

Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization
Policy Committee Meeting
March 5, 2025
3:30 PM
Mayor's Conference Room



Attendance:

Voting Members:	Patrick Collins Linda Heath Ralph Tarango	City of Cheyenne, Mayor, Chair Laramie County Commissioner, Vice-Chair WYDOT District Engineer
Guests:	Renee Smith Richard Duran Vicki Nemecek Brenden Schaefer Charles Bloom Thomas Cobb Molly Bennett Amber Ash Mary Karlsson Collin M	City of Cheyenne-Grants Manager-Zoom Statewide Planner FHWA City Public Works Planning WYDOT Planning and Development Director City Engineer Laramie County Public Works City Chief of Staff Quandel Consultants
Staff:	Christopher Yaney Gisele Pacheco Jennifer Corso Athen Mores	MPO Director MPO Office Manager MPO Senior Planner MPO Planner 1/ Transportation Specialist

1. Approval of Minutes: December 18, 2024

No corrections for December 18, 2024, minutes.

WYDOT District Engineer, Ralph Tarango, made a motion to approve minutes and Laramie County Commissioner (Vice Chair), Linda Heath seconded. Motion passed will all approved.

2. Passenger Rail Site Selection

Christopher Yaney, MPO Staff read the item into record.

Mary Karlsson, Quandel Consultant, presented the Quandel Passenger Rail Site Selection projects.

The Cheyenne MPO studied potential passenger rail station locations, considering integration with existing infrastructure, railroad operations, and economic and environmental impacts. Quandel engaged the public through online and in-person meetings, preference questionnaires, a public comment period, and a study webpage, with strong participation.

Site Identification and Evaluation:

Six potential station sites were initially identified and distributed for public comment. The public

suggested six additional sites, and through technical analysis and engagement, Quandel narrowed the list to two: the Reed Avenue Corridor and Old Happy Jack Road.

Development of the Station Concept:

Quandel collaborated with multiple agencies, including BNSF, UP, Amtrak, the Front Range Passenger Rail District, city planning and development, public works, engineering, sustainability representatives, and the mayor's passenger rail coalition. The study incorporated requirements and preferences into plan-view concepts, presenting potential station exterior designs.

The **Old Happy Jack Road** passenger rail station concept includes a two-story station building and platform located beneath the BNSF tracks, with a 20–30-foot grade difference. **Key features** include:

- **Infrastructure & Layout:**
 - Existing BNSF tracks (black line) run through the site.
 - Passenger platform (red rectangle) positioned alongside proposed track work (orange line).
 - Station building (brown rectangle) includes an elevator, ADA ramp, stairs, concessions, baggage, tickets, restrooms, and security.
 - The passenger bridge connects the station to the platform.
 - Access driveway (pink line) for city buses, local transit, and private vehicles.
 - Station parking (grey area).
 - Nearby city reconfiguration projects (wide orange line and red area) include expanding Grant Avenue and possibly closing the Missile Drive-Old Happy Jack Road intersection.
- **Economic & Property Considerations:**
 - Estimated cost: \$31 million (2023 dollars, not adjusted for future inflation).
 - No property acquisition costs: the city owns the land and could secure an easement from BNSF.
 - Potential for short- and long-term jobs in station operations, train maintenance, and staffing.
 - Could serve as a property development catalyst, but Quandel recommends a master plan for the area to assess economic potential.
- **Environmental & Transportation Impact:**
 - The site is environmentally clean and allows BNSF continued track access on both sides.
 - Estimated to save 5–10 minutes in travel time for the Front Range Passenger Rail Service compared to the Reed Avenue corridor due to its closer proximity to Denver.
 - Supports multimodal connections including city and local buses, a proposed greenway along Missile Drive, and does not require private property acquisition.
 - Potential hazard site identified, but it does not impact the project based on current drawings.

The **Reed Avenue Steam Plant** passenger rail station concept integrates with the restored steam plant building and accommodates a 15-foot access road west of the BNSF tracks for maintenance.

