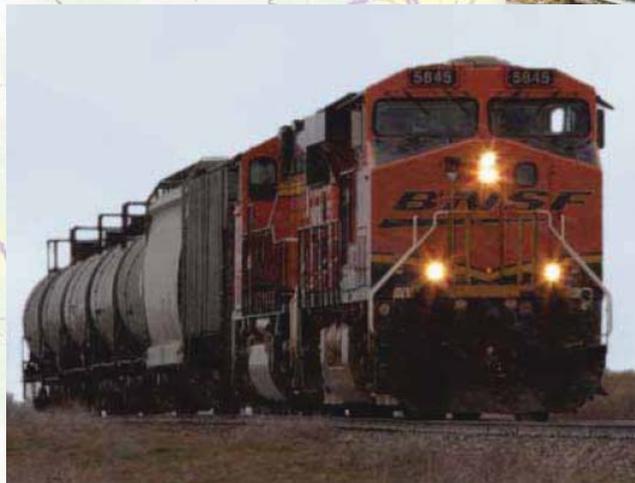


Appendix A: Public Involvement Colorado State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan

March, 2012





Appendix A—Public Involvement (see specific documents on enclosed CD)

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Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan



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Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – April 20, 2011

Meeting Attendees

CDOT

Mark Imhoff	Director – Div. of Transit and Rail
Bob Wilson	Public Relations Office

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Cathy Norris	BNSF Railway
Dick Hartman	Union Pacific Railroad
Mike Ogborn	OmniTRAX, Inc
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Tim Larsen	Colo. Dept. of Agriculture
Ann Rajewski	Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA)
Vince Rogalski	Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
Cathy Shull	Progressive 15
Mehdi Baziar	Rail Plan Project Manager
Wendy Wallach	Rail Plan Deputy Project Manager
Sandi Kohrs	Statewide Planning Manager

Consultant Project Team

Larry Warner	Parsons-Brinkerhoff (PB) Project Manager
Randy Grauberger	PB Deputy Project Manager
Roger Sherman	CRL Associates
Bob Felsburg	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU)
Evan Kirby	FHU
Matt McDole	LS Gallegos

1. CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Steering Committee for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP). Mehdi asked everyone to make a self introduction.
2. Following introductions, PB's Randy Grauberger provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting a brief history of rail planning in the United States and in Colorado. The presentation also provided details related to the twelve tasks in the SFPRP Scope of Work of PB's contract with CDOT.

3. BNSF indicated that they had coordinated with UP related to the data request by CDOT for the SFPRP. The railroads would request that, wherever possible, data provided to CDOT for the Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study (R2C2) and other recent studies in Colorado be utilized so that the effort to accumulate the requested data isn't duplicative of previous work. Randy noted that CDOT had provided the Consultant Project Team with electronic files of numerous rail studies recently completed in the state for the purpose of completing Task 2 (Summary of State and Local Rail Programs). These studies would be used when appropriate to obtain data for the SFPRP.
4. Railroads also suggested that CDOT coordinate with the coal industry for the study. CDOT agreed to schedule a meeting with a representative of the coal industry in the near future. The railroads could help facilitate such a meeting if necessary.
5. Roger Sherman, CRL Associates, next discussed the Outreach Plan and the schedule for obtaining stakeholder input into the SFPRP. A copy of the Outreach Plan and schedule had previously been provided to the Steering Committee members, and both had been revised based on comments received. Roger noted that key next steps would be to develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for placing on the CDOT Rail Plan website and also to begin planning for the four "Working Group Sessions" that will be held around the state (late summer) to receive input from the attendees on various elements of the SFPRP. There were no additional comments on the Outreach Plan and schedule at this time.
6. Cathy Shull, Progressive 15, asked that copies of the Stakeholder Group membership list be e-mailed to each of the Steering Committee members so that they could make recommendations for additional stakeholders. NOTE: The list was emailed by Mehdi on 4/20/2011.
7. PB's Larry Warner and FHU's Bob Felsburg led the discussion related to Development of a Draft "Vision for Rail in Colorado". The Committee had previously been provided with a copy of the Vision developed by the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee as well as a compilation of Vision statements included in state rail plans from the states of Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, and Washington.
8. Henry Stoppolecamp, RTD, noted that there was a great variety in the various state visions and that Colorado should focus on issues relevant to Colorado. BNSF's Sarod Dhuru noted that he liked the detail included in the New York Vision. Tim Larsen, Dept. of Agriculture, liked the short, concise Pennsylvania Vision but he didn't like the reference to 2035. He stressed that putting such a future date in the Vision suggests there isn't much urgency in dealing with the various rail related issues; safety, economic development, etc. and implies that the existing rail system is inadequate.
9. Larry Warner next asked for specific comments on the state visions. BNSF and RTD representatives liked the last 4 bullets on the Georgia Vision noting that they "covered what Colorado is looking for; they are just in a different format."

10. Larry Warner suggested that the Arizona vision seemed to be more of a general statement than a “Vision”. BNSF suggested that the Colorado Vision should reference “land use planning”. Larry Warner said that his previous CDOT experience made him somewhat leery of using “land use planning” in a state document such as the SFPRP due to the sensitivity that local governments have about this issue. However, members felt that the importance of coordinating land use planning should be emphasized.

11. Several Committee members liked elements of the Kansas Vision. CDOT’s Sandi Kohrs liked the “balance” in the Kansas Vision. Also, the reference to the importance of funding to achieve the Vision and the use of public/private partnerships was noted.

12. Throughout this discussion, key elements considered by the group to be important to Colorado for inclusion in the Colorado Rail Vision were recorded on a white board. Then, after the Committee reached consensus to utilize the Kansas Rail Vision as a template, the many key elements recorded on the white board were used as a checklist to develop a Vision applicable to Colorado. The outcome of this exercise was the following Draft Rail Vision for Colorado:

“The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, coordinated land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships.”

The Steering Committee will be asked to adopt a Final Rail Vision for Colorado at their July meeting.

13. Evan Kirby, FHU, next provided a presentation on the status of the data collection activities for the SFPRP. Evan showed the Committee a copy of the state rail map that has been developed and will serve as the base map for all of the maps to be generated during the development of the SFPRP. Evan also presented, as an example of how graphics can be used to effectively portray more complex data bases, a map depicting coal movement within the state utilizing varying colors and bandwidths to show tonnages and origin (in-state or out-of-state) of coal moving in and through Colorado by rail. A copy of the data request forms recently submitted to the Class I and short line railroads was also shown. Tim Larsen stressed the importance of the SFPRP showing those freight movements that not only have an origin or destination in the state, but also those freight movements that move “through” the state; i.e. no origin or destination within Colorado. Tim also noted that ethanol production in the state had increased freight traffic in Colorado in recent years. New freight data should reflect this , as well as new pending activities that could influence freight rail traffic.

