



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE:** September 18, 2012

**AGENDA TITLE:** : Consideration of a motion to approve the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Policy Review and potential work tasks

**PRESENTERS:** Jane S. Brautigam, City Manager  
Paul J. Fetherston, Deputy City Manager  
Maureen Rait, Executive Director of Public Works  
Tracy Winfree, Director of Public Works for Transportation  
Michael Gardner-Sweeney, Transportation Planning and Operations Coordinator  
Kathleen Bracke, GO Boulder Manager  
Randall Rutsch, Senior Transportation Planner  
Joanna Crean, Public Works Project Coordinator

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Boulder's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was created in 1989 and has since been updated four times. TMP has evolved through the application of available technology, new information and data, and the desire for the TMP to be a "living document" that dynamically reflects the needs and issues affecting the community. The 2012-13 TMP update continues this tradition with a collaborative approach focused on including sustainability objectives and city budget priorities as well as integrating the transportation planning process with community planning efforts across the city organization.

The first phase of the 2012-2013 TMP update has been a policy review included a comprehensive assessment of progress since 2002 relative to the existing six TMP objectives and each of the four TMP focus areas established in 2003. This phase included the development of the 2012 Transportation Report on Progress, a public phone survey and employee survey, consultation with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), an expert panel and cross-departmental interviews. Based on the compiled information, the feedback shows the city's transportation policy continues to produce positive results and has strong community support but can benefit from refinement. Following a review of these results by the TAB on Aug. 14, 2012,

the draft policy review materials were presented to City Council at a study session on Aug. 28, 2012.

Based on the City Council discussion at the Aug. 28, 2012 study session on and the TAB recommendation from Sept. 10, 2012, the following refinements are suggested to guide work in the update process:

- **Objectives:** Add new objectives related to Safety, Neighborhood Accessibility and Per Capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- **Focus Areas**
  - *Multimodal Corridors:* Rename, Address Lag in Transit System, Explore Innovations
  - *Regional Travel:* Continue Existing Approach
  - *Transportation Demand Management (TDM):* Explore Community-Wide Eco-Pass and Management Strategies
  - *Funding:* Expand Funding Focus
  - *Integrate with Sustainability Initiatives:* Add as a new Focus Area

Council is asked to approve a motion approving these refinements and work priorities for the update process.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Suggested Motion Language:**

Staff requests council consideration of this matter and action in the form of the following motion:

Motion to approve the suggested refinements and work priorities for the 2012-2013 TMP update.

#### **COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS**

- **Economic:** Transportation costs are a significant portion of household expenses and important to business competitiveness and employee retention. The local economy depends on the movement of goods and people. The policy review shows that enhancing the travel options available to residents and employees supports more sustainable travel behavior. There are numerous opportunities to coordinate with economic vitality efforts to improve access in existing employment centers and in regional travel options.
- **Environmental:** Addressing the most important transportation issues identified in the focus areas implements the TMP objectives of reducing single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel, reducing congestion and air pollution emissions. Development of the city's Climate Action Framework and sustainability initiatives in conjunction with the TMP update will place a greater emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions..
- **Social:** Enhanced travel options will improve access for all community members. Improved transit access is particularly important to seniors, low income and disabled members of the community. Recent research shows that transit riders tend to walk more and be healthier than auto commuters. Accessibility in being able to access daily needs within neighborhoods, or "20 minute neighborhoods," is an increasing focus related to public health for both children and

adults. The proposed emphasis on transit and accessibility will have multiple benefits to the community.

## **OTHER IMPACTS**

- **Fiscal:** Financial support for the TMP update is included in the 2012 and 2013 Transportation budget. The city does not have the resources to support the level of a 1996 or 2003 Update and the focused approach will appropriately scale the update effort. Consultant support is anticipated for the transit work effort given the specialized expertise needed and is anticipated to be the major expense of the update.
- **Staff time:** The staff time to implement the update is included in the normal work plans. Previous efforts such as the Complete Streets Investment program are comparable to the efforts anticipated in this program.

## **BOARD AND COMMISSION FEEDBACK**

The TAB considered the Policy Review materials at its Aug. 14, 2012 meeting. As reported by Jessica Yates, TAB vice-chair at the Aug. 28, 2012 study session, the board had the following comments to council:

- TAB supports TMP policy approach with refinements to objectives / focus areas
- TAB would like to continue to draw attention to funding
- TAB is committed to continue work on the TMP and funding solutions

The TAB reviewed the summary of the Aug. 28, 2012 council study session at their Sept. 10, 2012 meeting and had no questions or concerns.

## **PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

The major public comment portion of this work was the public phone survey conducted in June and July, 2012. A summary of the survey results was included in the City Council Study Session memo for Aug. 28, 2012 which can be found at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/City%20Council/Study%20Sessions/2012\\_SS/08282012S/TMP%20SS%208-28%20printed.pdf](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/City%20Council/Study%20Sessions/2012_SS/08282012S/TMP%20SS%208-28%20printed.pdf).