Key Features & Infrastructure:

- **Station Layout:**
 - BNSF tracks (black) run through the site.
 - Passenger platform (red) is positioned next to the proposed station track (orange).
 - The Station building (brown) is separate from the steam plant but could be integrated.
 - Two-story parking ramp (yellow) with the first level at Snyder Avenue elevation and the second at Reed Avenue elevation.

- Access driveway (pink) for multimodal connections, including city buses and local transit.
- Two elevators included due to the parking ramp's elevation difference.

Economic Impact & Costs:

- Estimated cost: \$26M–\$29M (2023 dollars, not including steam plant restoration).
- Quandel recommends hiring an architect to develop a restoration concept and determine capital costs.
- Temporary and long-term economic benefits from construction and operations.
- Projected economic impact:
 - 15% increase in economic activity based on the Reed Avenue corridor master plan.
 - Increased sales tax, revenue, property tax, and an estimated 81 new jobs.

Environmental & Land Considerations:

- Maintains BNSF track access but adds rail traffic at at-grade intersections.
- 5–10 minutes longer travel time for Front Range Passenger Rail compared to Old Happy Jack Road.
- Requires seven parcels of land.
- Must avoid impact on Fire Station operations at 19th & Reed Ave and a historic building at the southwest intersection quadrant, which would need to be removed or relocated.
- Steam plant is an EPA Brownfield site but is encouraged for redevelopment, offering environmental benefits.
- Floodplain considerations exist near Snyder Avenue, requiring permitting and engineering solutions but are manageable.

The **Reed Avenue Stub Track** passenger rail station concept is similar to the **Reed Avenue Steam Plant** concept but **separates passenger rail operations** from the main BNSF tracks.

Key Features & Infrastructure:

- Passenger rail remains on the BNSF track, with the platform directly against it, which complicates BNSF access to its tracks on the west side.
- Stub track (orange line) is located south of 17th Street and Lincolnway on the west side of Reed Avenue. This allows the passenger train to remain parked until its return trip while freight continues uninterrupted on BNSF tracks.
- Station building is in the same location as the Reed Avenue Steam Plant concept.
- **Includes:**
 - Two-story parking ramp (same as the Steam Plant concept).
 - Access driveway for multimodal transportation.
 - Separate station buildings with full amenities.

Economic Impact & Costs:

- Estimated cost: \$24M–\$25M (2023 dollars).
- Positive economic effects from construction, operations, and maintenance jobs.
- Property Development Catalyst:
 - \$2.4M–\$3M per year in sales tax revenue.
 - \$1.4M per year in property tax revenue.

Environmental & Land Considerations:

- Complicates BNSF track access due to platform placement.
- 5–10 minutes longer travel time for Front Range Passenger Rail compared to Old Happy Jack Road.
- Requires acquiring three parcels of land.
- Must avoid impact on Fire Station operations.

- Avoids the removal of the historic buildings at 19th Avenue and Reed Avenue (a key difference from the Steam Plant concept).

Findings:

- **Budget Risk:**
 - Reed Avenue Steam Plant has the highest budget risk due to property acquisition and steam plant restoration costs.
 - Reed Avenue Stub Track has moderate budget risk due to property acquisition.
 - Old Happy Jack Road has the lowest budget risk.
- **Public & Economic Support:**
 - Interviews with city planners and business owners showed moderate support for Old Happy Jack Road, though no opposition.
 - Strong support exists for a Reed Avenue Corridor location.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize station placement near downtown to maximize benefits to existing infrastructure and services.
- Continue studying and developing both Old Happy Jack Road and Reed Avenue Corridor sites by:
 - Engaging property owners and developers.
 - Conducting further risk analysis on construction and budget complexity.
 - Developing a Master Plan for the Hitching Post area, Old Happy Jack Road, and Steam Plant Restoration.
- **Engagement:**
 - Front Range Passenger Rail District and apply for FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program.
 - BNSF, UP, and Amtrak for ongoing collaboration.
 - FRA and Amtrak as the Long-Distance Service Study progresses.

