

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

FOR

TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY EVALUATIONS  
CONDUCTED UNDER THE 8-HOUR OZONE STANDARD

BY AND BETWEEN

THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT,  
THE DENVER REGIONAL AIR QUALITY COUNCIL,  
THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,  
THE UPPER FRONT RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION,  
THE NORTH FRONT RANGE TRANSPORTATION AND AIR QUALITY  
PLANNING COUNCIL (a.k.a. the North Front Range MPO),  
AND THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

March 14, 2008

**Abbreviations Guide**

APCD – Air Pollution Control Division  
AQCC – Air Quality Control Commission, (“the Commission”)  
CDPHE – Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
CDOT - Colorado Department of Transportation  
DRCOG – Denver Regional Council of Governments  
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement  
MPA – Metropolitan Planning Area  
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization  
NFR – North Front Range  
NFRT& AQPC – North Front Range Transportation & Air Quality Planning Council (the NFR MPO)  
NOx – Nitrogen Oxides  
RAQC – (Denver) Regional Air Quality Council  
SIP – State Implementation Plan  
UFR – Upper Front Range  
TIP – Transportation Improvement Program  
TPR – Transportation Planning Region  
USDOT – United States Department of Transportation  
USEPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency  
VOC – Volatile Organic Compounds

**Terminology**

Consulting parties – Those agency parties involved in data and document review for the purposes making or commenting on a Conformity Determination. Includes the Air Quality Control Commission, USDOT and USEPA, who are not signatory parties to this MOA.

Signatories/Signatory parties –The parties signatory to this document. This group of six agencies does not include USDOT or USEPA.

On-road motor vehicle – Refers to cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, vans and other motorized vehicles that use public highways, streets and roadways; to be distinguished from motor vehicles that may be designed for off-road use, e.g., all-terrain vehicles, and from agricultural and construction equipment.

### **A. Background and Purpose**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has designated an area (See map, Attachment A) inclusive of the Denver Metro Area and portions of both the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning area and the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region as nonattainment under the 8-hour ozone standard. The nonattainment designation became effective November 20, 2007. The Upper Front Range TPR is not represented by a Metropolitan Planning Organization as it comprises a largely rural area. Furthermore, the TPR lacks the expertise and wherewithal to provide or purchase transportation and modeling forecasts as part of the Conformity Determination process for the 8-hour ozone area.

Federal Transportation Regulations at 23CFR 450.314 (b) state that where a metropolitan planning area does not include an entire nonattainment area or maintenance area, “there shall be written agreement among the State Department of Transportation, State air quality agency, affected local agencies, and the MPO describing the process for cooperative planning and analysis of all projects outside the MPA within the nonattainment or maintenance area. The agreement must also indicate how the total transportation-related emissions for the nonattainment or maintenance area, including areas outside the MPA, will be treated for the purposes of determining conformity in accordance with EPA’s transportation conformity rule (40 CFR Part 93). The agreement shall address policy mechanisms for resolving conflicts concerning transportation-related emissions...**(and)** (c): In nonattainment or maintenance areas, if the MPO is not the designated agency for air quality planning...there shall be a written agreement between the MPO and the designated air quality planning agency describing their respective roles and responsibilities for air quality related transportation planning. (d) If more than one MPO has been designated to serve an urbanized area, there shall be written agreement among the MPOs, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) describing how the metropolitan transportation planning processes will be coordinated to assure the development of consistent metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs across the MPA boundaries....”

Similarly, EPA regulations at 40 CFR 93.105(e) and 51.390 require states to create consultation procedures in the SIP whereby MPO representatives, state and local air quality planning agencies, state and local transportation agencies and other organizations must consult with each other and with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) regarding development of State Implementation Plans (SIPs), transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs), and Conformity Determinations.

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is designed to allow for and to guide cooperative transportation planning in conformance with State air quality plans, and related review and analysis in the pursuit of transportation Conformity Determinations associated with the 8-hour ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP).

### **B. Conformity Determinations Prior to/In Lieu of the Establishment of On-Road Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets**

The first Conformity Determination for the area of concern is due November 20, 2008, as required by the federal Conformity Rule at 40 CFR 93.102(d). Since adequate or

approved motor vehicle emission budgets will not be available until late 2009, one or more Conformity Determinations for the nonattainment or maintenance area of concern must follow the procedures at 40 CFR 93.109(e)(2)(iii).