The full survey results can be found on the TMP update Web site at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=16948&Itemid=5479](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16948&Itemid=5479).

In addition, the Mindmixer Web tool went live on Aug. 20, 2012 and has seen a significant number of users. (A brief summary of results will be added to the final memo)

## **BACKGROUND**

### **TMP Development over Time**

The TMP was first adopted in 1989 as the city's long-range blueprint for travel and mobility throughout Boulder. The original plan contained the objective of achieving a 15 percent mode shift away from the Single-Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) and set the city in the direction of increasing travel options. The plan called for funding improvements for all the modes and established a spending plan and a metrics collection program. Subsequent plans established a

more complete set of goals and objectives, developed modal plans for a complete multimodal system, established funding priorities and focus areas, and prioritized individual projects into a series of investment programs ranging from “Current Funding” to the “Vision Plan.” The TMP is a mature plan reflecting more than 20 years of consistent policy direction and documented results.

The TMP is also set within the broader context of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP), with transportation supporting sustainability and quality of life goals set by the community. The TMP objectives are measurable aspects of the TMP goals with the six existing TMP objectives being:

- 1) Continued progress toward no growth in long-term vehicle traffic;
- 2) Reduce single-occupant-vehicle travel to 25 percent of trips;
- 3) Continued reduction in mobile source emissions of air pollutants;
- 4) No more than 20 percent of roadways congested (at Level of Service [LOS] F);
- 5) Expand fiscally viable transportation alternatives for all Boulder residents and employees, including the elderly and those with disabilities; and
- 6) Increase transportation alternatives commensurate with the rate of employee growth.

The four current focus areas identified in 2003 as areas needing additional work and improvement were:

- 1) Multimodal Corridors;
- 2) Regional Travel;
- 3) Transportation Demand Management (TDM); and,
- 4) Funding.

## **ANALYSIS**

The full policy review can be found in the City Council Study Session memo for Aug. 28, 2012 which can be found at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/City%20Council/Study%20Sessions/2012\\_SS/08282012S/TMP%20SS%208-28%20printed.pdf](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/City%20Council/Study%20Sessions/2012_SS/08282012S/TMP%20SS%208-28%20printed.pdf).

The conclusions from the policy review are included below.

### **Progress on TMP Objectives**

Based largely on the results of the Report on Progress ([www.bouldertransportation.net](http://www.bouldertransportation.net)), the first part of the assessment phase revealed continued progress in meeting each of the TMP’s six objectives. This finding suggests that the city “stay the course” relative to its transportation efforts but consider some enhancements needed to reach our goals in transportation and climate action. Without restating the Report on Progress information, brief highlights include:

- Vehicle counts have declined, leading to an estimated reduction in daily vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and single occupant vehicle (SOV) mode share for Boulder residents.

- The city has completed a number of significant projects in the bicycle/pedestrian system. These include the 30<sup>th</sup> Street bike lanes and underpass, the bike lanes and multimodal path on Broadway north of Iris Avenue, the Arapahoe Avenue multimodal paths and the Elmers Two Mile Greenways connection.
- Development and implementation of the Transit Village Area Plan (Boulder Junction) provides an example of integrating land use, transportation connections, and comprehensive transportation demand management (TDM) and parking management to avoid a majority of the expected SOV trips from new development.
- Of concern is the need to increase the rate of the shift away from SOV travel and the 2011 increase in SOV commuting shown in the Boulder Valley Employee Survey. While some of this change may reflect lower gas prices between 2008 and 2011, Regional Transportation District (RTD) service cuts and city reductions in programs and services may also be reflected in these results.

***Proposed Approach: Add Three New TMP Objectives***

During the policy review of the TMP objectives, three additional objectives have been identified and are recommended for this update.

Safety

The first of these relates to adding an objective that focuses on improving safety. While the TMP identifies safety as the top spending priority and safety underlies all the work in transportation, it is not measured as an objective. The recent *Safe Streets Boulder* report was generated from a new comprehensive database and the ability to measure safety improvements in the transportation system. The [Safe Streets Boulder report](#) can be found on the city’s website at: [www.bouldertransportation.net](http://www.bouldertransportation.net). Using the new database, safety improvements could be measured as part of the TMP.

Neighborhood Accessibility Measure

The second recommended new objective would be a neighborhood accessibility measure evaluating the ease by which people can travel to daily activities using different modal systems. This was suggested by the transportation expert panel and reflects the idea of a “20-minute neighborhood” where many of one’s daily activities can easily be accomplished on foot. The city has been working with our geographic information system (GIS) vendor on testing an accessibility analysis tool, which appears to provide good results using Boulder’s GIS data. Development of this tool continues and will allow for measurement of improvements in accessibility over time. The neighborhood accessibility measure will support economic vitality efforts as well as public health.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per Capita

The third recommended additional objective is vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita. The concept of including VMT per capita supports enhanced measurement and monitoring of TDM efforts. This measure also helps the TMP to reflect city sustainability goals beyond transportation and will help people understand their individual travel habits and the associated impacts. Based on council suggestions, staff will explore the applicability of per capita VMT for in-commuters as well as Boulder residents.