Mayor Collins asked if there were any questions. Hearing none.

WYDOT District Engineer, Ralph Tarango, made a motion to approve Passenger Rail Site Selection and Laramie County Commissioner (Vice Chair), Linda Heath seconded. Motion passed will all approved.

3. Laramie County Road Impact Fee:

Christopher Yaney, MPO Staff, read the item into record - MPO hired TischlerBise to present the Laramie County Road Impact Fee study.

Collin McAweeney, TischlerBise Consultant, presented the Laramie County Road Impact Fee study.

Impact Fee Overview:

- **Definition & Purpose:**
 - One-time fee collected when building permits are issued for new development (homes, industrial parks, commercial areas) to offset infrastructure demand.
 - Not a tax—functions like a contractual agreement for funding infrastructure.
 - Applies only to new growth, not to existing homeowners or businesses moving into existing structures.
- **Fee Criteria:**
 - Must meet three requirements:

1. Need (for system-wide improvements, not individual projects).
 2. Benefit (short-term spending within service areas or benefit districts).
 3. Proportionate (costs must align with growth impact).
- **Eligible vs. Ineligible Costs:**
Eligible: New facilities/improvements, excess capacity in existing facilities.
Not Eligible: Maintenance, repairs, operations, or fixing existing deficiencies (unless co-funded).
 - **Wyoming Impact Fees:**
 - Examples:
 - Cheyenne: Water/sewer system development fees, street impact fees.
 - Laramie: Park fee-in-lieu.
 - Jackson: Park, school, and housing exactions, utility fees.
 - **Fee Administration:**
 - Funds are tracked in a special revenue fund and must be spent within 10 years.
 - Impact fee studies updated every 5 years (or sooner if conditions change).
 - Revenue can be combined with other funding sources for road projects.

Growth Projection & Fee Calculation:

- Projected Growth (MPO TAZ Model & Building Permits):
 - 12,000 new residents (+33%) in unincorporated areas (35,000 total residents).
 - 766 new jobs (+9%) in industrial, retail, office, and institutional sectors.
 - Vehicle trips projected to increase by 29% over 10 years.
- **Methodology:**
 - Uses incremental expansion—applying current Level of Service to future vehicle trip increases.
 - Growth will require 7 new miles of arterial roadway.
- **Fee Structure:**
 - Cost per vehicle trip: \$266.00.
 - Maximum supportable fee is calculated by multiplying trip rates per unit type:
 - Single-Family: 5.33 trips/unit
 - Multifamily: 2.13 trips/unit
 - Retail: 14.06 trips
 - Office: 5.42 trips
 - Industrial: 2.44 trips
 - Institutional: 5.39 trips
 - Fees cannot exceed the maximum supportable fee but can be set lower.

Next Steps:

- Citizen Committee Recommendation: Explore service areas.
 - Options:
 - MPO Planning Area (excluding the city).
 - Split County Approach (targeting roadway expansion areas).
- Develop a Roadway Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to justify fee collection.
- Establish Benefit Zones to ensure fairness in distribution fees.

Mayor Collins asked Mr. McAweeney how he calculated the projected population growth, noting that it was higher than the historical growth rate in the area.

Mr. McAweeney explained that the calculation was based on the MPO TAZ model and various traffic analysis zones. He stated that the projections were derived by analyzing areas outside the city, including TAZ and unincorporated areas, as well as building permit data, and then combining these results.

Mayor Collins noted that Laramie County has an average of 2.33 people per household and questioned whether there was a discrepancy in the projections.

Mr. McAweeney clarified that the 3-person figure was simply an example. He stated that TischlerBise used local census data from the American Community Survey for their calculations.

Mayor Collins requested further clarification on the TAZ model and asked why the historic growth rate would be increasing at twice the rate.

