



**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2013
1:00 - 4:00 PM
CDOT/HQ Auditorium**

Members Present	YES	NO	Members Present	YES	NO
Larry Worth	X		Ann Rajewski		X
Terri A. Binder	X		Peter J. Rickershauser	X	
Craig Blewitt	X		Jim Souby	X	
Vince Rogalski	X		Michael E. Timlin	X	
Todd Hollenbeck		X	Bill Van Meter	X	
Jonathan Hutchison		X	Jacob Riger	X	
David Johnson	X (on phone)		Danny Katz	X	
Tim Mauck		X	Mike Ogborn		X
Kurt Ravenschlag		X	Sara Cassidy		X

Others Present	CDOT Present
Bruce Abel, RTD Sherry Ellebracht, RTD Gail Hoffman, CDOT Richard Marcus, Colo Springs Mountain Metro Transit	Mark Imhoff, David Krutsinger, Tracey MacDonald, David Averill, Tom Mauser, Julia Spiker, TJ Dlubac, Jason Wallis, John Valerio

1. Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Peter Rickershauser at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Statewide Transportation Plan/Transit Plan

Tracey MacDonald, DTR, reviewed the Statewide Transit Plan vision statement, as well as the supporting goals and objectives. As part of the Statewide Transit Plan, Regional Coordinated Transit Plans are being developed for the rural areas of the state.

The first round of meetings for the Regional Coordinated Transit Plans were held in July and August, obtaining input on issues, needs, and the direction of the study. Each round of meetings includes both a Transit Working Group (TWG) intended for agency staff participation, as well as an Open House intended for the general public. The second round of meetings were [being] held in October to finalize the direction of the study (vision, goals, objectives), to gather input on priorities, and to begin discussing coordination strategies. Key messages heard at the second round of meetings are as follows:

- Need for operating funds and more flexibility in fund use
- Need for regional & intercity transit service
- Better connectivity and coordination
- Equitable funding to rural areas

An elderly and disabled (E&D) survey is being completed. DTR and the FHU study team have compiled agency mailing lists. The survey is being delivered in Spanish and English. Some agencies provided their mailing lists for the team to use; others have requested copies of the surveys be provided so that the agencies may do the mailing themselves.

Comments on the study are being taken in at least two ways: (1) a comment form, and (2) a map-based tool (PIN Tool) that allows users to drop a “pin” onto a map and attach a comment to that location. Both input methods are accessed through the public involvement page of the Transit Plan:
<http://coloradotransportationmatters.com/other-cdot-plans/transit/public-involvement/>
<http://coloradotransportationmatters.com/cdot-swp-comment-form/>
<http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/pintransit/Home.aspx>

The next steps for the study are:

- Complete the E&D Survey (October – November)
- Complete the second round of Transit Working Group meetings & Open Houses (October)
- Prepare Regional Coordinated Transit Plans – Winter 2014
- Prepare the Statewide Transit Plan – Spring 2014

3. Advanced Guideway System (AGS) / Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS)

David Krutsinger, DTR, summarized the status of both of these high speed transit studies. Both have full-length corridor recommendations, AGS from Eagle County Regional Airport (ECRA) to DIA, and ICS from Fort Collins to Pueblo. Together, the studies will be integrated as a statewide vision for a future high-speed rail vision. Together, the recommendations total approximately \$30 Billion, in current dollars.

The vision will be included in both (1) updates to the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, and (2) the Statewide Transit Plan. Public meetings are planned for both studies in November. To be implementable, a governance structure such as a Rural Transportation Authority or similar state-enabled entity would need to be formed. That governing entity could then pursue funds to implement the recommendations, funding likely in the form of new taxes or fees, and implementation likely in phases.

Some follow-on studies are likely needed. In the North I-25 region, ICS recommendations will need to be reconciled with North I-25 EIS commitments and proposed implementation schedule. In the South I-25 corridor, a comprehensive vision for a combination of transit and roadway projects needs to be developed. In the I-70 Mountain corridor, a parallel Traffic & Revenue study is providing information on the idea of tolled / managed lanes which might be implementable without a new tax.

4. Interregional Express (IX) (Formerly Regional Commuter Bus or RCB) and Intercity Bus

Mike Timlin provided an update on the statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Study. That study has been looking comprehensively at a range of intercity, interregional, and regional bus services that could form a network of transit services among all of Colorado’s fifteen regions. It also establishes the framework for creating partnerships, measuring performance, and developing inter-agency agreements. A core set of services is recommended for the initial phase of service development.

Mike briefly explained a peer analysis that had been done. He summarized “lessons learned” from other states which either operate bus service directly, or contract out services with others. Other state systems work from the basis of park-and-rides as collection points for riders, try to minimize the number of contracts, and have a fare-recovery ratio between 15% (New Mexico) to 84% (New Hampshire).

