



# Regional Transportation Solutions

## Elected Officials Roadshow Summary

May through August 2022

The communities of Larimer County are strongly interconnected, and a safe and reliable regional transportation network is needed to support the communities' travel needs. Although there is transportation funding legislation at both the State and Federal levels, significant gaps remain in the ability to meet the regional transportation needs in the county.

In May through August of 2022, Larimer County sought input from the elected officials of the communities of Larimer County on their desire to collaborate and cooperate on regional transportation solutions. Mark Peterson and/or Laurie Kadrich (Larimer County) and consultant Jenny Young (FHU) presented to the elected officials of the eight municipalities and the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners to provide background context on regional transportation, explore alternative approaches to achieve mutually beneficial solutions, and to hear about each community's desires for further conversations on the topic of regional transportation.

The dates of the meetings with the elected officials are listed below, and Attachment I includes the presentation and polling questions used for all meetings.

- May 9, 2022: Larimer County Board of County Commissioners
- May 10, 2022: Timnath Town Council
- May 17, 2022: Wellington Board of Trustees
- May 23, 2022: Windsor Town Board
- May 24, 2022: Fort Collins City Council
- June 27, 2022: Johnstown Town Council
- June 28, 2022: Estes Park Town Board
- August 9, 2022: Loveland City Council
- August 23, 2022: Berthoud Town Board

## Polling Results

Live, interactive polling was used to gauge the elected officials' interests and to understand the relative priority of regional transportation. The following charts summarize the results of the polling by community. For the purpose of this summary, an average value was calculated for each community. The detailed polling results from each community are included in Attachment 2. Fort Collins' City Council did not participate in the interactive polling.

### **Q1. What are the critical issues for your community that impact regional transportation?**

Elected officials were asked to rank five critical issues. Overall, the critical issues were ranked in the following order, with the cost of living/affordable house being the most impactful on regional transportation:

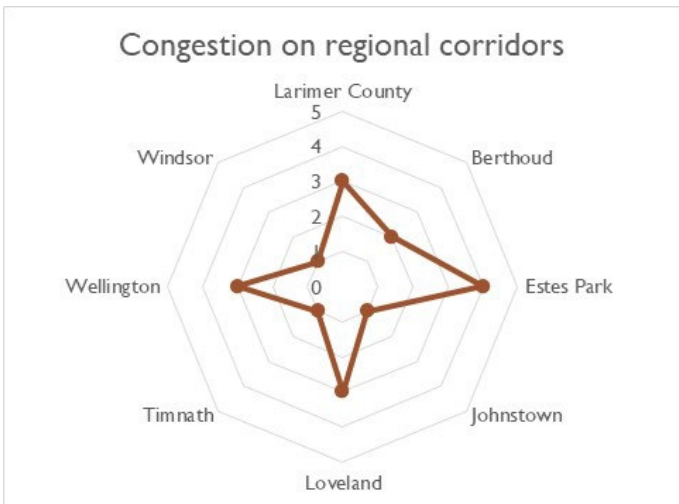
1. Cost of living/affordable housing
2. Congestion on regional corridors
3. Jobs/housing balance
4. Lack of public transit options
5. Tourism



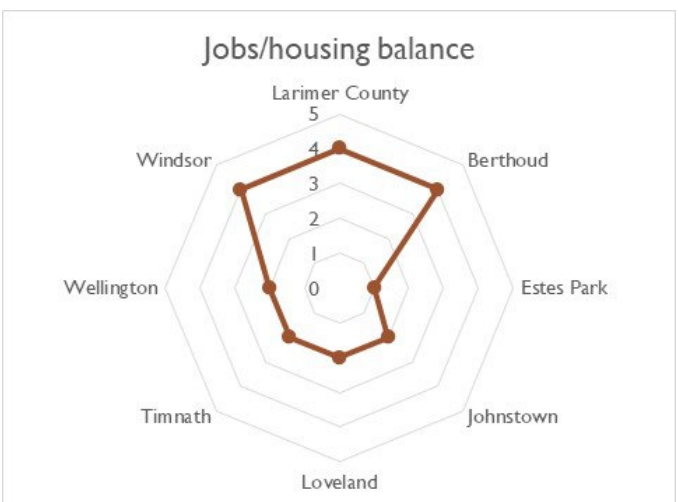
The charts below show how each community rated the critical issues. Points closest to the center of the diagram indicate a high ranking by that community.