Mr. McAweeney explained that the TAZ model is used to understand long-term growth patterns and how people travel through the city to help determine roadway projects.

Mayor Collins expressed concern about the projection of 7 miles of arterial roadways and the estimated cost of \$7.7 million in today's dollars. He questioned whether, in 10 years, that amount would increase to approximately \$15 million due to inflation.

Mr. McAweeney explained that the projections are updated every five years and recommended including an inflationary factor while reviewing cost indexes annually.

Mayor Collins asked if there were any questions from the committee.

Thomas Cobb asked about the expected revenue collection per year and whether the collection was based on the 7 new arterial roadways.

Mayor Collins clarified that \$7.7 million would be collected over the next 10 years and that the same amount would be spent.

Charles Bloom explained that the Engineering News Record (CCI) has been used in the Sweetgrass Development Agreement and noted that impact fees have been used for public safety funding.

Mayor Collins asked if there were any additional questions from the committee.

Linda Heath raised concerns expressed by Commissioners regarding impact fees affecting housing costs in the county. She noted that housing prices are already inflated, and implementing impact fees could be controversial since they would ultimately be passed from developers to homeowners.

Mayor Collins commented that he was uncertain whether 153 was incurred, noting that it would add another 12.6% reduction in assessed valuations.

Mr. Yaney commented on the TAZ model and referenced Kimley-Horn's analysis, which projected vehicle growth at 1.28% per year.

Mrs. Heath recited concerns about affordable housing, noting that impact fees could create an additional barrier, but acknowledged the importance of transportation improvements.

Molly Bennett commented on the Capital Improvement Plan.

Laramie County Commissioner (Vice Chair), Linda Heath made a motion to approve Laramie County Road Impact Fee. WYDOT District Engineer, Ralph Tarango seconded. Motion passed will all approved.

4. Safe Routes to School:

Mayor Collins explained that, based on the last meeting, the Committee agreed to include additional schools and ensure that all schools, whether public or private, are covered in the plan.

Christopher Yaney stated that Stantec provided MPO with a cost estimate for the eight additional schools, which totaled \$39,510.27. He noted that this cost follows the contract agreement, which includes a 15% increase due to it being a contract month. The total amount would then be split in half, with the city covering \$19,755.13 and the County covering \$19,755.14. Thomas Cobb agreed to fund the City's portion. MPO is currently awaiting the agreement.

Molly Bennett commented that the Board agreed to cover the cost and anticipated that the County would enter an MOU with the City to reimburse the amount, ensuring a clear record of the transaction.

Mr. Yaney agreed and suggested proposing a contract bond.

Mayor Collins commented on the Safe Routes to Schools initiative and the funding applied to related projects.

Linda Heath raised concerns about the additional schools and their proximity to the schools already included in the plan. She asked whether the new schools could be incorporated within the existing study parameters or if a separate study would be necessary.

Mr. Yaney explained that the eight additional schools had not yet been studied and that each school required a site-specific study. Therefore, each school must be evaluated separately.

Mayor Collins asked if there was a timeline for the study.

Mr. Yaney stated that Stantec would begin work once a contract is signed. He recommended that the study be completed before the end of the school year; otherwise, the project would be delayed until next fall.

Mayor Collins emphasized that the MOU should be expedited.

Mr. Yaney noted that the project would cost less than \$75,000 and less than 20% of the contract.

Thomas Cobb explained the change order process and the full onsite inspection. He noted that the original study did not include onsite evaluations for all schools, meaning there is potential to reduce costs by utilizing a desktop analysis instead.

Mr. Yaney added that Stantec estimated that using desktop analysis could reduce the cost by approximately \$4,000 (10%).

Laramie County Commissioner (Vice Chair), Linda Heath made a motion to approve the Safe Routes to School concept. WYDOT District Engineer, Ralph Tarango seconded. Motion passed will all approved.

5. West Crow Creek Greenway:

Christopher Yaney mentioned that the project is an Ayres project with no changes and will continue moving forward. It is linked to the city engineering project on 19th Avenue and Missile Drive.

