

THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

Gary D. Thomas
Executive Director
SAINT Volunteer Transportation



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

A “perfect storm” of issues will soon impact how Coloradans move about:

- **Fuel prices**
- **Climate change concerns**
- **Aging of the baby boom generation**

Several initiatives are underway to provide new options – but will the funding arrive in time?



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“We have met the enemy and they is us” -- Pogo

Northern Colorado continues to be regarded as one of the best places in the country to work, live and retire.

- Traffic is forecast to increase 62% in the next 20 years
- People over age 75 is among the fastest growing groups per the census
- Americans on average live 10 years past their ability to drive
- Medical facilities added without regard for city and county boundaries
- Reliance on sales taxes makes any transportation system vulnerable to recessions and creates competition between cities for retail outlets



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“Oils well that ends well” -- Popeye

Disagreement on how soon the world will exhaust its oil and gas reserves, but emerging consensus is that it will cost more.

- U.S. consumes about 20 M barrels of oil per day, but only produces 6.8 M
- Alaska and off shore would only add 4 million barrels
- ‘Lots of natural gas, but it will be several years before proven by actual results’
- ‘Oil must exceed \$100/barrel before significant new production can be justified’
- Wind, solar and nuclear are all limited by the electric grid
- Systems brown-out now on hot days



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“I will. I will survive” – Scarlett O’Hara

Several new efforts are underway to provide alternatives to private automobile travel.

- Fort Collins and Loveland just completed their first ever consolidated Transit Strategic Plan
- CDOT has formed a new Transit and Rail Division
- Amtrak is considering returning the Pioneer Train service between Denver and Seattle – with possibly a stop somewhere in Larimer County
- Major study on the feasibility of High Speed Rail in Colorado is being completed
- U.S. Congress is considering revisions to the Federal Transportation bill that will increase support and funding for transit and rail
- Mason Corridor Bus Rapid Transit line is funded and design is underway



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“All I want is a ‘ome somewhere...” – Liza Doolittle

Transit Oriented Development will replace the far-flung subdivision

- In Denver, all the light rail stations are inspiring a boom in development
- Considerable developer interest in the Mason Corridor
 - *Corridor seen as a positive economic engine for Fort Collins*
- Future corridors include Harmony Road, Timberline, and Mountain Vista
- New development at Harmony and I-25 to be designed as Transit Oriented Development
- Fewer than 25% of Americans live in traditional married family with kids
- Survey by the National Association of Realtors indicates high interest in walkable communities



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“...Just can't wait to get on the road again.” – Willie Nelson

Several new transit services are under consideration

- Bus service – Longmont connecting to RTD to Denver this spring
- Circulator bus route – McKee, Medical Center of the Rockies and the Re-Hab facility in Johnstown under consideration
- Downtown circulator – Fort Collins in the new Strategic Transit Plan
- Mason Bus Rapid Transit system (MAX) – a whole new concept in fast, easy service, hopefully open in 2011
- I-25 Environmental Impact Study – commuter rail into Denver and Bus Rapid Transit along I-25



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“ A billion here and a billion there and pretty soon you are talking about some real money.” --Senator Everett Dirksen

Should Transportation be the fifth utility?

- We fund water, sewer, electricity, and gas service as utilities with no tolerance for interruption in service, yet make transportation catch as catch can for funding
- AAA estimates it costs about \$500 per month per car – even a small reduction in use of cars would pay for a lot of mass transit
- Plenty of good solutions – without political will nothing much will happen



THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

“Say Goodnight, Gracie” – George Burns

QUESTIONS?