14. Evan also showed several maps that are in other state rail plans that are good examples of using GIS as more than just a “mapping tool” in the development of state rail plans.

15. Mehdi Baziar next discussed the status of the effort to complete Task 1 “Summary of Best State Rail Planning Practices” and Task 2 “State and Local Rail Programs”. Drafts of both of these tasks are being revised by the consultant team based on CDOT comments and are to be submitted to CDOT by the end of April. Shortly thereafter, copies of Task 1 and 2 will be provided to the Steering Committee for comments.

16. Future dates and times for Steering Committee meetings were discussed. Morning meetings were preferred. In order to set the specific meeting dates of the Steering Committee scheduled for July and November, Mehdi will send an e-mail to all SC members as to availability in July and November before the future meeting dates are finalized.

17. Henry Stoppolecamp indicated to the Steering Committee members that there is rail related training (*Introduction to Practical Railway Engineering*, June 13 – 15) available through the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA). The training will be held in Greenwood Village. (see AREMA.com for details on this training) Henry also noted that, upon request, he occasionally provides training (what Henry referred to as “Railroad 201”) at no charge. He offered to provide this training session for the Steering Committee if desired.

18. The group liked rail map and would like to have access to it electronically. Mehdi said he would notify Committee members when he places a copy of the map on CDOT’s FTP site. The group also requested that copies of the Steering Committee membership list be forwarded to all members of the Steering Committee. Both requests were completed on 4/20/2011.

19. Tim then asked about the status of the R2C2 study CDOT completed in 2009. Mehdi indicated that the follow-on study to evaluate additional benefits and impacts of rail relocation to eastern Colorado communities, farmers, and ranchers had been “put on hold” until the completion of the SFPRP. Mark Imhoff, CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail Director indicated that CDOT’s current position related to rail relocation is that CDOT will not take the lead on future efforts to relocate the railroads off of the Front Range. However, if someone else, communities or the railroads, came forward with such a proposal, CDOT could facilitate a discussion.

There being no further business, Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – July 6, 2011

Meeting Attendees

CDOT

Mark Imhoff	Director – Division of Transit and Rail (DTR)
Tammy Lang	Division of Transportation Development (DTD)

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Steve Gregory	San Luis and Rio Grande RR
Mike Ogborn	OmniTRAX, Inc
Jonathan Hutchison	Amtrak
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Ann Rajewski	CASTA
Mark Radtke	Colorado Municipal League (CML)
Mehdi Baziar	Rail Plan Project Manager
Wendy Wallach	Rail Plan Deputy Project Manager
Sandi Kohrs	Statewide Planning Manager

Steering Committee Members (or representatives) via conference call

Vince Rogalski	STAC
Cathy Shull	Progressive 15
Tim Larsen	Colorado Department of Agriculture
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Matt Cheroutis	Office of Economic Development
Craig Casper	Pikes Peak Area COG

Consultant Project Team

Larry Warner	PB Project Manager
Randy Grauberger	PB Deputy Project Manager
Joe Gurskis	PB Senior Advisor
Roger Sherman	CRL Associates
Evan Kirby	FHU
Jerry Albin	FHU
Matt McDole	LS Gallegos

CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the second 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 asked the SC to describe the level of detail that they would like meeting notes to appear. The options were “very detailed” or “more general”. The SC determined that general meeting notes would be appropriate.

Mehdi next indicated that in conversations with the consultant team, it appeared that an additional Steering Committee meeting would be desirable to provide CDOT and the consultant team with appropriate input into the upcoming stages of the development of the State Rail Plan. It was determined that an additional meeting of the SC would take place on September 13 at CDOT from 9 a.m. to noon.

Larry Warner next asked if there were any additional comments on or changes to the Vision that the Steering Committee had developed at its April 20 meeting. Following a brief discussion minor changes were made and the final Rail Vision for Colorado will be as follows:

Colorado Rail Vision

The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient, coordinated and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, cooperative land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships.

Roger Sherman, CRL Associates, next discussed the status of outreach that has taken place. The State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC), the Transportation Commission’s Transit and Rail Intermodal Committee, have all been provided with a PowerPoint overview of the SFPRP. Also, Wendy Wallach described the process by which CDOT staff is making a general presentation on the Division of Transit and Rail’s Rail Program and current rail initiatives to individual Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs) around the state and a briefing on the SFPRP is part of those presentations. The members present at the TPR meetings are encouraged to participate in the SFPRP by going to the project website and adding themselves to the Stakeholder Committee list.

Roger next discussed the upcoming six events scheduled as workshops and open houses. The format for these meetings will be an “invite only” workshop from 2 – 4 p.m. followed by an Open House from 5 – 6:30 p.m.

The following meetings will be held:

- August 15 Akron
 Washington County Event Center
 551 West 2nd Street

- August 17 Limon
 Limon Community Building, South Side
 477 D Avenue

- August 23 Denver
 CDOT Auditorium
 4201 East Arkansas Ave.

- August 25 Grand Junction
 Mesa County Courthouse – Multipurpose Room
 544 Rood Ave.

- August 31 La Junta
 Otero Jr. College
 1802 Colorado Ave.

- September 1 Alamosa
 Alamosa County Administration Building
 8900 Independence Way

There was a request to coordinate with DTD TPR liaisons before each meeting and to maintain close coordination so that DTD can review considerations for integration into the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. Larry Warner stated that DTD will be contacted for early coordination. DTD wants to be sure that TPR Chairs and the key people in each area are invited to the SFPRP workshops and DTD will help identify these participants.

Roger will be putting invite lists together next week so they can be reviewed and the invitations sent out sufficiently in advance. There was a comment that it is hoped that UP and BNSF should be able to assist in getting shipper representatives to the meetings.

PB’s Joe Gurskis provided a PowerPoint presentation related to Best Practices in State Rail Planning. Joe noted that the Federal Railroad Administration has not gone through formal rulemaking procedures to define the requirements of a FRA accepted State Rail Plan [In the first quarter of 2010, FRA did issue a draft outline that serves as guidelines for State Rail Plans.] Following Joe’s presentation the following comments were made: Planning for all modes of transportation should be closely coordinated with the Governor’s Office of Economic

Development. Also, the plan should relate what improvements in service would be anticipated from an infrastructure investment of a certain dollar amount. Mark Imhoff indicated his goal is to define performance measures for the rail mode that will put it “on the same playing field” with highways.

PB’s Randy Grauberger noted that Tasks 1 and 2 had been revised and finalized based on comments received from SC members and have been posted on CDOT’s SFPRP website. Upon inquiry, the website seems to be functioning adequately and is updated on regular basis.