Cost of living/affordable housing was ranked the highest by Larimer County, Berthoud, Loveland, and Wellington. All communities ranked it in the top 3.

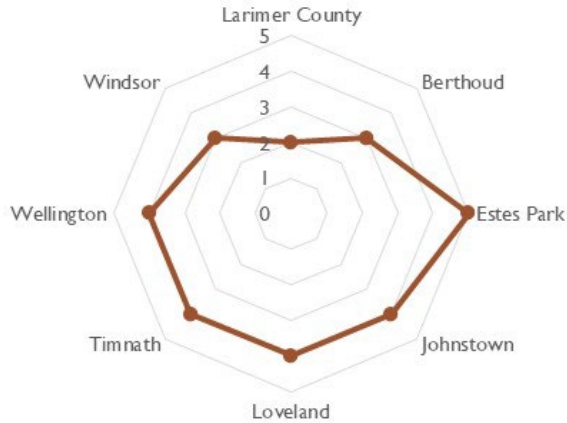


Johnstown, Timnath, and Windsor ranked congestion on regional corridors as the most impactful issue on regional transportation. Most communities ranked it in the top 3, with the exception of Estes Park, who ranked it 4th.



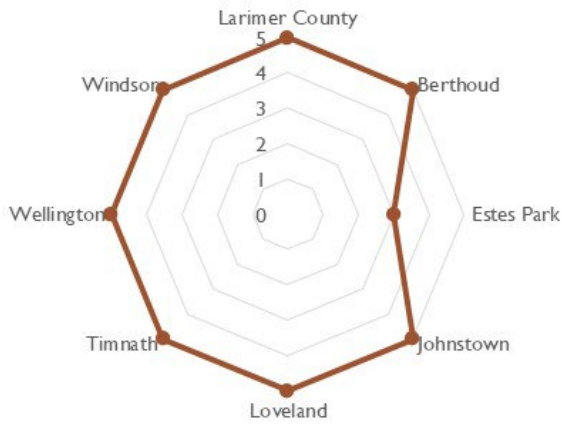
Estes Park ranked Jobs/housing balance as the most impactful issue on regional transportation. Several communities, including Johnstown, Loveland, Timnath, and Wellington ranked it 2nd.

### Lack of public transit options



Larimer County ranked lack of public transit options as the 2nd most impactful issue on regional transportation. Berthoud and Windsor both ranked it 3rd. Other communities ranked it lower relative to the other critical issues.