The Denver Regional Council of Governments and the North Front Range MPO shall perform transportation emissions forecasting for the respective areas described in Section C.1 and C.2 for Conformity Determinations, regardless of whether emission budgets have been established, and regardless of whether overall nonattainment-or maintenance area emission budgets or sub-area emission budgets are used.

### **C. Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets for the 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment (or Maintenance) Area and Sub-Areas**

In the SIP development process, the Air Pollution Control Division (APCD), the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), and the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) shall work together to propose overall area motor vehicle emission budgets for volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) for the 8-hour ozone nonattainment or maintenance area. Said budgets must be adopted by the Commission and affirmed via USEPA adequacy determinations in order to become viable for use in Conformity Determinations.

Sub-area emission budgets for ozone precursors under the 8-hour ozone standard may also be proposed to the AQCC for the following two sub-areas:

1. The combined areas of the Denver Metro Region and the southern portion of the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region (TPR) as designated nonattainment by USEPA, i.e., the area south of the north line of Township 3 north of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian; said line is the southern boundary of the North Front Range MPO extended to the east line of Weld County. For this sub-area, the budgets for NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC shall be proposed during SIP development for the federal 8-hour ozone standard by the RAQC with input from the APCD, CDOT, DRCOG, and UFR to be considered for adoption by the Commission.
2. The combined areas of the North Front Range MPO area and the northern portion of the Upper Front Range TPR, as designated nonattainment by USEPA, i.e., the area north of the north line of Township 3 north of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian; said line is the southern boundary of the North Front Range MPO extended to the east line of Weld County. For this sub-area, the budgets for NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC shall be proposed determined during SIP development for under the federal 8-hour ozone standard by the NFR MPO in consultation with the APCD and the RAQC, with input from CDOT and UFR, to be considered for adoption by the Commission.

Sub-area budgets, agreed to by the signatories and approved by the Commission, may be used to measure the conformity of plans and programs for the respective areas, once determined adequate by the USEPA.

Sub-areas as described above and Conformity procedures described in this document shall remain the same when and if the 8-Hour Nonattainment Area is re-designated an “Attainment/Maintenance Area.

#### **D. Granting of Authority, Responsibilities**

The Upper Front Range TPR lacks the expertise and wherewithal to provide or purchase transportation and modeling forecasts as part of the Conformity Determination process for the 8-hour ozone area. By this agreement:

1. The DRCOG agrees to provide transportation forecasts and make Conformity Determinations for the area described in Section C.1 above. The area includes the DRCOG MPO area and other 8-hour ozone nonattainment areas within the DRCOG TPR, as well as a portion of the nonattainment area of the Upper Front Range TPR.
2. The North Front Range MPO agrees to provide transportation forecasts and make Conformity Determinations for an area described in Section C.2 above. The area includes North Front Range MPO 8-hour ozone nonattainment areas as well as portions of the Upper Front Range TPR nonattainment area.
3. The Upper Front Range TPR authorizes the DRCOG and the NFR MPO to prepare transportation forecasts and make Conformity Determinations for the relevant nonattainment areas of the Upper Front Range as described in Section C of this document.
4. The agreed-upon transportation forecasting authorities shall continue for the 8-Hour Ozone Area after it is re-designated “Attainment/Maintenance” status by USEPA.

### **E. Compensation to MPOs for Additional Responsibilities**

It is anticipated that over the next one-to-four years, funding will be needed for enhanced transportation forecasting and to perform Conformity Determinations for the Upper Front Range areas of concern. The CDOT has the responsibility to fund required Conformity Determinations and associated transportation modeling efforts for areas outside of the MPOs.

As forecasting and modeling work for the UFR will extend beyond the MPO boundaries, the CDOT will provide necessary funding to DRCOG and NFR based upon a mutually agreeable course of action delineating tasks, schedule, and costs among the signatory agencies. The signatory agencies will look to the USEPA and USDOT to assure consistency with federal requirements regarding tasks. The CDOT will execute separate intergovernmental agreements with the NFRMPO and DRCOG detailing the specific work that will be done for the agreed-to compensation.