Discussions have been held regarding the Greenway, and it has been decided that the Greenway will be moved to the northwest side of Missile Drive, connecting with the Passenger Rail Site Selection presentation at the Old Happy Jack Road site.

6. Travel Demand Model: Update

Christopher Yaney mentioned that Kimley Horn is nearly finished with the project. There are two more areas that need to be double-checked, and Kimley Horn will be submitting the project for Connect 2050.

7. Connect 2050:

Christopher Yaney discussed that all the data has been provided. The MPO Department, City Planning Department, and County Planning Department are working on the map and determining the land use for the areas.

Amber Ash inquired about opportunity zones.

Charles Bloom commented that opportunity zones would not fall within the scope of MPO Connect 2050. The team would need to review the opportunity zones and ensure they align properly.

8. STP-U:

Christopher Yaney discussed that Juli brought the number one item for the High Plains Railroad Overpass to attention, which was supposed to be for reconnaissance only. The amount was initially set at \$10,044.00. MPO has adjusted to ensure it aligns with the correct amount.

Mayor Collins asked if the reconnaissance had been processed.

Mr. Yaney confirmed that it has been processed.

Mr. Yaney also discussed the cost with WYDOT, the city, and the County, and the revision of the summary cost for US 30, Dell Range, and Whitney Road.

Ralph Tarango commented that there needs to be an update to the agreement between WYDOT, the city, and the County based on cost escalation. The agreement currently has a cost estimate for 2024, but a new estimate will be prepared in a few weeks. The agreement also mentions that MPO funds will be available through 2025, but Mr. Tarango requested a decision on extending the agreement through 2026 since it is the construction year of the project.

Mayor Collins asked if there had been any updates since then.

Mr. Yaney explained that the funds are still listed for Fiscal Year 2025.

Mayor Collins commented that an agreement modification with updated numbers should be expected.

Mr. Tarango explained that the Technical Committee discussed and approved the funding.

Mr. Yaney confirmed the discussion and approval of the funding.

Mayor Collins asked if, once the agreement is updated, the Counselors and Commissioners would be updated, or if the agreement would be updated at that time.

Mr. Tarango confirmed that the agreement will be updated.

Mayor Collins asked if there were any further comments or questions. Hearing none.

Laramie County Commissioner (Vice Chair) Linda Heath made a motion to approve the agreement update and the STP-U money for the 2026 project. WYDOT District Engineer Ralph Tarango seconded. The motion passed with all approved.

9. Local Construction Project: Update

Thomas Cobb discussed the major pavement management projects:

- Tresshire will undergo a mill and overlay – significant but not arterial. It is a collector within a subdivision south of Airport Parkway, which is in poor condition.
- Dell Range mill and overlay – the project is still being organized. It is being tied to a WYDOT epoxy project.
- Capital Construction on the 5th and Deming Bridge are moving forward due to the approval of a change order.
- The 19th Street Bridge project is proceeding but is not currently funded; efforts are ongoing to find a funding source.

Molly Bennett commented on the completion of paving at Archer Parkway and Road 142. The Wallick and Division design – the County has submitted a BUILD grant for construction and is awaiting the outcome. The design is currently between 50-60% complete, with final right of way acquisitions still being finalized. The finalized plan set will take some time. Depending on funding, the project may be phased or remain as a single project. Additionally, the design of Chalk Bluff Road, extending roughly 9 miles from South Greeley Highway, is in progress. Construction is anticipated to begin this year or possibly next year. The update is tied to the STP-U fund, with Wallick and Division being number three on the list, so the ranking may change based on the outcome.

Mayor Collins asked if Ralph Tarango had any updates. Mr. Tarango did not have updates.

Mayor Collins asked if Waren Ave going north would still be considered.

Mr. Tarango confirmed that it would be considered.

Mayor Collins asked if there were any further comments or questions. Hearing none.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Next meeting June 4, 2025.