

**-Meeting Summary-  
North Nevada Transit Connectivity Study  
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Kick-Off Meeting  
August 28, 2019**

**Attendees**

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members:**

Arthael Alexander, The Independence Center &  
Community Transit Coalition  
Jay Anderson, City of Colorado Springs  
Alex Armani-Munn, Downtown Partnership  
Shannon Bertram, YMCA of the Pikes Peak  
Region  
Peter Frantz, Old North End Neighborhood  
Association Board  
Jennifer Furda, University of Colorado at  
Colorado Springs  
Jim Godfrey, PPRTA Citizens Advisory  
Committee  
Leonard Kendall, Downtown Partnership

Don Knight, City Council  
Linda Kogan, University of Colorado at Colorado  
Springs  
John Lauer, Colorado College & Citizen  
Transportation Advisory Board  
Diane Loschen, Council of Neighbors and  
Organizations  
Melissa Marts, PPAGC Area on Aging  
Elena Nunez, Colorado Springs Utilities  
Tim O'Donnell, Downtown Residents Coalition  
Liz Robertson, Transit Passenger Advisory  
Committee

**Project Team:**

Craig Blewitt, Mountain Metro Transit  
Amy Garinger, Kimley-Horn  
Kyle McLaughlin, Kimley-Horn  
Rick Nau, Kimley-Horn Project Manager  
Hannah Rimar, GBSM

Katie Van Scoyk, GBSM  
Brian Vitulli, Mountain Metro Transit  
Angela Jo Woolcott, GBSM

**Welcome & Introductions**

Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) Project Manager Brian Vitulli welcomed attendees, thanked them for their time and provided a brief project overview of how the North Nevada Transit Connectivity Study builds off of previous work, including the Renew North Nevada process and the 2017 Transportation Sub-Plan.

Brian requested participants stay engaged and committed throughout the process and help support the long-term vision for the corridor.

Project Consultant Angela Jo Woolcott introduced herself as the meeting facilitator and walked through the meeting purpose:

- Develop a common understanding of the study purpose and draft project needs
- Begin to prioritize and refine the draft goals
- Review transit mode options and collect feedback in order to identify preferences

Angela then facilitated participant introductions and reviewed the list of stakeholders invited to join the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). She asked participants to speak with the project team if there is anyone else they recommend get involved. She also noted that the roster of meeting attendees will be posted to the project webpage, with no objections from the group.

Angela walked through meeting guidelines as well as CAC roles and responsibilities, getting group commitment to uphold the guidelines and responsibilities by a nod of heads.

### **Study Overview**

Project Consultant Rick Nau provided an overview of the project that included a map of the study area and the purpose of the study: *to define what type of alternative transit service would best meet the needs of the area, to build on previous studies and to define where the alignment will be along with its operational characteristics*. He also explained how the study fits into the Federal Transit Administration's planning process and the variety of considerations that go into the study's decision-making process.

Project Consultant Kyle McLaughlin highlighted key demographics and forecasted growth along the corridor and surrounding areas and walked through existing transit system characteristics. The following conversation themes arose:

- Urban renewal is essential to economic development.
- Growth projections for population, employment and trip density were a topic of interest.
  - Growth projections were different for different portions of the study area.
  - Strong interest in connectivity between downtown and the UCCS campus.
  - There is a significant population of students who do not own a car, and are thus reliant on transit or other mobility providers.
- Downtown is nearing capacity for accommodating vehicles as employment and entertainment continues to grow.
  - Parking is already challenging in Downtown and there may be interest in establishing a park-and-ride type model to allow people to park in a less congested area and take transit into Downtown.
  - The new soccer stadium will likely exacerbate parking challenges in Downtown.
  - Colorado College is building a new hockey stadium that may benefit from off-site parking/park-and-ride options.

- Need to identify the target audience for future transit investments to help guide the study.
  - Students, specific populations (aging, people with disabilities), specific neighborhoods (such as manufactured homes along Cascade), others?

### **Draft Project Goals - Activity**

Angela walked through the draft project goals asking participants to consider the goals that most resonate with them and their constituents as well as any opportunities or concerns around the current goals. Participants received three green sticky dots to mark their most preferred goals presented on flip chart paper around the room, and three blue dots to mark goals for which they had suggested changes or revisions. Participants also had the option to add notes to the goals with additional feedback.

After the activity, Angela brought the group back together and highlighted initial observations on where the most cluster of dots appeared. The broader consultant team discussed the similarities in preferences from a meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee earlier in the day. The major takeaways included:

- Goal 3, *Consistent with neighborhood plans and contributes to safety, livability, and quality of life*, had the most green dots. People felt that collaborating with existing planning efforts was of paramount importance.
- Goal 5, *Can be incorporated into corridor redevelopment efforts*, was the second most supported goal. People discussed that successful transit planning efforts ought to result in increased economic development.
- Goal 1, *Improves transit travel time, reliability, and customer convenience*, had the third most green dots. Meeting participants talked about how critical transit improvements would be as a result of this effort. There was also discussion about how this goal may be combined with some of the other goals, as they all had a similar intent.
- Goal 4, *Improves the visibility and community perception of transit*, had the most blue dots. Some comments included that this is not actually a goal, but instead a potential byproduct if *Goal 1, Improves transit travel time, reliability, and customer convenience*, is achieved.
- Goal 6, *Provides an improved direct connection between downtown Colorado Springs and UCCS*, had the most combined green and blue dots. The north and south connection was discussed at length and CAC members emphasized the importance of extending beyond north of Garden of the Gods Road to University Village.