As much of the work supporting these measures has occurred or will occur as part of the update process, reporting on these can be accomplished with existing staff resources.

### **Progress in TMP Focus Areas**

The Report on Progress and other methods of gathering input also provides information on progress in each of the existing four TMP focus areas:

- Multimodal corridors,
- Regional travel,
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM); and,
- Funding.

There have been significant efforts in each Focus Area and each remains relevant to achieving the goals of the TMP. The policy review findings related to the focus areas are:

- The nomenclature associated with the “multimodal corridors” should be updated and referenced consistently as “Complete Streets” to enhance public understanding;
- Progress on improving access to transit has lagged over the last 10 years and requires additional focus;
- Testing innovative treatments to enhance the bicycling network and attract the “interested but concerned” target population – estimated to be as much as 60 percent of the Boulder community, who would like to utilize these modes but are afraid to be in the roadway on a bicycle.
- In the Transportation Demand Management focus area, the concept of a community-wide Eco-Pass has received significant support as a potential initiative;
- The funding shortfall has increased and will be a significant challenge to achieving the goals and objectives of the TMP and should be addressed;
- Integration and coordination of the TMP with city sustainability and other master plan initiatives are important opportunities to assure alignment and leverage overlapping priorities. Current examples include the Climate Action Framework, the Civic Area master planning efforts, and the Parks Master Plan update.

### ***Proposed Approach: Refine and Expand Four Policy Focus Areas***

As mentioned above, significant results are shown in each of the four focus areas and each remains relevant to achieving the goals of the TMP. A summary of the potential refinements to the focus areas includes:

- ***Multimodal Corridors: Rename, Address Lag in Transit System, Explore Innovations*** – In order to be more current and descriptive, the Multimodal Coordinators focus area could be consistently renamed to Complete Streets. Within this focus area, progress on implementing the transit system has lagged over the last 10 years and requires additional consideration. A transit consultant will be hired to assist in preparing for the opening of Boulder Junction and for developing a long term community vision for transit that the community can fund. Both local and regional transit will be included in this work. This focus area could also include evaluating potential bicycle and pedestrian system connections and other multimodal innovations.

- **Regional Travel: Continue Existing Approach** – Continue the focused work with our regional partners to fully implement true bus rapid transit (BRT) service on US 36 and to expand travel options on regional corridors in Boulder County. This work will continue to focus on the in-commute trip as well as the last mile issue of connecting transit users to their final destinations and mid-day travel options.
- **TDM: Explore Community-Wide Eco-Pass** – In the TDM focus area, the concept of a community-wide Eco-Pass has received significant support as a potential initiative and the Eco Pass has proven successful in achieving mode shift. The potential benefits of a community wide pass will be evaluated in partnership with the County study and through the transit consultant work, along with transit service levels and other strategies for increasing transit ridership. There will be a renewed effort on developing TDM packages in development review and relative to the VMT per capita objective. This focus area will include addressing potential parking and congestion management strategies in conjunction with other community planning efforts and will expand on the existing community partnerships.
- **Funding: Expand Funding Focus** – The funding shortfall has increased and will be a significant challenge to achieving the goals and objectives of the TMP and should be addressed. The investment programs of the TMP will be reviewed to reflect the current city approach to budgeting and investment and all elements will be evaluated in terms of funding options. The on-going work of the transportation maintenance fee (TMF) task force will be integral to the update and will include a full spectrum of options..
- **Integrate with Sustainability Initiatives: Add a new Focus Area** – Add “Integrate with Sustainability Initiatives” as a focus area. While there is a track record of coordinating the TMP across community goals, there is additional need for coordination in current city initiatives such as the Climate Action Framework, Economic vitality, Sustainable Streets and Centers, parking management, Parks Master Plan and the Boulder Civic Area project. This area builds on the successful inter-departmental work in Boulder Junction.

## NEXT STEPS

With the policy review phase wrapping up, staff will be establishing the inter-departmental management structure to coordinate the work efforts of the TMP update with the other community planning and sustainability initiatives. This structure may include a high level executive oversight group as well as several staff level working groups. Transportation staff is already involved with all of the identified Sustainability Initiatives and this structure will reinforce the linkages between all of these efforts and the TMP update.

Over the next couple of months, staff also anticipates releasing a request for proposals (RFP) and selecting a planning consultant team. The initial focus of the team will be near term transit planning in conjunction with RTD in preparation for the opening of the Boulder Junction transit facility in 2013 as well as work in the other focus areas described above.

## Attachments

- A. TMP Process Graphic (Slide 4 from Aug. 28, 2012 Study Session presentation)