### Tourism

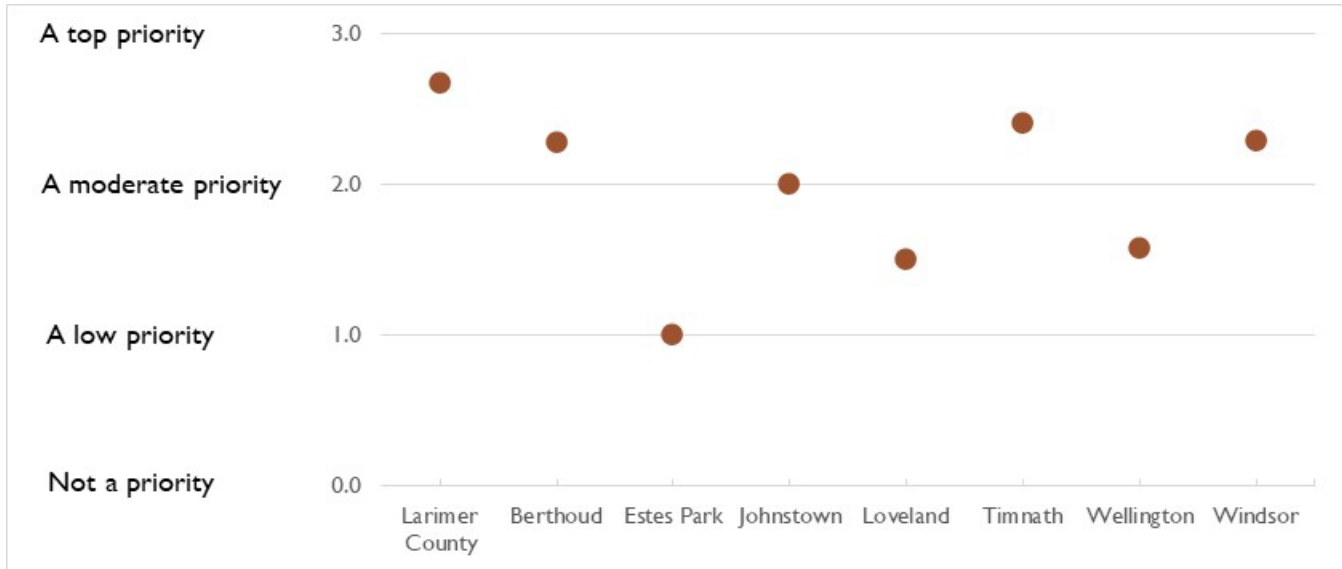


While most of the communities ranked tourism as the least impactful to regional transportation, tourism was ranked 3rd by Estes Park.



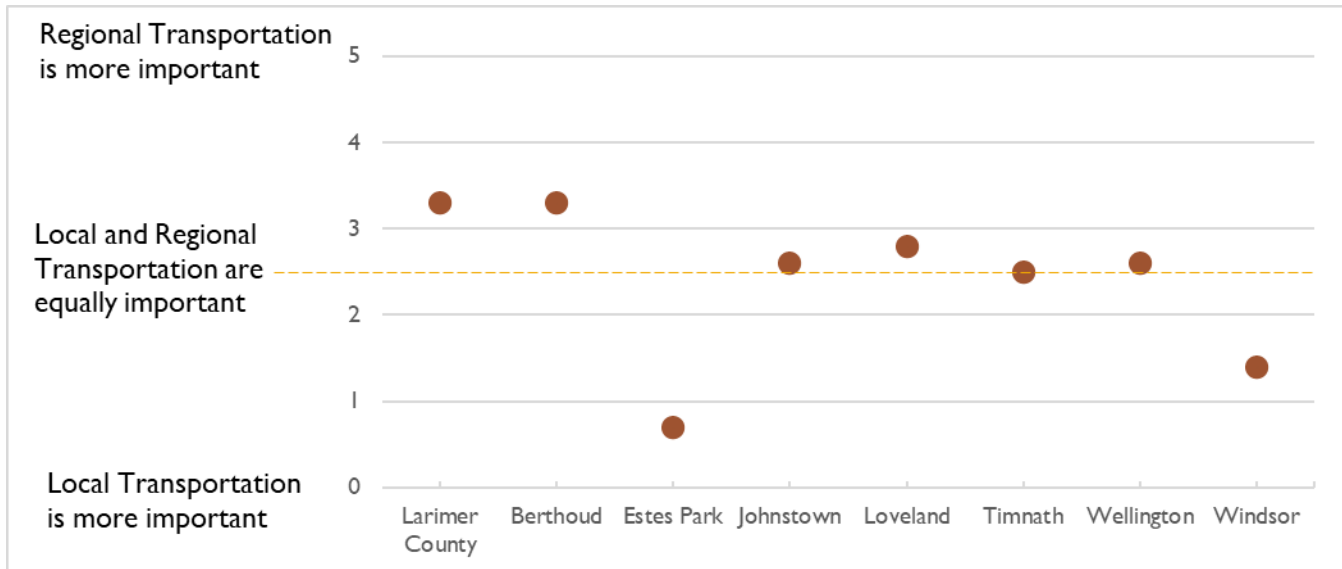
**Q2. How important is regional transportation compared to other topics in your community?**

Larimer County prioritized regional transportation the highest compared to other topics. Most communities identified regional transportation as a moderate or moderate/high priority. Estes Park prioritized regional transportation as a low priority compared to other topics in the community.



