

2050 Specialized Transportation Plan

Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Meeting #1

Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. MT

Overview

Mountain Metro Transit (MMT), in partnership with the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), held its first 2050 Specialized Transportation 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 specialized transportation providers, riders, and social services.

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 includes enlarged maps.

Welcome & Introductions

Jacob Matsen (MMT), Lan Rao (MMT), and Laura Crews (PPACG) welcomed stakeholders, thanking them for their participation in a very important process to guide the next 25 years of paratransit, fixed route, and specialized transportation service. They encouraged stakeholders to help the project team identify needs and gaps in the current system and create a common understanding of opportunities to create a visionary service that meets the needs of the current and future community.

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 Specialized Transportation Plan. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members shared the following goals:

- Build capacity to meet the rising demand.
- Coordinate across agencies and providers to enhance the client's experience.
- Utilize other agencies to create a robust transportation system with ways to anticipate and prevent gaps.
- Include transit as a solution to affordable housing.
- Remember how important socialization is for all who ride specialized transportation.
- Incorporate emergency preparedness.
- Educate potential riders on the multiple transit options, including fixed route, paratransit, and specialized transportation.

- Explore additional funding opportunities.

Multiple committee members mentioned coordination among agencies and providers to build a more robust transportation system to meet the riders' needs. 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 the stakeholder committee roles and clarified the stakeholder commitment for this planning process. Given the shorter planning window, stakeholders can expect two meetings over the six to nine months. The stakeholder committee accepted their role and agreed to have the committee roster posted to the website.

Project Overview

Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) introduced the Specialized Transportation Plan, often called the Coordinated Human Services Plan, a plan required for receiving federal transit dollars to serve older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) emphasized that contributions to this plan should come from community members, local governments, and specialized transportation providers.

Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) described the various activities that inform the planning process, including engagement and outreach, analysis of existing conditions, and incorporation of previous and current planning efforts. Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) built upon the summary of what has been done to describe the various engagement activities, including a website launch, a digital engagement survey, presentations to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Regional Transportation Planning Advisory Committee (RTPAC), stakeholder interviews, and focus groups.

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) then summarized what the project team has heard from stakeholders in the process thus far. Community members have shared the following:

Overall Planning Effort

- Create an inclusive transportation system from the start.
- Increase or identify funding for traditional and non-electric vehicles.

Ride Reservations

- Improve the experience of the current system.

Paratransit & Specialized Transportation Services

The **Specialized Transportation Plan**, often called the **Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan**, is required to receive federal transit dollars to serve older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes.

Paratransit services operate within a three quarters of a mile radius of Mountain Metro Transit's fixed route providing door to door services. Paratransit services are provided through MMT.

Specialized transportation provides services for individuals with disabilities or seniors that need added assistance outside of what paratransit can offer. Specialized transportation providers serve a larger geographic area with door through door services. Door to door services allows individuals with mobility issues to have assistance getting from the vehicle to their destination.

These services can sometimes be differentiated by their Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements. Paratransit services are a mandated service, whereas specialized providers can go above and beyond ADA standards.

- Make booking, canceling, or reserving single and/or reoccurring rides easier.
- Increase the number of volunteers to provide transportation.
- Include socialization preferences.

Operations

- Increase diversity of vehicle fleets.
- Align vehicles with requested trips.
- Increase service ranges.
- Improve safe access to fixed-route transit stops.
- Increase service capacity.
- Extend operational hours into evenings for social activities.

Partnerships

- Provide educational workshops for people with disabilities on how to use the system.
- Coordinate with health providers for medical visits.
- Coordinate marketing and resources among all providers.

