Environmental Streamlining STEP UP Project

2005 Smart Growth Conference January 25 – 28, 2006



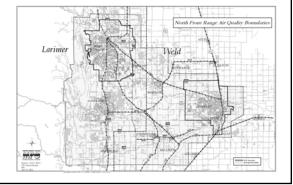




NFRMPO Location



NFRMPO



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

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

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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Phase I Objectives

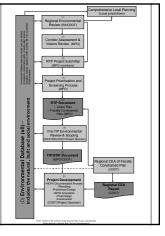
- ➤ 1. Modified RTP Process Development of an improved process and methodology for addressing environmental impacts related to transportation projects at the earliest possible stage.
- ➤ 2. GIS Tool Communication tool for planners and Resource agencies to review and submit comments
- ➤ 3. Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment Process Incorporation of a cumulative effects assessment process on NFRMPO's Regional Transportation Plan to help understand the effects of transportation development on the land use and the environment.

Regional Transportation Plan Objective 1

- ➤ Previous RTPs (2020 & 2025) attempted to include environmental assessment criteria in the Project Prioritization Process (PPP)
 - · Lack of data for analysis
 - The 2030 RTP does not include environmental assessment criteria due to a lack of information
- Environmental review of a project doesn't start until after project moves into the TIP

Modified RTP Process

Objective 1



GIS Tool

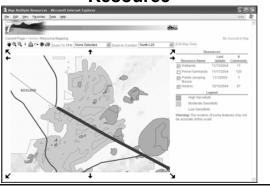
Objective 2

- > 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

GIS Tool Framework SITP UP-16 one - Microsoft Intervent Explorer Die Sit Iber Pgeriches | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | Use | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | My Account | Help | Actions | To Do List | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | 1969 | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | Dois | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | Current Page - Horne | My Account | Help | My Account |

Normalization of Environmental Resource **Translation Indicate In

Viewing of Environmental Resource



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

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

Benefits to Stakeholders > Integrated long-term project planning promotes stewardship by taking environmental

- ➤ Predictable and timely approval process
- ➤ More comprehensive regional planning
- > Improved project selection

issues into account up front

➤ Improved project cost and time line

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

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/PhaselReport v4.pdf http://www.dot.state.co.us/Publications/PDFFiles/stepup.pdf Suzette Thieman, NFRMPO sthieman@nfrmpo.org 970-416-2257