Mike then walked through CDOT’s proposal for Interregional Express (IX) bus service. CDOT proposes to contract out the service. CDOT proposes six round trips a day between Colorado Springs and Denver, five during peak times and one during the mid-day. Between Fort Collins and Denver, five round trips are proposed, four during peak times, and one during the mid-day. In the I-70 corridor, one round-trip per day is proposed between Vail and Denver. All services leverage existing park-and-rides. Mike responded to questions and took comments on the IX service proposal, summarized below:

- Although FASTER funds are fixed, with no adjustments for inflation, farebox revenues will allow service to grow.
- Mountain Metro Transit is generally supportive of the park-and-ride arrangements and is offering to contractually supply the fare box equipment to CDOT.
- Service schedules are being coordinated as closely as possible with Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Summit Stage, ECO Transit and Vail. Service schedules are not directly coordinated with Greyhound, but indirectly provide complementary service to Greyhound schedules.
- CDOT proposed 11 over-the-road coaches for I-25 services, and smaller buses for the I-70 Corridor. TRAC members advised that it would be better to have the same big buses on I-70. That would allow I-70 buses to also have on-board restrooms.
- How will buses be maintained? Maintenance will be with contractor, with oversight by CDOT
- As another source of revenue, college student opportunities should be encouraged. Possibly start with students specials. Rather than “deadheading” back to Denver on Fridays, bring students into Denver Friday evenings. Return them on Mondays to Fort Collins & Colorado Springs as the buses deploy for normal commuter service.
- Branding and marketing are budgeted in the proposed plan. The details are not decided and will be developed.

5. BREAK

6. MPACT 64-Process Update and CDOT Scenarios

Danny Katz, COPIRG, introduced this overall topic and facilitated discussion. David Krutsinger, DTR, talked through a presentation on various options for use of transit dollars that might be created by a ballot measure (MPACT 64) in 2014. At the core of the presentation are the expectations transit agencies expect CDOT to fulfill, as well as the possible ways of pursuing / implementing / achieving common regional and interregional service goals.

TRAC members voiced a number of different viewpoints on this topic, useful to the continuing development of ideas, whether for MPACT 64 or for the State Transit Plan:

- Need enough money for rail studies / corridor advancement
- Need money for preservation of the SW Chief.
- Need some assurance connections will be made. Different approaches to this same goal:
 - Grassroots “up” (max flexibility, local/decentralized accountability)
 - State/Regional “down” (more centralized accountability)

- A similar list of projects at the local level would be useful to understand what they are and whether the projects offer a clearer vision to voters

Danny closed by stating that additional polling by the MPACT 64 group members is to be completed in November/December, with a report-out in January. The November education election will also give a good indication of voter appetite for funding increases. Both will inform future transportation funding choices about what might have the greatest appeal.

7. FASTER Distribution 2015 & 2016

Mark Imhoff, DTR, stepped through many slides with potential ideas about ways FASTER dollars might be distributed differently in the future. Outside of administration of the program, \$5 Million per year has traditionally been offered competitively for “local” projects through CDOT Engineering Regions. “State” projects, amounting to \$9 Million per year are competitively offered through DTR. Together, these two pools amount to approximately \$14 Million per year.

Mark and Tom Mauser started with some background on funding source changes resulting from MAP-21. At the Federal level, 5309 & 5339 changed from local funding of \$10 million per year (pre MAP-21) to \$2.1 million per year under MAP-21. The resulting suggestion is that FASTER “local” dollars be focused toward (prioritized towards) bus replacement. DTR would use the forthcoming Transit Asset Management project and grants portal (aka Salesforce (vendor name) or Colorado Transit Asset Management System (COTRAMS)) to collect, monitor, and allocate dollars in a predictable way. Local agency match rates might be adjusted over time to make sure the dollars are allocated throughout Colorado. Two proposals were offered as optional ways of distributing the \$5 Million “local” pool, the second that would formalize the entire amount and eliminate the need for the competitive application process.

The \$9 Million “statewide” pool similarly offered two initial options for distribution. Both featured approximately \$4 Million set aside for operating assistance, \$3 Million for CDOT Interregional Express (IX) bus service, and an additional \$1 Million for cost-shared assistance to regional commuter bus services which might be delivered by a transit agency or group of transit agency partners. As part of both “local” and “statewide” pools, RTD would be prohibited from participating in the “local” pool, in exchange for a dedicated \$3 Million from the “statewide” pool, which is the average amount RTD has received over the last 5 years of the program and represents 21% of the total funding in both pools, contrasting with RTD’s 55% of the state’s population and 80% of the state’s service hours/ridership totals. That would leave \$2 Million in the “statewide” pool for competitive grants.

Various TRAC members offered the following comments and questions:

- \$20 Million a year vehicle gap in current funding stream. So the \$14 Million in FASTER funds will need to be spread/extended to \$20 Million with local matching dollars, using a 30-40% match.
- Like overall concept, and the certainty of funding.
- Rolling stock will become the greatest need in state transit funding. The more formula-driven replacement concept is great, but the devil is in the details. FASTER revenue streams and vehicle replacement schedules must be made to match. Less paperwork is great. Certainty is great.
- Vanpools currently compete in the statewide pool. They probably continue to be eligible there, but it is unknown whether they would be made eligible for the local pool.

A sub-committee will be formed to take up further consideration of the re-distribution concept. Volunteers for the committee include: Craig Blewitt (Mountain Metro/Urban Provider), Larry Worth (Rural Provider Representative), Elena Wilken (CASTA), David Johnson (RFTA/Resort Provider), Matt Helephant (DRCOG/MPO), and Jonathan Hutchison (Amtrak). The sub-committee will need to address expansion requests for future programming and higher match.

8. Monthly Updates

The 2015-2016 FASTER call for capital projects will be released October 18th. The redistribution discussion (above) is likely to apply to FY 2016.

9. Wrap Up/Adjournment

Pete Rickershauser closed the meeting shortly after 4:00, noting the next full TRAC meeting would be in January.