Evan Kirby, Felsburg Holt and Ullevig (FHU), next presented a PowerPoint describing the status of data collection and analysis. The Surface Transportation Board’s Waybill data has been received and the analysis of that data has begun. Evan presented some examples of how the waybill data would be shown in the SFPRP. These are proposed to be: Top 5 – Inbound Commodities, Top 5 – Outbound Commodities, Maps depicting origin/destination states with rail traffic through the state, percentage of rail traffic in the state originating, terminating and through the state. Also shown were maps identifying the maximum speeds on rail lines in Colorado and the location of grain elevators and associated agricultural lands. Lastly, examples were shown of how the various data and other information related to the Class I, short line railroads and tourist railroads would be depicted in the SFPRP.

Craig Casper asked if commodity flow maps, similar to the “heat” maps depicting flows between states could be produced at the county level for Colorado. Joe Gurskis indicated the waybill data does contain detail down to the county level, but the confidentiality of this data would preclude it being shown at this level in the SFPRP.

Larry Warner next led an effort to develop State Rail Plan goals linked to the Rail Vision for Colorado. A lengthy discussion led to the following goals being identified:

Plan Goals Linked to State Rail Vision

- **Create a balanced transportation system utilizing cooperative land use planning to create intermodal connectivity and accessibility without compromising existing service and infrastructure.**
- **Provide for the safety of people, infrastructure and goods.**
- **Expand rail infrastructure and freight and passenger rail services to meet future demand through strategic investments which include public-private partnerships.**
- **Promote through education the energy efficiency, environmental, and economic benefits of freight and passenger rail transportation throughout the state.**
- **Utilize the efficiencies of freight and passenger rail to develop livable communities which enhance economic growth throughout the state.**

It was proposed that these goals would be provided to the Stakeholder Group at their August meeting at which time that group would be asked to develop more specific objectives related to these goals.

Randy Grauberger led the discussion related to the next agenda item, “Discuss Potential Project/Prioritization”. He noted that some projects had been identified earlier by the Stakeholder Group and it was expected that numerous additional projects would be proposed during the six upcoming workshops to be held around the state. Joe Gurskis briefly described a handout showing a proposed project prioritization methodology. The following questions will need to be answered before this phase of the rail plan is initiated: Should only those projects that may be utilizing federal funding be evaluated in detail, or should all projects be evaluated to some extent (going through a screening process)? Also, should only public projects be shown or should private projects-especially those of Class I railroads be included? It was suggested that this topic could be the focus of the September SC meeting.

Mark Imhoff asked the SC members to be thinking about possible uses for the \$9 million that the state is anticipating receiving for the sale of the Towner line. The creation of a short line railroad assistance program similar to the Kansas DOT program has been suggested but Mark encouraged the SC members to think about other possible uses for these funds which will be placed in the State Rail Bank.

It was also noted that DTR is developing performance measures for the Division and a meeting had been held in which the Consultant team was asked to develop performance measures to evaluate proposed projects in the SFPRP. These measures should not preclude division wide measures being developed by DTR and DTD.

There being no further business, Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – December 2, 2011

Meeting Attendees

CDOT

Mark Imhoff	Director – Division of Transit and Rail (DTR)
Debra Perkins-Smith	Director – Division of Transportation Development (DTD)
Tracy McDonald	CDOT Statewide Planning
Bob Wilson	CDOT Public Relations

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Craig Caspar	Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Ann Rajewski	Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA)
Mark Radtke	Colorado Municipal League (CML)
Vince Rogalski	State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Pete Rickershauser	(for the Union Pacific Railroad)
Mehdi Baziar	State Rail Plan Project Manager
Sandi Kohrs	CDOT Statewide Planning and Performance Measure Manager

Via Conference Call

Jonathan Hutchison	Amtrak (SC Member)
Leo Wetula	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Kyle Gradinger	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

Consultant Project Team

Larry Warner	PB Project Manager
Randy Grauberger	PB Deputy Project Manager
Matt McDole	LS Gallegos

Other Attendees

Dave Munger	Colorado Springs Mayor's Office
Dave Menter	Mountain Metro

CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP). Mehdi asked everyone to make a self introduction including those calling in.

Following introductions, Mehdi asked Division of Transit and Rail Director Mark Imhoff to make introductory comments. Mark said he was looking forward to a good dialogue at this meeting in regard to the project prioritization efforts as well as draft State Rail Plan recommendations.

Mark informed the SC that CDOT today received a letter from the Victoria and Southern Railroad (V&S) notifying CDOT of V&S's intent to abandon the Towner Line from NA Jct. to Eads.

Randy Grauberger next provided the SC with the status of the effort to compile the overall freight and passenger rail projects and also to prioritize some of those projects. Randy noted the 8-person team that evaluated the projects consisted of: Mehdi Baziar and Wendy Wallach from CDOT, Vince Rogalski, Pete Rickershauser and Joan Shaffer from the Steering Committee/Stakeholder group, and three member of the consultant team.

Randy discussed the following handouts:

- Lists of all Freight and Passenger projects that would be included in the SFPRP.
- Lists showing Priority (High, Medium, or Low) of those projects that had been evaluated.
- Description of the various Freight and Passenger Rail project categories.

Randy also noted that one of the 10 evaluation criteria (safety) had a change in its descriptors. "Reduces the likelihood of derailment" had been added to the descriptors for the 'Safety' criteria.

The following are highlights of the discussion that took place regarding the above project lists and prioritization efforts:

- The cost shown for the potential relocation of Intermodal facilities for the BNSF and UP (\$100 million) may be too low. It may be more appropriate to show a range of costs for these projects.
- In the Notes show column that some of the Great Western Railroad projects have been submitted in a Tiger Grant application.
- City of Colorado Springs and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) believe that the concept of Eastern Colorado Freight Rail Relocation should be included in the project lists and not just referred to in the text of the SFPRP. It was noted that since this is considered a 'Vision' document a major project such as this should be included even if there isn't much likelihood of it being implemented in the near future. This major freight related project should be treated similarly to the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) rail passenger service in the I-70 mountain corridor and the Greenfield High Speed Passenger Rail projects in the Front Range.
- FRA suggested that a list be included in the appendix that includes "all projects" proposed throughout the stakeholder outreach process.
- Several changes were suggested to the columns labeled "Project Source". This may be changed to "Entity Submitting Project", "Project Sponsor" or something similar.
- Show RTD as the 'project source' for the Union Station Redevelopment Project.
- Under the heading "Property Owner", a note will suggest that 'some adjacent property may also be required to implement some of these projects'.
- For the High Speed Rail projects showing RMRA as the project source; change 'RMRA' to 'Interregional Connectivity Study'.
- Pete Rickershauser will follow-up with the railroads to get additional project details and cost estimates where possible.
- Consider adding "Moffat Tunnel improvements" as a new project.
- Add 'RFTA' (Roaring Fork Transit Authority) to the list of acronyms.
- Provide an enhanced definition to the High Speed Rail project description.
- Break out the "High Speed Rail- Denver to Pueblo" into two projects; 1) Denver to Colorado Springs, and 2) Colorado Springs to Pueblo.
- Be consistent in rounding the "costs" to the nearest \$100,000.