**Q3. How important is it to address regional transportation needs compared to local transportation needs within your community?**

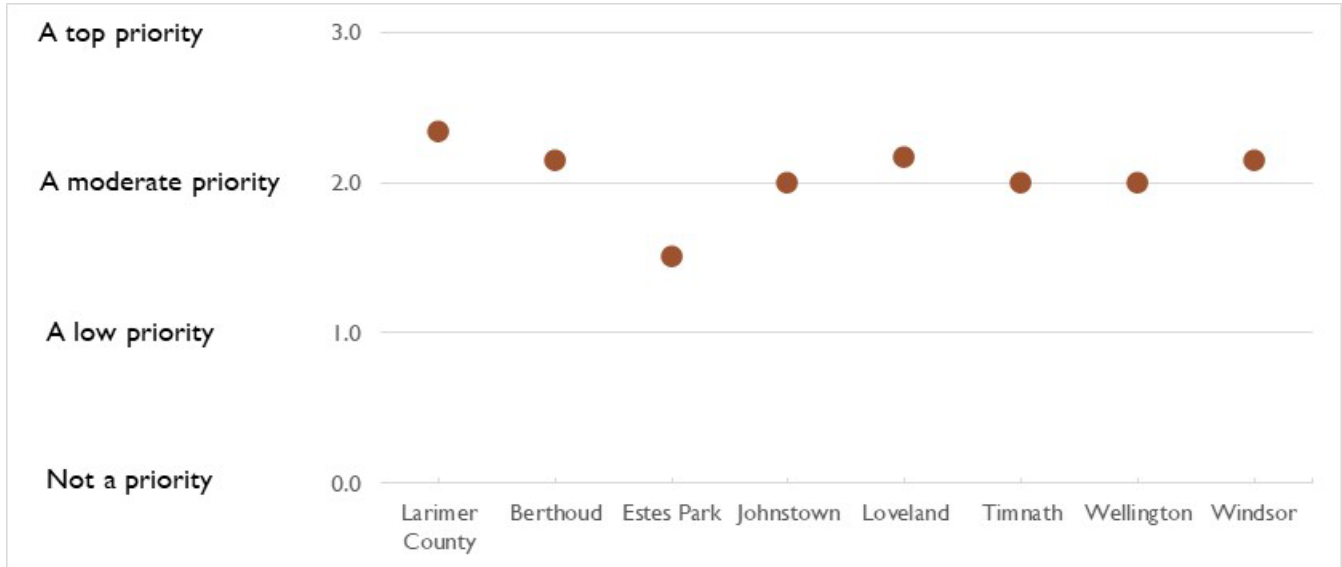
Most communities indicated that both local and regional transportation needs are important within their community. Larimer County and Berthoud indicated the highest relative importance for regional transportation while Estes Park indicated the highest relative importance for local transportation.





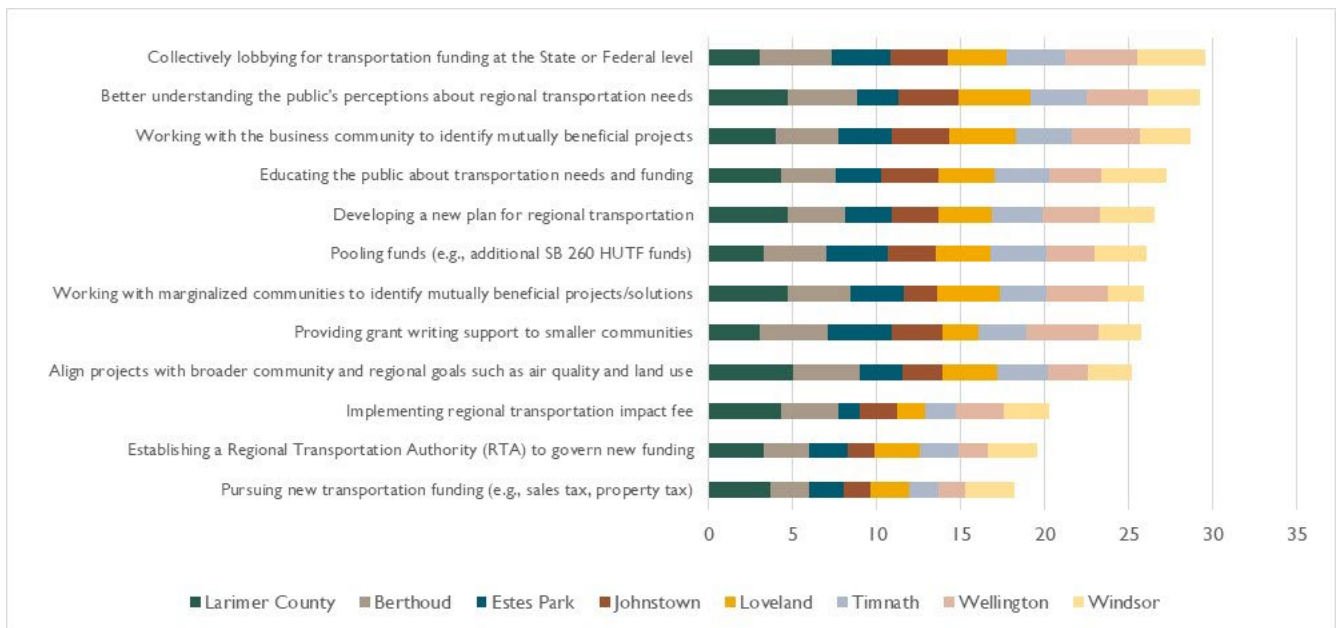
**Q4. What is your level of interest in coordinating and cooperating on regional transportation solutions with other communities in Larimer County?**