### **F. Conformity Review – Procedural**

The agencies shall follow the interagency consultation process and procedures identified in Colorado Air Quality Control Commission Regulation No. 10 for sharing information and conducting review of transportation data, projections, and determining Transportation Conformity to the State Implementation Plan under the 8-hour ozone standard, and generally the process outlined in memoranda of agreement for Transportation Conformity evaluations by and between the CDPHE and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (1998) and with the North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Council (2003).

The DRCOG and NFR MPO shall provide forecasts for their respective areas as described in Section C. 1 and C.2. In cases where one Conformity finding is to be made for the overall 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment (or Attainment/Maintenance) Area, and no sub-area emission budgets are to be used, the MPOs, in consultation with the other signatory parties and with USEPA and USDOT, shall sum the ozone precursor emissions from their respective areas for overall-Area totals of VOC and NO<sub>x</sub>, to determine whether forecasted emissions meet the appropriate Conformity test(s). In such cases, the MPOs jointly shall produce one Conformity Determination document for the overall 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment (or Attainment/Maintenance) Area.

The APCD will perform independent emission budget tests and other applicable analyses for the overall Nonattainment (or Attainment/Maintenance) region and, as well as for the sub-areas described in C.1 and C.2 if sub-area budgets are to be used, within 30 days of receiving the final submittal of transportation data, although such data will be submitted to the APCD as early in the process as possible. The APCD may also assist with enhanced emissions forecasting for the Upper Front Range area, or provide other in-kind assistance to emissions forecasting efforts.

Assuming the APCD agrees with a Conformity Determination, it will recommend that the Air Commission comment formally via letter to the relevant MPO and to CDOT regarding its concurrence.

In the event that future sub-area emissions exceed a Conformity test or emission budget, the sub-area MPO shall immediately and diligently pursue actions, e.g., transportation plan and/or TIP amendment, that would bring projected emissions under budget (or in line with the Conformity test being used) and thus to conform to the SIP (and/or not threaten to increase the severity of the 8-Hour Area's nonattainment status). Such endeavor would be pursued as part of standard interagency process. If the sub-area were to fail to meet a Conformity test/make a positive Conformity Determination, all parties to this MOA shall confer on an emergency basis to review emission budgets and to consider the merits of the following actions, which may be needed to achieve or to re-establish Conformity:

- Potential revisions to transportation plans and/or transportation programs
- Potential modeling (by both MPO's) of the entire nonattainment (or Attainment/Maintenance) Area for a Conformity Determination, if allowed by the SIP
- Potential appeal (via the SIP process) for emission budget revisions
- Potential additional SIP revisions.

A course of action employing one or more of the above-listed actions shall be determined by the parties to this agreement. Parties may appeal to the USDOT and USEPA for guidance in establishing Conformity.

### **G. Dispute Resolution**

Any protracted disagreements between consulting parties reviewing a Conformity Determination shall be elevated to the Commission, per the provisions in AQCC Regulation No. 10. Any continuing dispute that devolves or threatens to devolve into a situation of official non-conformance of transportation plans with the State Implementation Plan may be elevated to the Governor, just as a disputed Conformity Determination may be elevated to the Governor, as provided in AQCC Regulation No. 10 and at 40 CFR Section 93.105(d).

### **H. Termination of Agreement**

This agreement shall be binding upon the signatory parties-until the 8-hour ozone area has achieved attainment status and maintains said status for a period of at least 20 years, unless the undersigned agencies revise or replace this MOA via unanimous, written agreement.

The undersigned hereby agree to the delegations, responsibilities and procedures described above.