- Make sure that the text describes how the cost estimates were arrived at; some were previous studies; some are in existing programs (Section 130, etc.).
- Use the “Notes” column to describe potential benefits of projects to the state’s transportation network.
- The Rail Plan should contain a discussion of the importance of rail stations that references the Inter-regional Connectivity Study (ICS).
- The Rail Plan should reference the ICS and AGS and indicate that the findings of the associated reports will be considered when those studies are complete.

Craig Caspar asked to be provided a copy of the evaluation spreadsheets showing the scoring for each of the 10 criteria.

The Consultant Team will revise the lists based on these comments and re-submit to the SC for additional comments.

Randy next provided the SC with the schedule for the remaining elements of the development of the SFPRP. The Draft plan is expected to be put on the website for review and comments on January 30, 2012

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It was noted that the State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) will be briefed on the Draft Plan at their February 10 meeting. The final Steering Committee Meeting date was also set for February 24. The Transportation Commission will be expected to adopt the Final SFPRP at their March meeting to be held on March 22, 2012.

The last item on the agenda was a discussion of the preliminary recommendations to be included in the State Rail Plan. Several comments were provided and a revised list of recommendations will be provided in the next 10 days. Members were asked to submit any additional comments on the recommendations to Mehdi Baziar by close of business 12/9.

There being no further business, Mehdi thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – March 16, 2012

Meeting Attendees

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Mehdi Baziar	State Rail Plan Project Manager
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Ann Rajewski	Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA)
Cathy Shull	Progressive 15
Mark Radtke	Colorado Municipal League (CML)
Vince Rogalski	State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Deborah Cameron	Office of Economic Development & International Trade
Pete Rickershauser	(for the Union Pacific Railroad)

CDOT

Mark Imhoff	Director – Division of Transit and Rail (DTR)
David Krutsinger	CDOT - DTR

Via Conference Call

Mike Ogborn	OmniTrax (SC Member)
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Consultant Project Team

Larry Warner	Parsons Brinckerhoff - Project Manager
Randy Grauberger	Parsons Brinckerhoff - Deputy Project Manager
Roger Sherman	CRL Associates
Bob Felsburg	FHU
Evan Kirby	FHU
Marie Arroyo	FHU
Matt McDole	LS Gallegos

CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at noon. He welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP). Mehdi asked everyone to make a self introduction including those calling in.

Following introductions, Mehdi asked Division of Transit and Rail Director Mark Imhoff to make introductory comments. Mark began by noting that David Krutsinger had been hired to head up the Rail Programs group within DTR, replacing Wendy Wallach. David will be the project manager for the Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS) and the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) feasibility study.

Mark also expressed his thanks to Project Manager Mehdi Baziar for a job well done in managing this project. This project was originated within the Division of Transportation Development and Mehdi did an excellent job in dealing with the transition to DTR.

Mark also expressed his thanks to the State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) and Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) for their efforts in the State Rail Plan's development and their recommendations for approval by the Commission.

Mark discussed next steps and noted that DTR would soon be initiating an Intercity Bus Study and that would be followed by a Statewide Transit Plan. In addition, Mark noted the aforementioned ICS and AGS studies which were now under contract.

Lastly Mark noted that DTR would like to move forward with some type of short line railroad assistance program within Colorado and also begin early implementation steps on commuter rail between Denver and Fort Collins.

Mehdi thanked the SC and the Consultant Team for their efforts over the past 15 months and indicated he enjoyed heading up this project!

Mehdi next began a discussion of some of the major comment themes received during the review of the January 30 Draft State Rail Plan. Mehdi noted that there had been concerns that tourism wasn't adequately addressed and asked for and received support from the SC to add an additional Plan Objective that addresses rail related tourism as well as the addition of two new scenic railroads in the Chapter 3 discussion. The SC also supported the addition of a new Plan Policy recommendation focusing on "embracing a performance based evaluation process". The SC also suggested that the word "tourism" be included in to the Plan Policy Recommendation related to economic development.

There were also numerous comments that the Plan was not focused sufficiently on "transit". Mehdi pointed out that "transit" was in fact not the focus of this effort; and that would come in the Statewide Transit Plan.

Larry Warner next thanked and recognized the sub-consultants to Parsons Brinckerhoff: Felsburg Holt and Ullevig (FHU), LS Gallegos and Associates, and CRL Associates for their considerable efforts in the development of the Plan. He also thanked Randy Grauberger for his role as Deputy Project Manager for this project. Larry also noted that the consultant team will be under budget on this project.

Larry emphasized the considerable stakeholder involvement in this project. He said there were over 200 comments on the January 30 Draft and probably 400+ comments during the initial public review period following the six Workshops and Open Houses in September and early October.

Larry reminded the SC members that each of their names and the organization they represent is shown on the "Acknowledgements" page on the back of the cover of the Executive Summary. In regard to the Executive Summary, Pete Rickershauser provided the Consultant team with additional comments.

Mark Imhoff noted that CDOT has already utilized the State Rail Plan. The Great Western Railroad, in conjunction with the Town of Windsor, has submitted a TIGER IV grant request for projects that were included in the Rail Plan. Mike Ogborn thanked CDOT for their support of this project.

Mehdi then discussed the next steps related to finalizing the Plan. The Commission is expected to approve the Plan at its meeting on March 22, and then the Plan will be forwarded to FRA once all of the edits are made. Mehdi asked the Steering Committee members how they would like to receive "copies"

of the Plan. Both Gary Beedy and Henry Stoppelcamp indicated they would like hard copies and two extra CDs. The remaining Steering Committee members will receive CD's containing the full document and Executive Summary and all of the appendices.

The last item on the agenda was an open discussion to assist CDOT in its future rail planning activities. The following three questions related to the State Rail Planning effort were asked of the SC:

- What went well?
- What might be considered process improvements?
- What might be done differently next time?

