

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Fort Collins first developed a *Transportation Master Plan* (TMP) in concert with the development of *City Plan* in 1997. The plans defined the future of Fort Collins, in terms of transportation and land use issues. Vision statements were developed and corresponding goals, principles, and policies were established to make sure the City was moving towards that vision. As part of the 1997 *City Plan* and TMP, a mechanism was put in place that required these documents to be reviewed every five years. The intent is that the documents would be re-examined to ensure they still capture the long-term goals of Fort Collins.

This document, the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004*, began as an update, but because of significant changes and additions to numerous areas, it essentially became a new plan. The areas that were just updated as part of this effort are identified as such in Chapter 5. Many of the goals, principles, and policies that were developed in 1997 are still valid, but this plan focuses more on implementation of those goals principles, and policies. As the City continues to grow, this plan will be reassessed at least every five years to keep pace with change and to continue working towards the ultimate goal of a safe, efficient, and convenient transportation system in Fort Collins.

This chapter outlines the purpose of the TMP, the process that was used to re-evaluate the plan, outreach efforts that were conducted, and the structure of the document.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004* serves a variety of purposes. It is a vision document that defines the long-term transportation system that Fort Collins needs in the future. The plan also provides policy direction for how decisions regarding the implementation of the transportation system should occur. It is also a framework document that serves as a comprehensive reference guide regarding transportation issues in Fort Collins. Additionally, the plan provides priorities for implementing projects to meet short-term deficiencies while working towards the ultimate transportation system the City is trying to achieve. Finally, the plan identifies transportation issues that need to be resolved as part of the next plan update or under specific department work plans.

As in the 1997 plan, the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004* reaffirms the City's commitment to providing a multi-modal transportation system. As the City continues to grow and mature, it has witnessed continued increase in vehicle trips, impacting the existing street network and causing severe congestion on many of the City's streets. Fort Collins remains committed to providing a more balanced transportation system, providing citizens with transportation choices to continue to maintain its high quality of life. This plan also provides updates to the various modal plans that have been developed and also serves as a means to more clearly define other transportation ideas like the concept of Enhanced Travel Corridors.

The plan provides the goals, principles, and policies that will be used to shape the transportation system today and into the future. The plan provides a look at existing conditions, changes since 1997, and what the future may look like based on current practices. This plan also provides

recommendations for future work items that the City may want to pursue to enhance transportation planning and implementation efforts.

This plan discusses issues facing the City in terms of limited funding, increased population growth, and policies that may need to be addressed to ensure the success of the transportation system. The plan incorporated the most recent demographic data and used the City's comprehensive transportation demand model to test and evaluate alternatives. New methodologies were created to develop prioritized capital improvement project needs by mode. Existing and future financial issues were evaluated to provide a picture of how things look today and how things may look if the City is unsuccessful in developing other funding means.

1.2 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004* began with reviewing the existing conditions and changes since the 1997 TMP. The next step in the process was revising the 1997 *City Plan* goals, principles, and policies. This step was conducted in close collaboration with the *City Plan* team. Concurrently, the *City Plan* team updated the local and regional demographic and transportation system information. Next the travel demand model was used to evaluate existing conditions, existing and committed conditions, and the current Master Street Plan (MSP) that serves as a vision plan for the City. An analysis of existing financial conditions was completed and a list of capital needs was developed for the transportation system by mode. Next, a prioritization process was developed to rank projects by mode, and then funding was allocated to develop a fiscally constrained capital improvement plan. Other possible funding options were then developed to provide the City some options to consider for future funding. Finally, the document was developed summarizing the analysis that was completed throughout the process.

The development of this plan was a collaborative effort between the City staff and consulting team from this plan and the team completing the *City Plan* update. This collaboration was instrumental in developing separate land use and transportation plans that recognize the symbiotic relationship between land use and transportation. Also, throughout the development of this plan, outreach efforts included monthly working meetings with the Transportation Board, presentations to various boards throughout the City, interaction with the Council-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), six public meetings, and one-on-one communications with various affected interests.

1.2.1 Existing Plans Review and Inventory

One of the first steps in the process was to review the existing transportation planning related documents. The review included vision statements, goals, and objectives from other transportation mode plans that were developed separately from the 1997 TMP including:

- Bicycle Plan Program (1995)
- Pedestrian Plan (1996)
- Transfort Strategic Plan (2002)
- Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan (2001)

Input received from various boards and commissions, City staff and management, and the public indicated that overall, the vision and goals set forth in 1997 are still accurate and applicable.

One of the other activities completed was an existing conditions inventory that identified the transportation projects that had been implemented since 1997. The inventory included extensive discussions with various members of the City's transportation staff and surveys of the arterials in Fort Collins to identify bicycle and pedestrian facilities. A bicycle focus group comprised of members of the Transportation Board also provided input on the existing conditions analysis, potential bicycle projects and the project prioritization process.

