

# Environmental Streamlining STEP UP Project

2005 Smart Growth Conference  
January 25 – 28, 2006



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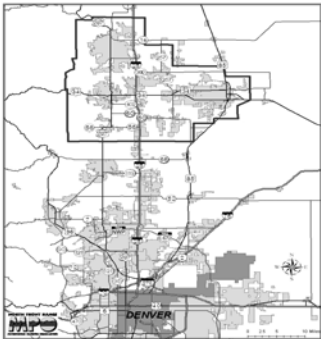
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## NFRMPO Location



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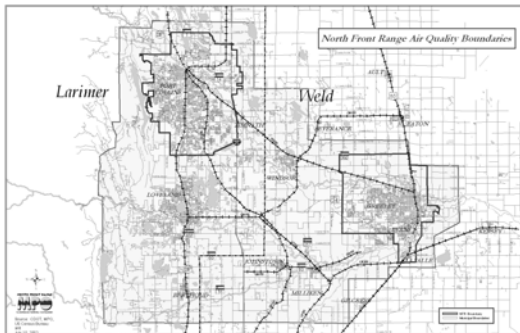
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## NFRMPO



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## What is an MPO?

- Census designated – urbanized area over 50,000
- Responsible for long range (20 year minimum) regional transportation planning – multi modal
- Air quality responsibility on transportation plans – conformity determinations
- Receive federal funding – SAFETEA-LU

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## What is STEP UP?

Strategic Transportation, Environmental and Planning Process  
for Urbanizing Places (STEP UP)

- Environmental Streamlining Pilot Project in Colorado in response to Section 1309 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).
- A partnership between FHWA, FTA, CDOT, EPA, and the NFR MPO
- Funded by FHWA Colorado Division

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## Purpose

- To increase **consideration of environmental impacts** and **resource agency involvement early** in the transportation planning process
- To help ensure that projects proceed more quickly through NEPA documentation during the project development phase

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# GIS Tool

## Objective 2

- Web based communication tool
- Template created for Statewide use
- Dependent on data repository, which needs full participation of Resource Agencies to develop the relevant data
- Requires staffing and equipment (server, software, etc) with ongoing funding

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# GIS Tool Framework



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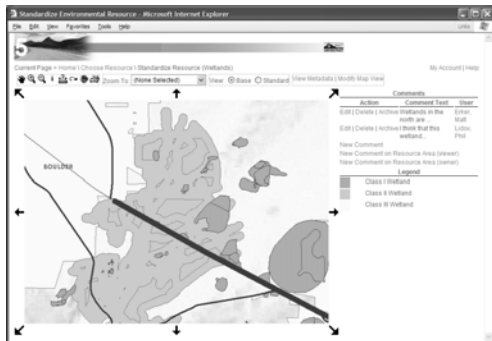
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# Normalization of Environmental Resource



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## Viewing of Environmental Resource



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## Environmental Screening

### Objective 2

- Using environmental GIS data, evaluate environmental impacts of a corridor
- Identify cumulative and environmental issues that may affect the project's priority, alignment or features
- Early assessment of environmental effects for NEPA documentation

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## RCEA Process

### Objective 3

- Identify regional resources of concern for cumulative effects
- Identify data needs
- Establish thresholds for resources
- Identify impacts of RTP on identified resources
- Identify impacts of land use changes on identified resources

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## Benefits to Stakeholders

- Integrated long-term project planning promotes stewardship by taking environmental issues into account up front
- Predictable and timely approval process
- More comprehensive regional planning
- Improved project selection
- Improved project cost and time line

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## Implementation Steps for Pilot

- Create a regional environmental database with as many layers as possible (done)
- Create formalized partnerships agreements with Resource Agencies
- Development of the Modified Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) process (done)
- Development of a web based application to support revised planning process (beta testing)
- Test existing RCEA models

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## Current Status of STEP UP

- Final Phase I Report is complete
- The development of an implementation plan, Phase II, for use by the North Front Range MPO April 2006

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**STEP UP Phase I Report is available at:**

[http://www.nfrmpo.org/pdfs/PhaseIReport\\_v4.pdf](http://www.nfrmpo.org/pdfs/PhaseIReport_v4.pdf)

<http://www.dot.state.co.us/Publications/PDFFiles/stepup.pdf>

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