What Went Well

- Project finished within budget
- Having a thorough public & stakeholder process means the final product was better than it would have been otherwise.
 - The meetings geographically covered the state well, with 4 meetings in the scope and 6 meetings delivered
 - Staggering the stakeholder and steering committee meetings, schedule-wise, helped the overall process
 - Efficient responses to steering committee requests, usually within one or two days, was helpful
 - Monthly PMT meetings were very good for the project
- Meetings and project organization were better than the previous Rail Relocation Implementation Study completed in 2009.
- FRA involvement throughout the study was a wise decision and important to the final acceptance of the project
 - Having Mark (or similar) DTR representation in face-to-face meetings in Washington DC established credibility

Suggested Process Improvements for Next Effort

- More metro Denver/Front Range meetings. Although the past study efforts provided good geographic coverage, east and west, north and south, having more meetings in the populated areas would be helpful
- Make more use of technology for public input in future updates, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, telephone/teleconference town hall meetings
- CDOT needs to provide much better quality teleconference/videoconference (particularly the sound quality) for Steering Committee and other meetings. One example is WebEx and/or similar vendors currently used for on-line training and meetings.
- Spend more time making roles clear early in the process. There were so many new stakeholders along the way that meeting time was spent “catching up” the newcomers to the process. This slowed the ability of other continuous participants to move decisions forward more quickly.
 - Stakeholders grew from 35 to over 400 during this process

- Because Steering Committee meetings are open to the public, have a standing “public testimony” item early on the agenda so that comments can be taken, and the meeting can then move forward.
- Identify early in the study process what level of detail the final product will address: what it will and will not do.
 - Show how comments with detail beyond the intended scope of the final product will be used or recorded for future use.
- Anticipate that expectations for the next State Rail Plan / State Rail Plan Update will be higher. We have a good foundation.
 - Connecticut plan is an example of a plan with a very intensive amount of detail and prescriptive types of recommendations related to passenger rail
 - Kansas is a good example of a plan with a strong short line railroad assistance program
- Emphasize the State Rail Plan in the [2040] Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Don’t just include the State Rail Plan by reference, but work to use the information from this plan in the LRTP.

Do Differently

- Make the Waybill Data request from CDOT to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) earlier so that the freight data are available sooner. Alternatively, explore other sources of the data, like the Transportation Technology Center Incorporated (TTCI) located in Pueblo, which could deliver the data sooner.
- Provide periodic (quarterly, annual, other?) updates on the actions taken with the State Rail Plan, in between 5-year update intervals.

There being no further business, Mehdi thanked everyone for all of their attendance, participation and support and adjourned the meeting at 2:00p.m.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Stakeholder Group

Denver, CO – May 4, 2011

Mehdi Baziar, CDOT project manager for the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, (SFPRP) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Stakeholder Group (SG) for the SFPRP. Mehdi asked the 41 individuals at the meeting to make a self-introduction. Scanned copies of the sign-in sheets will be distributed with these meeting notes.

Following introductions, Mehdi described the purpose of the Stakeholder Group. The SG was originally convened in April of 2010 to assist in developing the State Rail Plan Scope of Work. CDOT will provide the SG with ongoing updates related to the various activities taking place in the development of the SFPRP, in addition to holding two additional formal meetings of the SG during the duration of the study.

Parsons Brinckerhoff's (PB) Randy Grauberger, consultant team deputy project manager, next provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting a brief history of rail planning in the United States and in Colorado. The presentation also provided details related to the twelve tasks in the SFPRP Scope of Work. At the conclusion of the presentation, a request was made to have the PowerPoint placed on CDOT's SFPRP website.

Peg Ekstrand, CRL Associates, next discussed the Outreach Plan and the schedule for obtaining input into the SFPRP. A copy of the Outreach Plan and schedule had previously been provided to the Steering Committee and SG members, and both had been revised based on comments received. Peg noted that key next steps would be to develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for placing on the CDOT Rail Plan website. She encouraged SG members to submit any questions in regard to the Rail Plan. She also described the four "Working Group Sessions" that will be held around the state in late summer to receive input from the attendees on various elements of the SFPRP. She asked for input related to specific "community thought leaders" that could be invited to those meetings.

PB's Larry Warner, consultant team project manager, next described the process that the Steering Committee had earlier used in developing the following Draft Rail Vision for Colorado:

“The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, coordinated land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships.”

Larry asked the SG members if there were any comments or thoughts related to the Draft Vision. None were provided at this time. Mehdi asked that any comments on the Draft Vision be provided to him so that the Steering Committee could take those comments into account before it finalizes the Vision at its July Meeting. .

Evan Kirby, FHU (PB's sub-consultant), next provided a presentation on the status of the data collection activities for the SFPRP. Evan provided the Committee a copy of the state rail map that has been developed and will serve as the base map for all of the maps to be generated during the development of the SFPRP. He presented several maps utilizing the Federal Highway Administrations Freight Analysis Framework (FAF3) 2007 data depicting various commodity flows (coal, cereal grains, lumber, etc.) either originating or terminating in Colorado.

Evan also presented an example of how graphics can be used to effectively portray more complex data bases, by showing a map depicting coal movement within the state utilizing varying colors and bandwidths to show tonnages and origin (in-state or out-of-state) of coal moving in and through Colorado. A copy of the forms recently submitted to the Class I and short line railroads specific to railroad data being requested for the SFPRP was also shown. Evan was asked if the SFPRP would evaluate any truck traffic data to the extent that increased rail usage might reduce highway maintenance costs. Evan indicated that this type of analysis would be included in the SFPRP but that element of the project had not been initiated at this time.

Evan also showed several maps that are used in other state rail plans that are good examples of using GIS as more than just a "mapping tool" in the development of state rail plans.

The next element of the meeting agenda were Breakout sessions to discuss goals and projects related to freight and passenger rail. Individuals had the opportunity to choose which Breakout session to participate in. The session was designed to identify goals and to discuss any freight and passenger 'projects'.

The following is the listing of goals and projects that came forth from the Breakout sessions:

Freight Rail Goals

- Do no harm. Passenger service should not negatively impact freight rail operations— support policies that emphasize these goals
- Encourage rail industry standards and maintenance to keep rail competitive
- Establish uniform weight/ load (286,000 lbs.) capability across the whole system
- Identify and address critical network bottlenecks, including structures that have height/width/weight restrictions
- Implement state-of-the-art traffic control and safety systems, as appropriate for Class I and Class III; including Positive Train Control (PTC)
- Develop coordinated land use planning
- Maintain and enhance intermodal/multi-modal/transload facilities
- Explore ways to leverage other dollars (FHWA, TIGER, PPPs) for funding opportunities
- Open accessibility to intermodal sites

- Insure effective intermodal connectors—roadway connections between rail and major highways
- Coordinate efforts that may have regional impacts with neighboring states

Freight Rail Related Projects

- Move through freight rail traffic off of the Front Range
- Relocate the BNSF and UP intermodal facilities
- Upgrade short lines to handle 286,000 pound rail cars
- Partner with the short lines and Class I railroads in rural areas, on economic development, industrial parks/transload efforts
- Monitor Towner Line to preserve the rail corridor.
- Monitor other rail corridors that may be subject to abandonment
- Establish safety improvements at grade crossings
- Evaluate needs for grade separations and quiet zones
- Support property management activities (vegetation control, rail car storage, etc.) for unused or under-used rail corridors

Passenger Rail Goals

- Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Provide opportunities for travel options in addition to the use of private vehicles
- Develop an efficient and safe rail network
- Insure rail passenger service is competitive in the areas of travel time and cost
- Give priority to rail passenger service where feasible
- Be expandable to accommodate change in growth and technology
- Develop seamless rail connections
- Establish integration with interstate and national passenger rail lines
- Make rail travel accessible to all
- Protect existing service (Amtrak)
- Develop land use integration
- Economic development
- Preserve existing infrastructure—rail and right of way (ROW)
- Develop diverse, dedicated funding opportunities for passenger rail
- Provide executive leadership, starting with the governor’s office and seek both public and private leadership support
- Demonstrate need and provide economic value for government support