Most communities indicated coordinating on regional transportation is a moderate priority. Larimer County’s level of interest was the highest, while Estes Park’s interest was the lowest – midway between a low and moderate priority.



**Q5. What approaches are you interested in exploring to address regional transportation needs?**

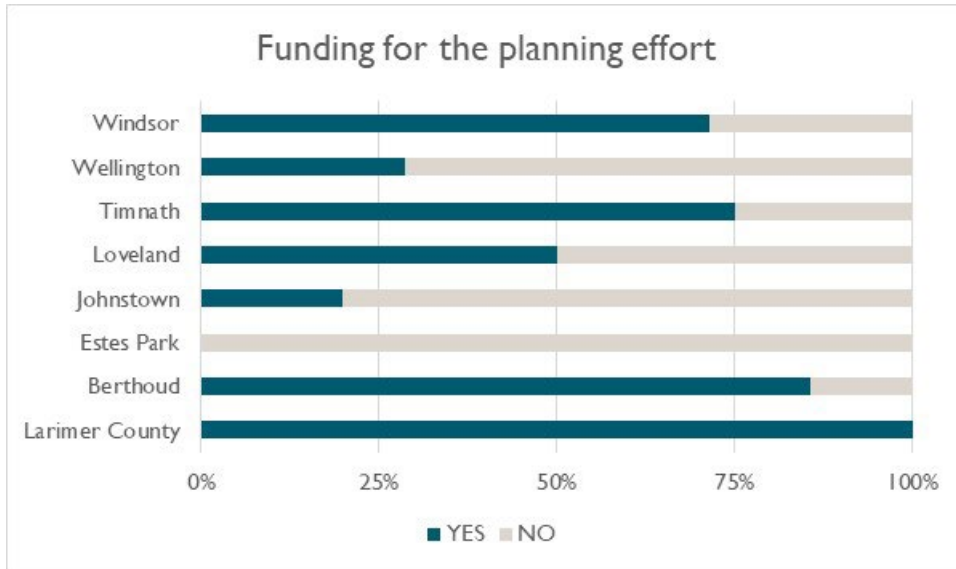
The possible approaches to address regional transportation are listed in priority order in the chart below. Lobbying for transportation funding at the State or Federal level received the highest level of interest from the communities collectively. The communities collectively are least inclined to focus on new funding that would require additional fees or taxes, as indicated by the three lowest ranked approaches.