The consultant team said they would revise the goals based on the CAC and TAC feedback and share the updated version with the group once they were updated.

### **Modal Alternatives – Worksheet\***

#### ***\*See table at the end for full results***

Rick displayed a modal alternatives table and walked through the different mode categories and definitions for the group. He discussed how the list of current modes was developed and that the team is looking for input from stakeholders on their level of interest in each mode for the North Nevada study area. He also briefly explained the multiple inputs and considerations that will factor into the evaluation and decision-making process related to mode and alignment; these included stakeholder input but also technical inputs such as environmental constraints, federal standards, and engineering feasibility, among others.

Each participant received a worksheet and Rick asked them to indicate their level of interest for each modal alternative option on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “very excited” and 1 being “not excited at all.” Each mode was ranked independently, so that multiple modes could get the same score if they were equally preferred. The worksheet also asked participants to provide rationale for the rating, keeping in mind how they prioritized draft project goals in the previous exercise. The full results can be found at the end of this document.

Angela then brought the group back together to discuss thoughts. The exercise prompted suggestions from the group to incorporate Quality of Life, Cost to the End User, and Connectivity as categories in future discussions around modal alternatives.

Additionally, some specific discussion points that were brought up related to the modal exercise included:

- Because of the unique characteristics of the different portions of the corridor (Downtown vs. residential areas vs. industrial/redevelopment area vs. campuses), there were suggestions to consider a phased implementation approach, where some investments are made in a specific mode sooner than others.
- There are tradeoffs between modes that will have to be further investigated based on clarification of project goals.
  - A more permanent investment in a mode like streetcar or BRT that requires permanent infrastructure (rail tracks, fixed stations) would be at a higher capital cost for the City but also shows commitment to redevelopment, and thus often helps attract more robust redevelopment investment from the development community.
  - A streetcar or lightrail has a ‘cool factor’ that may help attract ridership and would provide something new and upgraded, but the financial feasibility and limited existing ridership limits the feasibility to justify these modes.
- Connectivity considerations include accessibility of the transit (how will riders get to transit stops/stations), connectivity to services (grocery stores, hospitals) and connectivity to the other transit modes in the City as well as other mobility options (bikes, scooters, rideshare) for first-mile/last-mile connections.

- Need to make sure that we are thinking holistically and about the future so that we are not constrained by current conditions. For example, there are some planned roadway improvements that the City has identified that should be considered, as they could have impacts to future transit options:
  - Extension of Cascade Ave to connect to Mark Dabling Blvd
  - Extension of Weber St to cross the railroad tracks
  - It will be less expensive and easier to plan for transit investments as part of these projects, rather than having to retrofit the roadway after they are completed

### **Project Schedule and Process**

Kyle reviewed the overarching project schedule highlighting key milestones, and Angela walked through the community and stakeholder engagement process explaining how it is aligned to the project's key milestones. She asked the group to reach out to the project team if there are specific recommendations on how to best engage with the broader community and their constituents.

Prior to adjourning the meeting, the project team opened it up for any last questions. The following main points were discussed:

- There are a variety of stakeholders at the north end of the study area that should be included in future conversations.
- People asked that Cascade and Union be reviewed closely as part of the suite of options for future transit improvements.
- In regard to mode choice, there was a question as to what other options might be considered such as, circulators or smaller service vehicles. Mountain Metro and the project team responded that this study's purpose is to consider a higher-capacity transit option for the corridor, but that the City is looking into these other types of investments as part of the larger, City-wide transit vision.
  - This also spurred a discussion around an important point that this study is not looking to replace other, existing transit options in the area. The local transit services that are currently being provided or that are planned (such as a Downtown circulator) will continue to be provided in addition to the recommendations that come out of this study.
- The perception of Bus Rapid Transit is often challenging and providing positive visuals of the types of options under consideration would go a long way.

### **Next Steps**

Angela adjourned the meeting by thanking participants for their feedback and partnership on the effort and told them the project team would be in touch soon with details on the next public engagement effort in early to late fall time. She also reminded attendees that the meeting summary from today's meeting and other project information will be provided on the project website.