Passenger Rail Related Projects

- Tackle “low-hanging” fruit first
- Base projects on the plan’s vision
- Implement rail component from the North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Establish Amtrak’s Zephyr connection on Tennessee Pass
- Initiate rail passenger service from downtown Colorado Springs to downtown Denver on existing tracks

- Develop a Cheyenne to El Paso, Texas commuter rail line
- Resurrect the Pioneer line through Denver (using the BNSF tracks along the northern Front Range)
- Construct High Speed Rail (HSR) from Golden west to the mountains
- Complete FasTracks
- Join the Midwest HSR Coalition (Ohio, Kansas and Omaha, Nebraska)
- Re-build the double track from Palmer Lake to Fountain
- Move through freight rail traffic off of the Front Range
- Encourage Passenger rail stations in city centers
- Use Colorado Rail Cars on the Zephyr line going between Denver and Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction
- Purchase Tennessee Pass (fly tourists into Pueblo and put them on the train to the mountains)
- Develop marketing strategy to promote passenger rail
- Reclaim ROW from abandoned rail lines
- Develop Pueblo to Denver International Airport line (greenfield alignment through Colorado Springs and E470 corridor)

David Johnson (Roaring Fork Transit Authority) then provided the larger group an overview of the rail passenger related goals and projects and Pete Rickershauser with BNSF did the same for the freight rail related goals and projects.

The lists of projects will continue to be compiled over the course of the development of the SFPRP and will eventually be evaluated using a prioritization methodology to identify a short- and long-term program of rail related projects in the SFPRP.

Mehdi noted that the next meeting of the Stakeholder Group would be on August 9 from 1 – 4 p.m. in CDOT’s Auditorium.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP)
Stakeholder Group

Denver, CO – August 9, 2011

Mehdi Baziar, CDOT project manager for the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, (SFPRP) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Stakeholder Group (SG) for the SFPRP. Mehdi asked the 33 individuals at the meeting to make a self-introduction. Also, the 7 individuals calling in on the conference call also introduced themselves. Scanned copies of the sign-in sheets will be posted on the web site.

Following introductions, Mark Imhoff, Director of the Division of Transit and Rail, stated that the work of the Stakeholder Group was key to linking rail related issues into CDOT's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, especially as it relates to goals and objectives.

Larry Warner, Consultant's Project Manager, reviewed the highlights of the Stakeholder Group's May 4 meeting. At that meeting, the group broke into sub-groups, "Freight" and "Passenger", to develop a draft list of goals and projects related specifically to freight and passenger rail. The work of that Stakeholder Group at that meeting was later provided to the Steering Committee at their July 6th meeting and the Steering Committee developed a list of preliminary Goals for the Stakeholder Group to work with in developing "Objectives" at today's meeting. Larry indicated he was very pleased with the way the process was working; Stakeholder Group providing input to the Steering Committee to provide direction for the SFPRP with the Stakeholder Group continuing to provide feedback.

The next agenda item was a review of the preliminary goals developed by the Steering Committee. After a good period of discussion, it was recommended that Goal # 1 be changed by adding the word "rail" into the goal which would now read: "Create a balanced transportation system utilizing cooperative land use planning to create intermodal connectivity and accessibility without compromising existing rail service and infrastructure." Also, it was suggested that Goal # 5 be revised to read: "Utilize the efficiencies of freight and passenger rail to support communities and enhance economic growth throughout the state." There were no suggested changes to Goals 2, 3, and 4.

CRL's Roger Sherman, Public Involvement Consultant on the Consultant team, next provided the Stakeholder Group with an update related to the upcoming six workshops and open houses to be held around the state. Concerns were expressed related to the lack of meetings on the Front Range. Larry noted that the meeting in Denver was one hour from both Colorado Springs and Fort Collins and individuals on the west slope (Steamboat Springs as an example) were 3 1/2 to 4 hours from Denver or Grand Junction. Larry explained that the project scope originally called for 4 locations but that the sponsoring partners of these outreach meetings, Action 22 and Progressive 15 had each asked for an additional meeting location.

The PowerPoint presentation that will be presented at the workshops as well as copies of the presentation boards that will be available at the open houses will be placed on the SFPRP web site on Monday, August 15. Individuals that are not able to physically attend any of the upcoming meetings can still provide comments and input either by completing the “Comment Card” that will be also posted on the web site or by sending an e-mail to CDOT’s Project Manager, Mehdi Baziar at Mehdi.baziar@dot.state.co.us .

Consultant’s Randy Grauberger, Deputy Project Manager for the SFPRP, provided the group with a brief overview of the 20 + presentation boards that are being developed for the open houses. There were suggestions that the “Questions to be Asked” listed on the final board be revised. Based on this discussion, the questions will be shown as:

- What are the strengths of Colorado’s rail transportation system?
- What are the deficiencies of Colorado’s rail network?
- What improvements need to be made to Colorado’s rail infrastructure and rail service?
- What should be considered in prioritizing these improvements?

There was also a suggestion that a map be included on a presentation board that shows the various rates of population growth by county. There was also a question as to how many ‘quiet zones’ had been created in the state.

The next element of the meeting agenda were Breakout sessions to discuss and develop objectives linked to the five Rail Plan goals. Individuals had the opportunity to choose which breakout session to participate in. Those on the conference call participated with the “passenger” group.

Bob Felsburg then provided the larger group an overview of the rail passenger related objectives and Randy Grauberger did the same for the freight rail related objectives.

Randy Grauberger next provided the Group with an update on the various tasks in the development of the SFPRP. Additional comments were made concerning the lack of workshops and open house meetings being held along the Front Range.

Mehdi asked the attendees for their preference of meetings dates for the next Stakeholder Group meeting. It was determined that the next meeting of the Stakeholder Group would be on October 18 from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. in CDOT’s Auditorium.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP)
Stakeholder Group

CDOT Headquarters - Denver, CO – October 18, 2011

Mehdi Baziar, CDOT Project Manager for the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, (SFPRP) called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the third and final meeting of the Stakeholder Group (SG) for the SFPRP. Mehdi asked the 38 individuals attending to make self-introductions. Also, the individuals calling in on the conference call introduced themselves. Scanned copies of the sign-in sheets will be posted on the web site.

Following introductions, Mark Imhoff, Director of the Division of Transit and Rail, stated that the work of the Stakeholder Group was key to linking rail related issues into CDOT's 2040 Long Range Plan, especially as it relates to goals and objectives. He thanked all in attendance and welcomed newly appointed Transportation Commissioner Kathy Gilliland.

