

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – September 13, 2011

Meeting Attendees

CDOT

Debra Perkins-Smith Director – Division of Transportation Development (DTD)

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Steve Gregory	San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Alice DeStigter	Union Pacific Railroad (for Dick Hartman)
Ann Rajewski	Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA)
Mark Radtke	Colorado Municipal League (CML)
Mehdi Baziar	State Rail Plan Project Manager
Vince Rogalski	State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
Tim Larsen	Colorado Department of Agriculture
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Pete Rickershauser	BNSF Railway
Sandi Kohrs	CDOT Statewide Planning and Performance Measure Manager

Steering Committee Members (or representatives) via conference call

Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Mike Ogborn	OmniTRAX, Inc.

Consultant Project Team

Randy Grauberger	PB Deputy Project Manager
Holly Nichols	CRL Associates
Bob Felsburg	FHU
Evan Kirby	FHU
Jerry Albin	FHU

CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP). Mehdi asked everyone to make a self introduction.

Following introductions, Mehdi Baziar mentioned that in addition to the six meetings shown on the Workshops/Open House Summary Report previously distributed to the SC, additional meetings had been held with the agricultural and coal stakeholders as well as briefings with the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region (TPR). Additional briefings have also been scheduled with the Pike Peak Area Council of Governments and Denver Regional Council of Governments

Holly Nichols next provided an overview of the “major themes” that were discussed at the workshops/open houses. Randy Grauberger noted that both the Towner Line and the Southwest Chief Amtrak service were specific projects identified under the general theme entitled “Retain all existing rail lines and services”.

Pete Rickershauser noted that at the meeting he had attended, there seemed to be a shortage of “rail users” or rail shippers/receivers. Mehdi noted again that specific meetings had been held with representatives of the agricultural and coal industries. Also, the Stakeholders Group now contains over 200 members, many of which are shippers. Bob Felsburg asked if there is a “shippers association” in Colorado that could be added to the Stakeholders Group in order to get additional input when the Draft State Rail Plan is made available for comment.

Randy Grauberger next discussed the handout containing the draft Goal and Objectives. The Goals had been previously developed by the Steering Committee and minor modifications were suggested by the Stakeholder Group at their early August meeting. Also, the Stakeholder Group had suggested Passenger and freight Objectives related to those Goals.

The objective of this agenda item for the Steering Committee at this meeting was to finalize the Goals and Objectives.

A lengthy discussion led to the Revised Goals and Objectives which are attached to these minutes as a separate document. One of the significant changes to the previous document was the addition of a category of “General Objectives” to each Goal for those Objectives that were relevant for both freight and passenger issues.

Bob Felsburg led the discussion related to the next agenda item, “Framework for Prioritizing Improvements”. Bob noted that the overall process related to developing the Draft Investment Program was divided into three main steps: 1) Identification of Projects; 2) Assessment of Projects; and 3) Prioritization of Projects.

In regard to “Identification of Projects” Bob described the various sources of projects and also listed the “Project Types” that were being considered:

- Capacity Bottlenecks
- Safety (Grade Crossing Improvements./Grade Separations)
- Shared Use Corridor Improvements
- Shipper Access (Industry Siding Upgrades/Extensions)
- Track/Structure Upgrades for Handling Larger Rail Cars
- Facilities Improvements (Freight); Intermodal Facility Relocation, Etc.
- Facilities Improvements (Passenger); Station Upgrades/Improvements
- High Speed Rail Corridors
- Rail Corridor Preservation

“Assessment of Projects” involves identifying evaluation criteria and developing a “scoring” concept. The following Evaluation criteria are being proposed for consideration:

- Economic Development
- Capacity Enhancement/Congestion Relief
- Environmental Benefits/Impacts
- Energy Efficiency
- Safety

- Infrastructure Maintenance/Upgrades
- Mobility Options/Community Enhancement
- Local/Public Support/Regional Balance
- Funding/Potential for Private Capital
- Cost Effectiveness
- Multimodal Benefits
- Accessibility Benefits/Jobs, Markets

Bob suggested that each project could be assessed by each criterion utilizing a high, medium, or low value. It was noted that specific definitions of high medium and low had not yet been established for each of the 12 criteria. It was suggested that different methodologies such as “Green, Yellow, and Red” or the “Consumer Report” method of evaluating criteria could also be considered.

In the “Project Prioritization” phase, it is anticipated that each project would be classified either as Short Range or Long Range. “Short Range” would be those projects that could possibly be completed in a 5 – 6 year period. “Long Range” would probably be future projects such as the implementation of high speed rail.

The Steering Committee was asked to provide additional comments on this process by September 23.

Mehdi reminded the Steering Committee that the next meeting was scheduled for November 1 in Denver from 9 to noon.

There being no further business, Mehdi thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:15.