

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Dylan Swanson, Airport Operations & Facility Manager
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SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 026, 2026, Authorizing a Mid-Year Budget Appropriation for the Runway 15-33 Widening Project at Northern Colorado Regional Airport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to authorize a supplemental budget appropriation of \$1,690,867.84 to complete funding for the Runway 15-33 Widening Project at Northern Colorado Regional Airport. The Project has already been approved by both Cities, and the majority of the \$19,761,259.45 total cost has been secured and appropriated. This final appropriation, supported by a recently awarded \$1,678,254 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) grant and \$12,613.84 in Airport reserve funds, will allow construction to begin in June 2026.

Widening Runway 15-33 from 100 feet to 150 feet is a critical infrastructure improvement identified in the Airport's 2020 Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The project is necessary to improve safety and bring the runway into compliance with FAA design standards for the Airport's current and forecasted fleet mix, including aircraft such as the Airbus A319/A320 and Boeing 737, which are commonly used in commercial airline service.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Northern Colorado Regional Airport (FNL) is jointly owned by the Cities of Fort Collins and Loveland. While the former Airport Commission provided policy oversight until its sunset in 2025, the Airport now operates under direct governance of the two City Councils, pursuant to the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins Regarding the Joint Operation of the Northern Colorado Regional Airport in Furtherance of a Transition to an Airport Authority, dated October 27, 2025, with the Airport Director reporting directly to the City Managers. Major decisions such as budget approvals, certain types of agreements, and large capital projects require approval from both Councils.

Runway 15-33, the Airport's only operational runway, currently measures 100 feet in width. The runway is designated with a Runway Design Code (RDC) of C/D-III; however, it does not meet the FAA's 150-foot minimum width requirement for that design standard. Widening the runway is necessary to bring the airfield

into compliance with current FAA standards and will enhance operational safety, improve reliability during crosswind conditions, extend the useful life of the pavement, and reduce energy costs.

The project has been developed over several years in close coordination with the FAA and CDOT Aeronautics. Planning, environmental review, and final design were completed in 2024 and were funded primarily through federal and state grant programs.

The project scope includes:

- Widening the runway from 100 feet to 150 feet
- Replacing outdated lighting, signage, and Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPIs) with energy-efficient LED systems
- Installing new edge drains and stormwater infrastructure
- Reconstructing connector taxiways to meet current FAA geometry standards
- Seal coat and updated pavement markings.

In response to stakeholder feedback regarding the impacts of the original construction plan, Airport staff, in coordination with a third-party engineering firm, recently conducted a secondary review to identify less disruptive alternatives. As a result, several key modifications were made. 3,750 feet of runway will remain available throughout the project, allowing most current Airport users to continue operating during construction. To further minimize operational impacts, the Airport will fund the construction of a temporary taxiway connector to eliminate the need for back-taxiing. Additionally, because aircraft may only operate over the construction zone when the air traffic control tower is open, tower hours will be extended by four hours each day, with the Airport covering the associated controller staffing costs.

The FAA has demonstrated strong and sustained support for this project through years of coordination, planning, and significant grant funding. In 2025, the agency awarded a \$16.73 million construction grant, including additional funds to cover the \$2 million gap between the engineer’s estimate and the lowest responsive construction bid. In 2026, the Cities were awarded a FAA Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the grant agreement for which was executed by the Cities on February 11, 2026, providing funding in the amount of \$1,678,254 for the Airport Runway Project (IIJA Project No. 3-08-0023-04-2026) with a required local match of \$44,165, of which \$31,551 was previously appropriated. In addition to appropriating these funds, this ordinance, once adopted, expressly ratifies the grant agreement.

This Council action represents the final funding appropriation necessary to fully fund the project and authorize construction to proceed.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There is no direct impact on City finances, as the IIJA grant local match of \$44,165, of which \$31,551 was previously appropriated, will be funded with Airport reserve funds. The remaining amount of the required local match, \$12,614, is to be appropriated from reserves in the Airport Fund. The FAA grant funding of \$1,678,254 is also being appropriated with this action, all to be spent in the Airport Fund.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Northern Colorado Regional Airport Commission voted 7-0 to approve Resolution #R-3-2025, recommending that the Loveland and Fort Collins City Councils approve grant agreements with the FAA and the Colorado Department of Transportation for the Runway 15-33 widening project, provided that the local match does not exceed \$750,000.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Runway Widening Project is a key component of the 2020 Airport Master Plan, which was developed with extensive stakeholder input gathered through more than 30 public meetings and adopted by both City Councils.

Between 2023 and 2025, the project was discussed at more than 25 Airport Commission meetings.

Recent feedback received during stakeholder meetings prompted Airport staff to conduct a secondary review of the construction plan. Several modifications were identified, and the revised plan was presented at the February 18 and March 18 stakeholder meetings. Airport stakeholders will continue to receive project updates via email, website, and biweekly meetings.

ATTACHMENTS / LINKS

1. Airport Commission Resolution #R-3-3035
2. Airport Widening Presentation
3. Ordinance No. 026, 2026