Mark next provided an update on the status of the Towner Line. The Towner Line's closing (sale of the Towner Line to the Victoria and Southern) took place on October 4. CDOT hopes the V&S will continue to provide rail service over the line and CDOT will monitor this situation. CDOT has the right of first refusal in the event that V&S decides to abandon and salvage the line.

Mark next discussed the status of Amtrak's Southwest Chief (Chicago to Los Angeles service). Amtrak has notified the states of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico about the potential of the "Chief" being re-routed off of its existing alignment (through Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad) to the BNSF's Transcon line which passes through the Oklahoma panhandle and Amarillo Texas. If this re-routing were to take place, the Southwest Chief would not travel through any portion of Colorado. The issue is that BNSF has re-routed the freight trains that used this line onto the Transcon route and therefore the Amtrak train is essentially the only train using the La Junta - Trinidad – Raton – Albuquerque route and Amtrak can't afford to make the required upgrades to this track. There will be discussions taking place to see if the three states might be able to help fund a portion of these infrastructure improvements.

Mark next discussed the status of two studies that are going to be developed in the Division of Transit and Rail. The first is the Colorado Inter-regional Connectivity Study. A consultant has been selected and contract negotiations are taking place. That Study will evaluate how potential high speed rail corridors identified in the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority's recent study will connect to RTD's FasTracks rail corridors. The second study will look at the alignment and technology issues related to deploying the Automated Guideway System (AGS) included in the recent I-70 EIS Record of Decision (ROD). The Request for Proposals for the AGS Study is expected to be released by November 1.

Roger Sherman of CRL Associates next provided a summary of the Workshops and Open Houses. The six meetings were attended by 170 individuals, and Roger discussed the various ‘themes’ discussed at these meetings:

- Retain all existing rail lines and services
- General shipper access
- Provide expanded intercity passenger service
 - Commuter rail
 - High speed rail
- Improved communications between the railroads and all interested parties
- Rail-related economic development
- Highway/rail crossing safety improvement
- Support for short line railroads
- Community/railroads co-existence
- Ensure that CDOT’s long-range transportation plan incorporates all aspects of rail
- Front Range freight rail relocation

Randy Grauberger, Parsons Brinckerhoff’s Deputy Project Manager for the SFPRP, next reiterated that this effort would culminate in the development of CDOT’s first state Rail Plan in many years. The Plan is to be a framework document that will be built upon in future updates. State rail plans being developed in many states that have existing state funded rail passenger programs (Connecticut, New York, California, etc.) will have considerably more detail in the passenger related sections of the plan than will this first Colorado State Rail Plan. This Plan will attempt to promote the initiation of publicly supported passenger rail service in the state.

Randy then provided the group with a handout showing the Rail Plan Goals and Objectives as revised by the Steering Committee at their September 13 meeting. The Stakeholder Group had originally developed draft Freight and Passenger Objectives for each of the 5 Rail Plan Goals at its August 9 meeting. The Steering Committee determined that many of the objectives developed specifically for freight and passenger rail were so similar that the Steering Committee grouped some of these into “General Objectives”.

The Stakeholder Group was asked to provide any comments on these Objectives to CDOT’s Mehdi Baziar by October 25. It was suggested that the Objectives will be finalized by the Steering Committee at its next meeting on December 2nd.

Randy next discussed the make-up of the proposed SFPRP in regard to the 8 Chapters that will be included. There was a good discussion related to how the SFPRP will be integrated into the CDOT Long Range Plan. It was suggested that this would be mentioned in Chapter 1 (Introduction and Vision) but the bulk of the discussion of the integration into the Long Range Plan would occur in Chapter 8 (What are our next Steps?). Other comments were to make sure the Rail Plan differentiated between “Short-term” and “Long-Range” investments.

Matt McDole of LS Gallegos next discussed the process to evaluate the freight and passenger rail projects being identified in the development of the SFPRP. Matt distributed copies of the project lists that have been received to date. The freight rail projects were grouped into 6 categories:

- Railroad/Public Safety projects
- Railroad Overpass/Underpass projects
- Corridor Preservation projects
- Short Line Railroad improvement projects
- Rail Facilities Relocation projects
- Railroad Capital projects

The passenger rail projects were grouped into 4 categories:

- Existing Passenger Service
- Proposed Passenger Service – Commuter Rail
- Proposed Passenger Service – Intercity Rail
- Proposed Passenger Service – High Speed Rail

It was noted that the Draft Plan needs to be explicit in terms of the definitions of “project categories” and “eligible projects”. For instance, any project currently under construction should not be included. The projects will be evaluated in terms of each being either a “short term investment” or “long range investment”. Again, definitions of “short term investment” and “long range investment” will be noted in the Draft Plan. *It was noted that additional projects for any of these categories could be submitted to CDOT by October 25 because the project evaluation process was scheduled to begin on October 26.*

Randy Grauberger next described the 10 evaluation criteria that had been selected to evaluate the projects:

- Economic Development
- Environmental Impacts / Benefits
- Capacity Enhancement / Congestion Relief
- Energy Efficiency
- Safety
- Existing Infrastructure Maintenance / Upgrades
- Mobility Options /Community Enhancement
- Local/Regional/Public Support
- Funding / Potential for Private Capital
- Cost Effectiveness

Each of these ten criteria had several descriptors that would help determine whether or not a project: 1) predominately addresses the criteria, 2) partially addresses the criteria, or 3) does not address the criteria.

The “Project Evaluation Working Group” will consist of eight individuals (CDOT’s Project. and Deputy Project Managers, three members from the consultant team, and three representatives of the Steering Committee/Stakeholder Group). They will each evaluate the projects individually

and then the full group will get together to determine an overall evaluation of the project, such as high, medium, or low categories.

The schedule for completing the State Rail Plan was next discussed. At a meeting on October 24 between the consultant team and CDOT project managers, it was determined that the Draft would be completed by the Consultants and provided to CDOT for comments in early January, provided to the Steering Committee and posted to the website for review by the Stakeholder Group in early February with the Final Plan expected to be completed before the end of March.

Under the last agenda item, Other Issues/Topics, it was noted the ColoRail is developing packages of Colorado vacations that will be promoted by Amtrak. Also, the Trails and Rails program was described, especially as to how it is effectively being implemented by local SE Colorado volunteers on the Southwest Chief. Also, it was suggested that the Passenger Rail Principles of the Class I railroads be included in the Plan in order to identify the importance of communications with the Class I railroads whenever their railroad properties are being considered for passenger rail service.