3/14/08

Paul Tourangeau, Director, Air Pollution Control Division, CDPHE

Date



3/14/08

Jennifer Finch, Director, Transportation Development Division, CDOT

Date



3/14/08

Kenneth H. Lloyd, Executive Director, Regional Air Quality Council

Date



3/24/08

Robert D. Masden, Weld County Commissioner,  
Chairman, Upper Front Range TPR

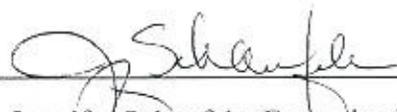
Date



3/20/08

Cliff Davidson, Executive Director, North Front Range MPO

Date

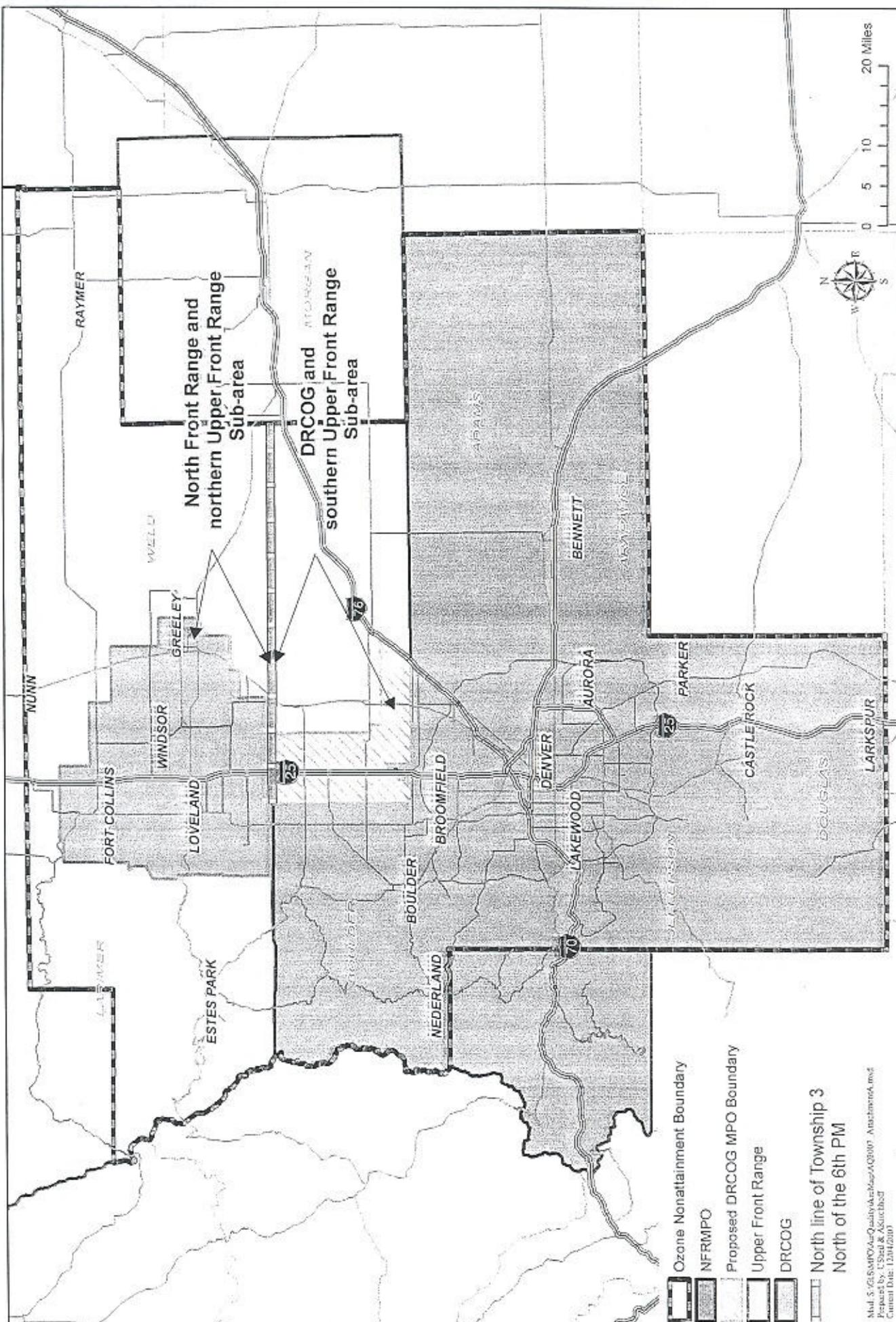


3/14/08

Jennifer Schaufele, Executive Director,  
Denver Regional Council of Governments

Date

**Attachment A:  
8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area  
and Sub-areas**



- Ozone Nonattainment Boundary
- NFRMPO
- Proposed DRCOG MPO Boundary
- Upper Front Range
- DRCOG
- North line of Township 3
- North of the 6th PM

