

Target Locations

Map 1



Map 2

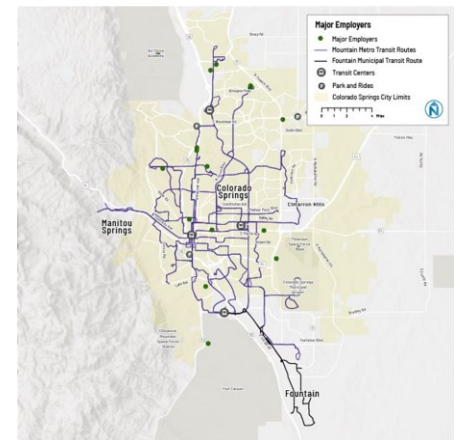


Figure 2: Maps show the transit propensity index (Map 1) and major employment markets (Map 2).

Existing Conditions

Jonathan Mosteiro (Nelson\Nygaard) presented the existing conditions for fixed routes transit. The existing area shows service frequency on a typical weekday and the system coverage (Figure 1). Within the current system, most routes are more in the 40 to 60-minute frequency, requiring riders to plan their trip around routes, which causes disruptions if a rider cannot make a bus.

In addition to looking at the current service route, the project team has also analyzed demographic data to understand where the region will see near-term and future growth, especially in areas that might not currently have access to transit. When considering future growth and current service, it is important to consider how paratransit and specialized transit work in partnership with the fixed route service. The 2050 Regional Transit Plan is working closely with the Specialized Transportation Plan to develop strategies to increase regional transit access.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of considering and planning for future population growth when examining existing conditions. Stakeholders also shared anticipated employment growth and development within the City. The growing semiconductor manufacturing industry was one example of future employment opportunities that should be incorporated into the transit plan.

To understand more about where transit opportunities might be more prominent, the project team has analyzed socioeconomic data to determine what characteristics transit riders are more likely to have through the transit propensity index. This includes areas where there might be more concentrations of reliable ridership (Figure 2). The transit propensity index is focused more on where people start their trips, whereas the major employment markets demonstrate popular destinations where people might utilize transit to get to and from. Stakeholders confirmed that the St. Francis Hospital is a major employment center not currently served by transit. Additionally, stakeholders shared the growing population east of Powers Boulevard should be served with future transit service.

Next Steps

Angela Jo Wolcott (Kearns & West) closed the meeting by thanking participants for their participation and reminding them that the next committee meeting will be in late Spring. Jacob Matsen (MMT) also thanked stakeholders for their participation and emphasized that a plan with community input will allow MMT to create the best possible plan.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members - In Attendance

| Name | Organization |
|---------------------|---|
| Carlos Perez | Citizens Transportation Advisory Board |
| Steve Posey | City of Colorado Springs |
| Sharon Thompson | City of Fountain |
| Juan Alvarez | City of Manitou Springs |
| Pete Zeitz | Colorado College |
| Emily Barden | Colorado Department of Transportation |
| Scott Skinner | Colorado Department of Transportation |
| Chris Padilla | Colorado Springs Airport |
| Chelsea Gondeck | Downtown Partnership |
| Tara McCarthy | PikeRide |
| Jim Godfrey | Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority |
| Traci Marques | Pikes Peak Workforce Center |
| Darren Horstmeier | Schriever Space Force Base |
| Beth Dukes | United States Space Force |
| Amy Kelley | United States Air Force Academy |
| Matthew Fitzsimmons | United States Air Force Academy |
| Matt Beckwith | University of Colorado - Colorado Springs |

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members – Not in Attendance

| Name | Organization |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Gayle Sturdivant | City of Colorado Springs |
| Jessie Kimber | City of Colorado Springs |
| Morgan Hester | City of Colorado Springs |
| Cathy Buckley | Colorado College |
| Ben Gellman | Colorado Department of Transportation |
| Geoff Guthrie | Colorado Department of Transportation |
| George Gromke | Colorado Department of Transportation |
| Erin Maruzzella | Innovations in Aging |
| Cindy Aubrey | Pikes Peak United Way |
| Hannah Parsons | Transportation Commission of Colorado |
| Doug Price | VisitCOS |

Project Team

| Name | Organization |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Laura Crews | PPACG |
| John Liosatos | PPACG |
| Danelle Miller | PPACG |
| Jacob Matsen | MMT |
| Lan Rao | MMT |
| Jackson Simmons | MMT |
| Ezra Pincus-Roth | Nelson\Nygaard |
| Jonathan Mosteiro | Nelson\Nygaard |
| Zach Barr | Kearns & West |

| Name | Organization |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Angela Jo Woolcott | Kearns & West |
| Caitlin Sheridan | Kearns & West |