1.2.2 Revisions to City Plan Goals, Principles and Policies

Through close coordination with the *City Plan* team, transportation related community goals, principles, and policies were reviewed and revised. Transportation specific principles and policies include a community-wide vision for transportation and specific ideas for transportation corridors within the City.

This process began with a scenario building exercise with the CAC to develop characteristic statements that best described the vision for the future of Fort Collins. Several public meetings were held to interactively involve the public in workshop settings to help re-word and better explain the meaning of these characteristics. Once adopted by City Council, these characteristics formed the basis for revising the goals, principles, and policies within *City Plan*.

Internal staff, boards, commissions, and the public carefully scrutinized revisions to *City Plan* principles and policies. Public meetings held in August and September 2003 provided the public the opportunity to give their input on these policies prior to adoption as a part of the final plan. The adopted characteristics, goals, principles and policies are described in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.2.3 Land Use, Population and Employment Projections

Future land use, population, and employment were developed by the *City Plan* team using census projections from the State Demographer and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Projections were completed for Fort Collins and the North Front Range region with input from the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

In order to determine what part of regional growth could occur in Fort Collins over the next 20 years, the *City Plan* team conducted an available lands inventory for all land within the City limits and the Growth Management Area (GMA). Based on existing zoning and density requirements, population and employment forecasts were allocated to available land within the City and GMA over the next 20 years. While it is difficult to project where development will specifically occur, these projections indicate that the City and GMA will be completely built out by the year 2025. This allocation process assumed a percent of infill and redevelopment will occur within this 20-year period. Additional growth not contained within the City was allocated to land outside the City in surrounding areas throughout the region in both Larimer and Weld counties. Table 1.1 illustrates existing and forecasted population and employment for the City, GMA and region. This information was an essential input in the transportation demand model that was used for analysis of a variety of elements of the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004*.

Table 1.1
Population and Employment Forecasts

	Population		Employment	
	2000	2025	2000	2025
Fort Collins	118,652	192,753	85,438	138,535
Larimer County	251,494	404,241	148,436	235,278
Regional Modeling Area*	234,899	381,599	144,168	330,186

* Modeling area is defined as Fort Collins, Windsor, Loveland, Berthoud, and surrounding communities.

This area is a subset of Larimer County.

Source: EPS based on DOLA growth rates, U.S. Census and City of Fort Collins, City Plan Update

1.2.4 Development of Conceptual Modeling Scenarios

Using the City's comprehensive TransCAD transportation demand model and the revised demographic information developed by the *City Plan* team, three transportation system scenarios were modeled. The results of the analysis were used to gain a better understanding of the transportation system's current and future needs. The scenarios included:

- Existing Conditions - The Existing Conditions scenario reflects current conditions experienced by Fort Collins residents and visitors. Inputs to this model scenario included the existing street and transit networks and current socioeconomic data, including land use, population, and employment.
- Existing and Committed - The Existing and Committed (E+C) scenario demonstrates the effects of socioeconomic growth on the current street and transit system. In this scenario, 2025 population and employment forecasts and the current street and transit networks were used for the model. The only additions assumed in the E+C transportation system were street projects that are currently funded. No transit improvements were assumed beyond current service.
- Vision Plan - The Vision Plan scenario included the current MSP street network and the completed grid transit route structure described in Transfort's Long Range Strategic Plan, including completion of the Mason Transportation Corridor. These transportation networks were also modeled with 2025 socioeconomic data.

The model analysis was used to spur discussions about how Fort Collins should react to these scenarios. Questions were asked regarding continuing with the multi-modal transportation system approach, accepting increased congestion on the system, and considering other land use changes to enact some change in transportation behaviors. The travel demand modeling analysis is explained in detail in Chapter 4.

The model was also used to develop potential changes to the MSP to meet future transportation demand. These potential changes are discussed under the MSP section of Chapter 5.

1.2.5 Development of a Fiscally Constrained Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

A list of transportation system deficiencies including street, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, rail crossing, parking, and signal system facilities was developed to show improvements necessary to achieve the vision set forth in the MSP, the Transfort Strategic Plan, and other projects listed in the City's unfunded capital improvement plan (CIP). This list was also input into the City's Geographical Information System (GIS) database to provide a visual representation of the overall needs. Capital cost estimates were updated for each list by mode (operations and maintenance costs were not included). A system was also developed to cross-reference projects between modes to ensure that project costs were not double-counted.

In order to prioritize this needs list, a ranking methodology was developed for each mode that used existing data sources including recent trend data, accident history, existing traffic conditions, and the ability of the improvement project to provide needed linkages to the rest of the transportation system. These criteria were used to evaluate the conditions of the current facilities. Projects were then prioritized by mode based on the ranking criteria.