Mode	Level of Interest (# or responses) 5 = Very Interested						Reason for Level of Interest (# of responses)							
	No score	1	2	3	4	5	Peak Frequency	Runningway	System Length	Capital Costs	Passenger Amenities	Influence on Development	Station Spacing	Daily Boardings
Local Bus	1	2	4	5	1	2	5	1	3	4	2	1	1	5
Enhanced Bus	0	0	1	6	3	5	7	1	3	5	3	3	3	5
Bus Rapid Transit Light	1	2	0	2	4	7	7	5	4	7	4	4	4	8
Bus Rapid Transit Heavy	0	3	2	3	5	3	4	6	2	5	4	6	3	6
Streetcar	1	2	1	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	7	5	5
Light Rail Transit	1	6	4	1	1	2	1	3	2	9	3	4	5	5

Mode	Notes – Relationship to Goal Priorities
Local Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like "green options" - Boring;</li> <li>• Already exists! BUT seems like there's still a need to enhance what already exists;</li> <li>• The number of stops may not allow for access to desirable places in a timely manner;</li> <li>• Makes sense as first step investment-wise. Not knowing what redevelopment plans are;</li> <li>• Current system not working. Potential of long wait times even though more convenient station spacing;</li> <li>• The low volume of use is a concern in terms of positive impact. Cost is a plus, but not if ridership can't be increased;</li> <li>• Not always attractive means may deter overall good;</li> <li>• Not frequent, convenient;</li> <li>• Already have this</li> </ul>
Enhanced Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't want a ton of stops. Want to get students to/from UCCS quickly - can get done;</li> <li>• Contributes to quality of life; increased times;</li> <li>• Already exists! BUT seems like there's still a need to enhance what already exists;</li> <li>• Absolutely need more times 5am to midnight;</li> <li>• Level of frequency and accuracy of schedule can be a great start to something more robust;</li> <li>• Maybe next (2nd) step as part of incremental investment;</li> </ul>

Mode	Notes – Relationship to Goal Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More cost effective not ideal but manageable. Station spacing;</li> <li>• capacity to grow ridership into BRT light;</li> <li>• A step above the bus, but Bus Rapid Transit offers more benefits;</li> <li>• Won't move the dial;</li> <li>• Students need service, later on weeknights and weekends</li> </ul>
BRT Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doable, fast transport; quality of life;</li> <li>• Seems to be most appropriate, sustainable fit. Based on the needs/gaps. Fits "multimodal" goal;</li> <li>• Can be a great way to move people far distances with little change to the right of way;</li> <li>• Level of investment does not make sense yet;</li> <li>• Promising and the separate runningway a plus, especially for the cost;</li> <li>• Feasible transition from current to desired stage; Near/short-term step;</li> <li>• Easier to transition - than get to BRT heavy</li> </ul>
BRT Heavy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost prohibitive - need too many daily boardings to justify cost;</li> <li>• Relieves congestion as park and ride but does little for neighbors;</li> <li>• Only difference is cost vs ridership to justify implementing it;</li> <li>• Could run in Fillmore to Garden of the Gods;</li> <li>• Similar to the BRT-light but with more introductory costs and amenities;</li> <li>• Level of investment does not make sense yet;</li> <li>• My immediate reaction is that "Rapid" transit does not belong on a residential street. Therefore, BRT is my least favorite;</li> <li>• Take passengers off road runningway, high volume of boardings makes it attractive, lower cost than light rail with many of the same benefits;</li> <li>• Daily boarding too high;</li> <li>• Streamlined connectivity between north and downtown is appealing and convenient;</li> <li>• ultimate/long-term;</li> <li>• Ultimately better if we can find place - for North to South and back - not within</li> </ul>
Streetcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super cool but too expensive. Too much disruption;</li> <li>• Development;</li> <li>• uniqueness to neighborhood;</li> <li>• Ideally this would be better fit inside downtown not running it/out of it. But this idea/design seems attractive, accessible, and feasible. Can work if run properly. Needs to be timely;</li> <li>• Level of investment does not make sense yet;</li> <li>• Streetcar seems like it could minimize externalities. However, it cannot be distributed between two streets to share the load to decrease impact on a neighborhood;</li> <li>• Lower neighborhood impact but also local and visitor amenity/charm and connectivity to other metro option;</li> </ul>

Mode	Notes – Relationship to Goal Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intriguing option, particularly if it includes the old historic cars that have been discussed as part of trolley system. Historic character;</li> <li>• For old North End and downtown circulation;</li> <li>• Without density of interesting features and stops, don't see the advantage</li> </ul>
LRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cool - too expensive;</li> <li>• Too short distance;</li> <li>• Development;</li> <li>• This would be better/more appropriate for a longer corridor + connectivity to different geographical areas of town - not this smaller corridor;</li> <li>• Only if near highway;</li> <li>• Most attractive, but most expensive;</li> <li>• Tracks may pose an issue with bikes;</li> <li>• Level of investment does not make sense yet;</li> <li>• Cost of implementation. Neighborhood impact for parking accommodation, etc.;</li> <li>• Cost is greatest detriment, otherwise daily boarding projections are very promising, likely to be one option that does pull people out of their car;</li> <li>• Daily boarding too high;</li> <li>• Not for this corridor. Unless connected on front range</li> </ul>
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My primary concern is for the impact to the neighborhood and the negative externalities that accompany each mode. For that reason, I rank these primarily by my perception of how they affect livability and safety. However, my perception may not be correct. I have to learn a little more about each one;</li> <li>• Accessibility for all of these modes will be our focus. Demographic areas as well as if these modes are accessible for people with disabilities</li> </ul>