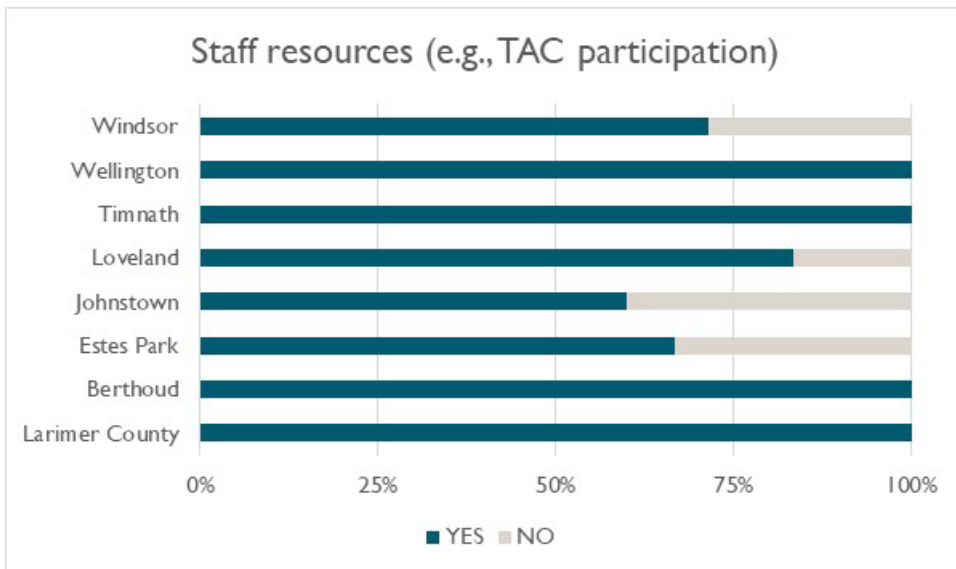


### Q6. What resources is your community willing to contribute?

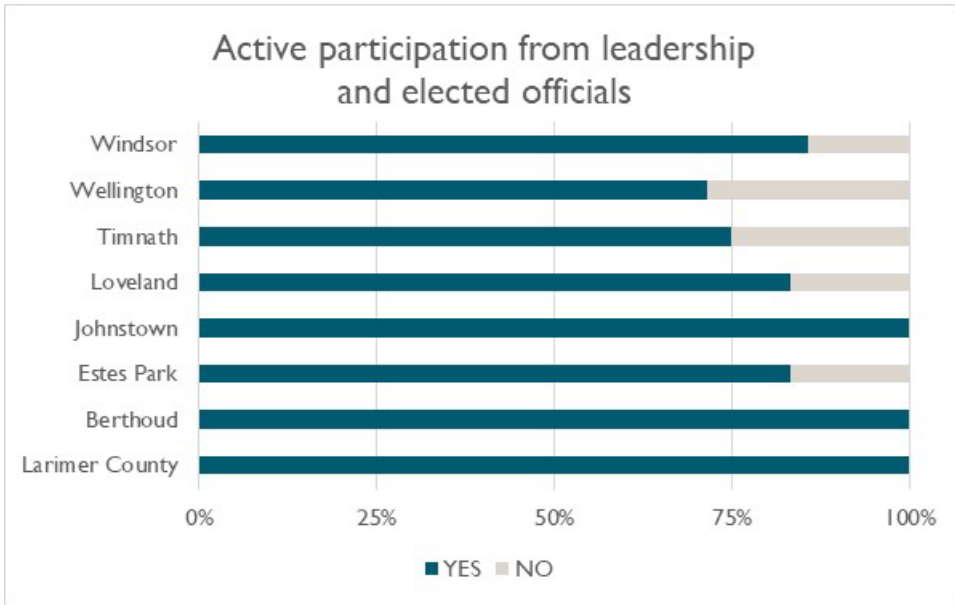
The charts below show the percentage of elected officials from each community that demonstrated support for contributing resources to regional transportation discussions. It should be noted that these responses do not represent a vote or formal decision about committing resources; rather they provide a gauge on each community's willingness to offer tangible support for the effort.



Only four communities (Larimer County, Berthoud, Timnath, and Windsor) had more than half of their elected officials indicate a willingness to fund the planning effort for regional transportation.