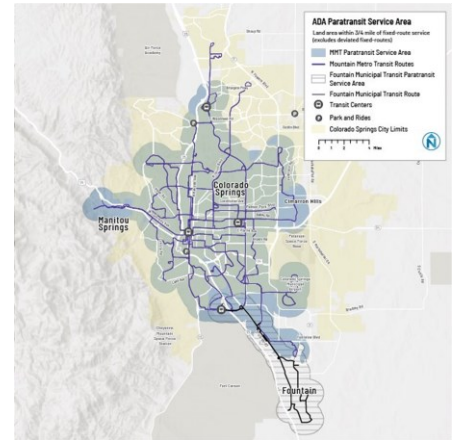
While sharing commonly heard themes, stakeholders shared that they would prefer the transportation system was flexible and consider the rider’s needs, rather than expecting the rider to accommodate the transit schedule.

Stakeholders also asked for clarification on what was previously heard about the diversification of vehicle fleets. While conducting focus groups, riders expressed how the size of the vehicle matters. When riding in too large of a vehicle can create an awkward riding experience and draw attention to their transportation needs. A diversification in vehicle fleets could lend itself to a better rider experience. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee considered the challenges of providing a diverse fleet of vehicles, including funding needs and ongoing driver shortages. Stakeholders proposed potential solutions to these issues to include a shared fleet of vehicles, additional benefits for drivers including increased pay or community benefits, and increased coordination among providers to help share the demand for requested rides.

Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) emphasized that the team looks forward to hearing from the community, which will inform improvement opportunities and recommendations. In addition to those in the room, stakeholders recommended additional organizations and communities that should be engaged

Existing Service Areas

Map 1



Map 2

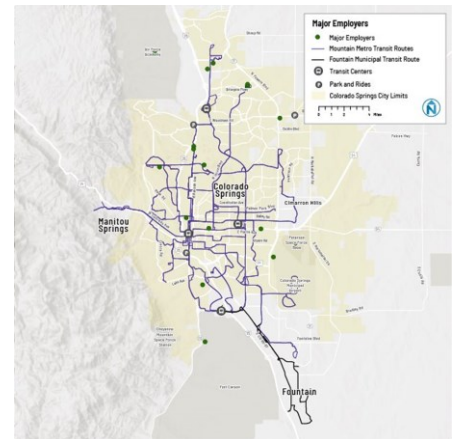


Figure 1: Maps show the existing service area (Map 1) and major employers (Map 2).

throughout the plan. He then explained that the plan would propose solutions to meet accessibility, connectivity, service, user experience, and inter-service coordination needs.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee shared additional feedback, particularly on the ride reservation system. Stakeholders recommended the following considerations:

- Streamline how clients reserve rides, including the questions asked on intake calls.
- Create a shared database of client information.
- Educate clients about how to reserve rides within the system and what questions might be asked as part of the process.
- Improve getting rides when you are further than fifteen minutes from the provider.
- Eliminate the “no ride scenarios” for those needing to ride transit, paratransit, or specialized transportation.

When considering connectivity, stakeholders recommended exploring how transit operates within the larger transportation system, as there are only so many corridors to transport people. Additionally, stakeholders recommended that the team consider first- and last-mile connections and the creation of mobility hubs to assist riders in starting or ending their trips.

Existing Conditions

Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) explained the technical team has been reviewing the existing service area to understand where specialized transportation and paratransit operate and where geographic gaps still exist. Within the existing service area (Figure 1) the current system requires riders or clients to navigate many different services or options. When looking to travel, riders must make a series of choices to meet their trip needs.

Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson\Nygaard) also shared that while this plan looks at current needs and gaps, it must anticipate future growth in the region. It is predicted that the Pikes Peak region will see a sharp increase in older adults by 2045, which could require additional funding, capacity, and resources for the transit system. The 2050 Specialized Transportation Plan looks to incorporate predicted demographic changes in its planning and coordinate with the 2050 Regional Transit Plan effort.