As a part of the CIP development process, a financial analysis was completed to forecast funding levels through the year 2025 based on existing and anticipated revenue streams for capital projects. Using this financial analysis, projects were then matched to available funding sources to develop the fiscally constrained CIP list.

The financial analysis and CIP development process is discussed in Chapter 7.

1.2.6 Outreach Efforts

Throughout the development of this plan, great efforts were made to involve the numerous affected interests in the process. Coordination efforts included the public, other City departments, various City boards, and City Council. A detailed list of outreach efforts is included in **Appendix A**.

Coordination efforts with the public included a week-long series of stakeholder meetings at the beginning of the project to discuss the pros and cons of the 1997 *City Plan* and TMP. Attendees included land developers, local business owners, environmental interest groups, Colorado State University, and City and County officials. The purpose of these stakeholder meetings was to gain a clear understanding of how the *City Plan* and TMP documents could better meet citizens' needs.

Six public meetings were conducted throughout the project and included a variety of open house and workshop type settings. Meetings were advertised in the *Coloradoan* and published on the City Website www.fcgov.com. The Website also contained a page specific to the *City Plan* update and the development of the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004*. This site was also used as a means to disseminate information from the public meetings.

In addition to the stakeholder meetings and public outreach efforts, meetings were held monthly with the Council-appointed City Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). City Council appointed a 21-member CAC comprised of citizen volunteers living within the City of Fort Collins or the existing GMA. The CAC was tasked with providing citizen input at the advisory

level on the visioning process, recommending changes to the GMA boundary, updating goals, principles and policies, and developing master plan level development and transportation system scenarios to be used for future year forecasting.

Close coordination was maintained within City departments through cooperation between the City staff and consultant teams working on *City Plan* and the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004*, other departmental coordination meetings, and the City Plan Technical Advisory Committee. City staff and project consultants met frequently throughout the project to discuss issues and ensure consistency between the planning efforts. Presentations were provided to Transportation Service Area staff and management at key milestones to solicit input into this plan. Also, as part of creating the fiscally constrained CIP lists, weekly meetings were held with key transportation staff to assist in reviewing and developing the information. Finally, a City Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to provide input. The TAC was comprised of City staff and technical experts from all areas within City and regional planning entities including Advance Planning, Transportation Services, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, City Managers Office, and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This group provided more technical review of the update process and specific recommendations on how analysis could be refined and planning efforts implemented.

In addition to outreach efforts with the public and City staff, regular meetings were conducted with City boards to provide updates on the project process and technical analysis. All groups are comprised of citizen volunteers who serve terms of 4-8 years to advise decisions on a variety of the City's planning efforts and analysis. Groups consulted during the project included:

- Transportation Board
- Planning and Zoning Board
- Air Quality Advisory Board
- Natural Resource Advisory Board
- Park and Recreation Advisory Board
- Senior Advisory Board

The Transportation Board served as the lead technical reviewing board for all analysis and technical documentation. They provided input and direction on all aspects of the travel demand modeling analysis and CIP prioritization process through monthly meetings and special sessions. In most cases, material was presented to the Transportation Board prior to presentations to other boards and commissions and City Council. The involvement of the Transportation Board was an important aspect of the project and their commitment to the project provided substantial benefit.

Finally, periodic study sessions and regular meetings were held with City Council to provide insights and direction on the project. City Council approved the *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004* on February 17, 2004.

1.3 PLAN DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The *Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan 2004* document structure includes an executive summary, eight chapters, and several appendices including:

- Executive Summary – provides an overview of the document, introducing key policy points and major differences from the *1997 Transportation Master Plan*.
- Chapter 1 – Introduction – discusses the purpose of the document, the process followed to develop the document, and the document structure
- Chapter 2 – Goals, Principles, and Policies – discusses the transportation goals, principles, and policies and other policy related issues that need to be further examined
- Chapter 3 – Recent Trends – discusses trends since 1997 in terms of demographic and transportation growth and the existing conditions inventory that was conducted
- Chapter 4 – Transportation Demand – discusses the use of the City’s transportation demand model to support the development of the plan
- Chapter 5 – Mobility and Access – discusses each transportation mode in terms of visions and long-term goals
- Chapter 6 – Environmental Considerations – discusses the relationship between transportation facilities and the environment and some ideas about Context Sensitive Design/Solutions
- Chapter 7 – Implementation – discusses the development of the process to prioritize capital projects, existing and potential financial analyses, and capital improvement plans
- Chapter 8 – Action Items – discusses issues that need to be addressed that fall outside the parameters of this plan
- References – a list of the materials used to develop this plan
- Appendices – detailed technical information and support documentation

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