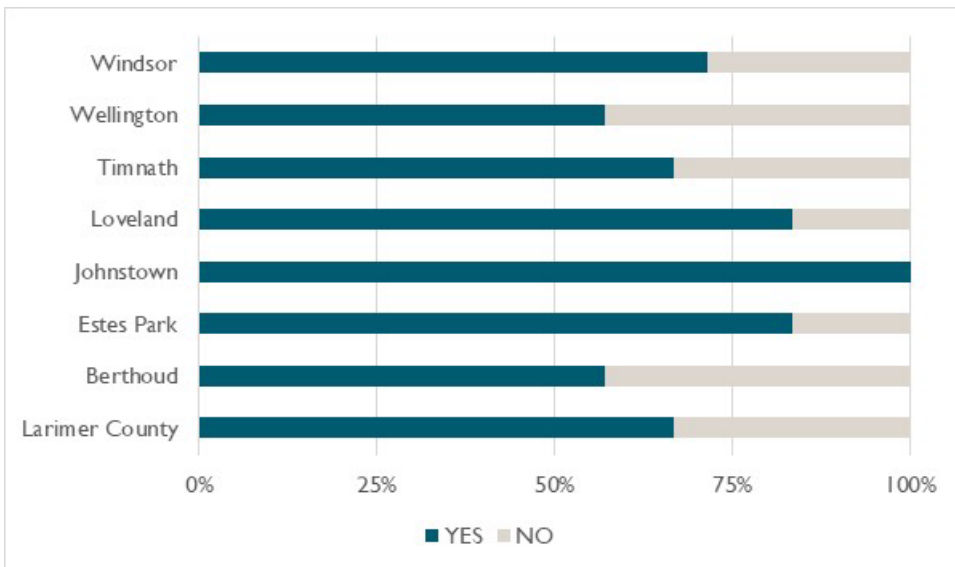


The elected officials showed stronger support for offering staff resources for regional transportation conversations.



Similarly, there was relatively strong support for active participation from leadership and elected officials in regional transportation conversations.

**Q7. Should there be consideration for expanding the "region" beyond Larimer County?**



More than half of the elected officials from each community feel the region should be expanded beyond Larimer County for the purpose of regional transportation discussions.

Responses as to what the geographic extent of the region should include (numbers represent the frequency of each response from individual elected officials):

- Weld and Boulder Counties (8)
- Weld County (6)
- Northern Colorado (5)
- A portion of Weld County (3)
- I-25 communities (3)
- Longmont, Denver, Boulder, Weld Counties (2)
- North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) (2)
- Greeley (1)
- Boulder and Grand Counties (1)



## Discussion Questions

Two open-ended questions were posed to the elected officials about the “must haves” and “deal breakers” for their community to coordinate on regional transportation. This section summarizes the verbal responses from the elected officials.

### **Q8. What are the “must haves” for your community to coordinate on regional transportation solutions?**

- Project(s) that directly benefit our community must be included with local control (*Wellington*)
- A detailed plan that includes year by year project priorities (*Windsor*)
- Inclusion of all of Windsor (not just the portion within Larimer County) (*Windsor*)
- Representation of all community members in Johnstown (not just those that live within Larimer County) (*Johnstown*)
- Spread any new money evenly to all communities (*Johnstown*)
- Contributions for planning effort should be pro-rated based on population (*Johnstown*)
- Address coordination of transit services (*Johnstown*)
- If we were to move forward with pursuing a new funding source; must learn from the 2018/2019 experience (*Estes Park*)
- Would like to see the previous Estes Park projects (from the 2018/2019 effort) carried forward (*Estes Park*)
- In the long term we need a strategic plan for regional transportation; it would be short-sighted for our community to not be at the table, even if it’s not our top priority (*Estes Park*)
- The hours of operation for regional transit service are important for public transportation to help address the workforce housing issue (*Estes Park*)
- Consider rural transportation needs and the needs of unincorporated towns like LaPorte and Red Feathers (*Larimer County*)
- A commitment from communities to fund the planning effort and have some skin in the game (*Larimer County*)
- A willingness to listen and work together (*Larimer County*)
- Recognize the unique mobility challenges for people with disabilities (*Larimer County*)
- Discussion of regional rail (*Larimer County*)
- Include transit, multimodal (*Larimer County*)
- Representation in the governance of funds (*Timnath*)
- Direct benefits to our community (*Timnath*)
- Contribution to the planning effort shouldn’t be the same amount for all communities (*Timnath*)
- Any coordinated effort to create regional transportation solutions should be transit focused (*Fort Collins*)
- Any plan moving forward should be based on good data and a complete understanding of the needs (*Fort Collins*)
- Regional transit should be coordinated through the NFRMPO instead of Larimer County (*Fort Collins*)
- It could make sense to coordinate other regional needs, such as the regional trail network, within Larimer County (*Fort Collins*)
- Comments were made that supported individual project regional collaboration with cost sharing based on project benefits (*Fort Collins*)
- A seat at the table (*Loveland*)
- A fair share; Fort Collins typically is the focus (*Loveland*)
- Solutions that are technologically advanced, clean, reliable (*Loveland*)