Within the plan, the project team will look at a series of possible improvements as potential strategies or recommendations, including:

- Create shared wheelchair-accessible vehicle fleets for all specialized providers to access and utilize.
- Develop creative opportunities to train and retain drivers.
- Implement a discounted taxi program for riders in areas where there are unmet geographic needs.
- Design infrastructure to include accessible travel paths to fixed route transit stops.

The coordination continuum (Figure 2) provides a possible framework for aspirational recommendations across all strategies and recommendations within the region’s transportation and transit system. Ezra Pincus-Roth (Nelson Nygaard) prompted stakeholders to consider what they would like this planning effort to be and where collaboration can create efficiency for future service.

Coordination and partnership opportunities were themes discussed throughout the meeting. Stakeholders emphasized wanting to explore more opportunities to partner either with each other or through private-public partnerships. Stakeholders recommended creating more standardization across providers regarding regulations, data sharing, driver training programs, and vehicle maintenance.

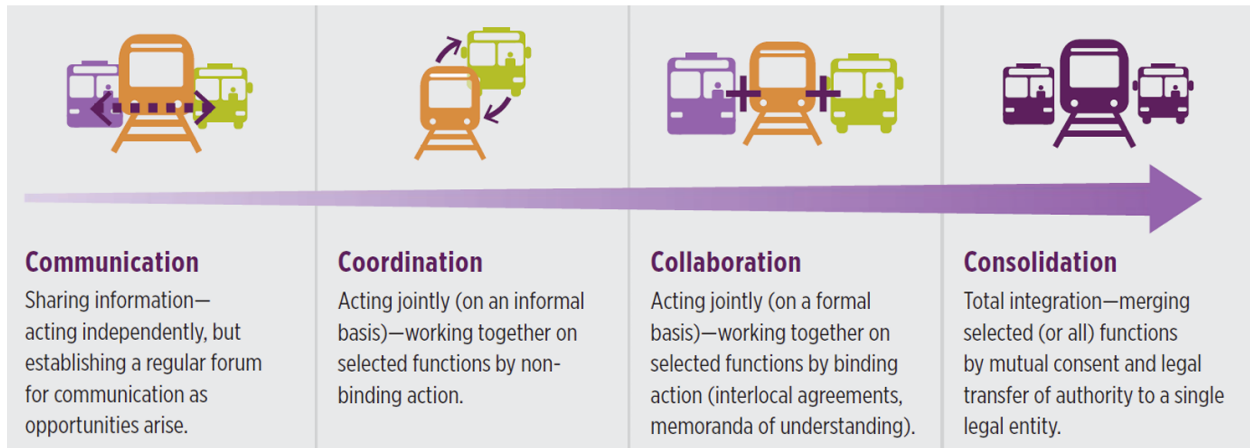


Figure 2: A diagram shows the coordination continuum from communication to consolidation.

Next Steps

Angela Jo Woolcott (Kearns & West) closed the meeting by thanking those who could join the first stakeholder committee meeting. Stakeholder Committee members can expect a second committee meeting before the Public Open House in late Spring. The technical team will refine the needs and strategies between meetings based on incoming survey responses and further analysis.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Stakeholder Committee Members – In Attendance

Name	Organization
Sharon Thompson	City of Fountain
Eric Esch	Envida
Gail Nehls	Envida
Lee Palke	Greccio Housing
Sharon King	On-Demand Transportation Group
DeAnna Rumsey	PPACG Mobility Coordinating Committee
Aaron Simeraro	Silver Key
Valerie Anders	Silver Key
Diana van Auken	Teller Senior Coalition
Kathy Lowry	Teller Senior Coalition
Roni Gordon	Teller Senior Coalition
Tom Lathrop	YMCA Colorado Springs Senior Center

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members – Not in Attendance

Name	Organization
Jenn Nimmo	CCHACares
Darrel Holtzlander	Goodwheels
Jason DeaBueno	Silver Key
Edgar Morales	The Independence Center

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
Angela Jo Woolcott	Kearns & West
Caitlin Sheridan	Kearns & West