- Inclusive; don't leave people out due to language barriers or affordability (*Loveland*)
- Focus on public/private partnerships (*Loveland*)
- Address safety (*Loveland*)
- All communities collect local impact fees to offset development impacts (*Berthoud*)
- Polling of, and meetings with, businesses and community members to understand their priorities (*Berthoud*)
- Sharing the burden; compromises between communities for the greater good of the region (*Berthoud*)
- That our community is included and not forgotten about (*Berthoud*)
- A transit solution/service for every community (*Berthoud*)
- Recognition that an improvement in another community benefits our residents, given the dynamic travel patterns in Larimer County (*Berthoud*)
- More willingness to provide carrots to encourage desired behaviors (*Berthoud*)

**Q9. What are the “deal breakers” that would prevent your community from coordinating on regional transportation solutions?**

- A new sales tax could be considered, but not an additional property tax (*Wellington*)
- Affordability is a major issue, and a new tax would further contribute to the problem (*Wellington*)
- SH 1/LCR 62e is a major priority for the Town; it would be a deal breaker if that project fell out of favor (*Wellington*)
- Any new taxes (*Johnstown*)
- Larger communities receive all the money/benefits (*Johnstown*)
- Workforce housing is so critical; the timing is really the issue and right now regional transportation is just not the highest priority (*Estes Park*)
- Don't want the communities to feel like they're being roped into these conversations; there must be a willingness and desire from the communities to advance this topic (*Larimer County*)
- Community is sensitive to taxes (*Timnath*)
- Opinions of the Council regarding new vehicular capacity ranged from “not supportive of any new capacity” to “any new capacity needs to come with an addition of strong emphasis on transit, regional trail connections, and other multimodal strategies” (*Fort Collins*)
- Cost (*Loveland*)
- Doubling up on management (e.g., overlap with NFRMPO responsibilities) (*Loveland*)
- No improvements are included in our community (*Berthoud*)
- Too much large entity oversight (*Berthoud*)
- Significant tax increase (*Berthoud*)
- Financial or priority imbalance (*Berthoud*)



## Summary and Recommendations

Real estate prices and inflation have caused cost of living and availability of affordable housing to be a pressing topic for most of the communities in Larimer County. Although indirectly related to transportation, some communities (most notably Estes Park) feel their focus should be addressing this community issue.

- Overall, addressing regional transportation needs is a moderate priority to the communities of Larimer County compared to other topics. Communities collectively view addressing regional transportation needs as equally important as addressing local transportation needs.
- The communities expressed only moderate interest in coordinating on regional transportation. The Larimer County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) expressed the greatest interest; however, they noted that they only want to advance the discussions if the local communities are interested.
- Collectively lobbying for State or Federal funds received the overall highest level of interest; however, this was notably the approach with the least interest (of the 12 presented) from the Larimer County BCC.
- Given current economic conditions, there is an aversion to pursuing new funding for regional transportation through new fees or taxes.
- Less than half of the communities expressed willingness to contribute financially to a regional transportation planning effort. The communities are, however, more willing to commit staff resources and involvement from leadership and elected officials.
- All communities indicated that the planning region should be expanded beyond Larimer County for the purpose of discussing regional transportation; however, the definition of the appropriate geographic extents varied.
- Although elected officials were not directly asked about the type of transportation solutions they would be interested in, some disparities in thinking around regional transportation solutions became evident in the “must have” and “deal breaker” discussion. For example, the City of Fort Collins expressed that any coordinated effort to create regional transportation solutions should be transit focused; while some of the smaller communities noted the need to complete their roadway capacity infrastructure.
- There was a strong sense of parochialism from the elected officials – they want to make sure their own community gets their “fair share.” There was a general lack of regional thinking that could lead to strong collaboration and consensus building. A notable exception was a comment from a Berthoud Trustee, who stated that a transportation improvement in another community in Larimer County would benefit Berthoud residents because of the interconnected nature of the region.