Mehdi Baziar thanked all of the participants for their hard work and involvement over the course of the last few months. Mark Imhoff also expressed his gratitude to the Stakeholder Group for their involvement in the development of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and stated he looked forward to working with them in the future.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Akron Workshop/Open House Meeting Notes – August 15, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- Why don't the users in the agricultural industry have any direct representation on the Steering Committee?
- What is the purpose of this study? Is it to secure future federal funding? Is it to identify State rail priorities?
- What is the difference between a Short Line railroad and a Class I railroad?
- Why do we have to utilize trucks vs. rail to move product in the state? Why is there such a dominance of trucking over rail?
- Why don't Class I railroads want small-car shippers on their lines?
- Why are all BNSF decisions made out of Fort Worth?
- Why can't we get any local customer service out of the railroads? The railroads charge the shippers for demurrage when they are late getting their cars loaded, but the railroads aren't accountable for late deliveries of empty cars to the shippers.
- Why can't the Class I railroads operate on schedule?
- Why does Colorado have less Short Line railroad mileage than most states?
- Will this plan create new money for rail funding?
- Will the railroads use this study as a planning tool?
- Will they follow the study's recommendations?
- Who is responsible for the deteriorated siding condition at the elevator in Otis? Who owns these siding tracks? Are they leased? Who is responsible for maintaining them; the owner or lessee? In general, who is responsible for the condition of the tracks?
- What is the status of R2C2?

Comments:

- CDOT tends to have a history of not including private interests on committees such as the rail Plan Steering Committee and chooses governmental entities. The end users should have a representative.
- Key theme of almost all comments was the need to improve shipper access. "It is not easy to be an end user."
- Every rail car (grain) removes four trucks from the highways.
- It was difficult getting the BNSF to approve of a new double loop track project in Morgan County because of the amount of coal train traffic between Brush and Denver.
- From an economic development perspective, it is difficult to attract new business because the Class Is said they would not accommodate the business.

- It would be very useful to have a publicly supported program to build team tracks (where various shippers can have access to railroad freight service).
- The Class I railroads make it impossible to ship Colorado products by rail. Class I railroads often do not engage in conversations even if local representatives offer to pay for improvements.
- Project team offered to share these concerns with Class I representatives on the Steering Committee.
- We need to change the conversation with the Class Is to “how do we create a joint investment/partnership so we can mutually benefit?”
- Too many single tracks (lack of double tracks in the state) are problematic for rail service in Colorado.
- State Rail Plans do not dictate to Class I’s especially if the state isn’t offering a financial partnership.
- Make it clear that there is potential commuter rail passenger service in the North I-25 corridor.
- Matt Cheroutes from the Governor’s Economic Development Office (and a State Rail Plan Steering Committee member) will be encouraged to convene a meeting of various economic development leaders and the railroads to look at rail and development opportunities.
- Some industrial sidings need to have capacity for 20 cars instead of 15 cars.
- The improvement of the roadway surface at highway/rail at-grade crossings would be a great improvement to safety.
- CDOT is very “Denver-centric” when it comes to transit planning. 47% of the Loveland community commutes along the US 287-corridor. Most residents do not work in Denver. We want to work with BNSF to promote commuter rail on the existing north/south BNSF line from Longmont to Fort Collins and possibly to Cheyenne.
- The BNSF’s demurrage rules are unfair. Empty rail cars, that should be delivered by BNSF on a Tuesday or Thursday and that are required by the demurrage rules to be filled within 24 hours, are often delivered on a Friday evening; farmers are not typically working Saturday - Sunday and return on a Monday with \$150 in demurrage (\$75/day).
- A county commissioner suggested that the COT (Certification of Transportation) program, a process that allows agricultural product customers to bid for covered grain hopper cars according to a weekly schedule, should be expanded. All COTs provide customers with a car placement date guarantee. Car reservations are awarded to the highest bidders and require a nominal pre-payment.
- If a north/south rail bypass (similar to R2C2) is ever built in eastern Colorado to reduce Front Range coal traffic, an east-west extension of the UP along US 36 should be built into eastern Washington County connecting to that line to facilitate a unit grain loading facility in eastern Washington County.
- The new industrial park south of Cheyenne, WY, is taking proposed businesses from NE Colorado communities.
- A new state-of-the-art rail passenger train should be built into Colorado’s mountains from the Denver area (or Denver International Airport) to enhance the state’s tourism.

Limon Workshop/Open House Meeting Notes – August 17, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- What is the status of R2C2? How will that study be incorporated into the State Rail Plan?
- Why can't we get any local customer service out of the railroads? Wheat in the Limon area goes to either Byers or Cheyenne Wells because the railroads refuse to provide cars to a 50-car elevator built just to the west of Limon on the UP.
- Can CDOT give contractors an incentive for shipping aggregates by rail? This would save a considerable amount of wear on the highways and also support Colorado's Short Line railroads.

Comments:

- Since CDOT has put any future study efforts related to R2C2 "on-hold", there should be no reference to that study in the State Rail Plan. A Lincoln County Commissioner went on record as opposing the Rail Relocation Implementation Study.
- In the 1980s the railroads stated they didn't want to lose the higher tariff they receive (approximately \$.50 per bushel) from shipping wheat east or west out of eastern Colorado before it can go either north (to the Pacific Northwest ports) or south (to the Gulf ports).
- The state (CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail) should be in a better position to prevent future rail line abandonments than the Department of Highways was in 1981 when the Rock Island line between Limon and Colorado Springs was lost. The state cannot afford to lose more rail lines.
- Taking care of the Short Line railroads is very important, but they must be able to connect to the Class I railroads.
- CDOT should have a program like the Short Line Railroad Assistance Program in Kansas to aide Colorado's Short Line railroads, using low interest loans or grants to upgrade deficient rail tracks and bridges.
- At one time there was an idea proposed to build a grain terminal at Las Animas, but there was concern with its impacts on the coal being moved on that line. Maybe the time has come to reconsider this idea.
- There is a great market for Colorado millet to be exported to Mexico in 15-car shipments. How can the state help make that happen?
- The Towner rail corridor could perhaps be utilized as a utility corridor to transmit electricity generated by wind farms in eastern Colorado. Or, possibly a water transmission line in the future carrying Missouri River water to the Colorado Front Range. Maximize the use of existing rail corridors as broader transportation corridors.
- Concern over possible "takings" of private property and related requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act as it relates to property acquisition.
- There is considerable concern that the Victoria and Southern railway will scrap the Towner Line once they acquire it from CDOT later this year. Towner line lease documents for shippers in

Towner, Colorado, came from the UP, not from the rail operator from Towner east into Kansas (the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad).

- Both Limon and Hugo each only have one major rail/roadway crossing, which will become an issue if rail traffic increases. Any grade separation would need to be relocated to a site away from the downtown area to avoid major disruption of the community.
- Key theme of almost all comments was the need to improve shipper access. “It is not easy to be an end user.”
- Red winter wheat used to be the major crop in SE Colorado. Now white wheat is becoming a major commodity as well for export to SE Asia.
- Millet, used primarily for bird seed in the US market, is being shipped in hopper cars to LA ports where it is being placed in containers for shipment to Asia for human consumption. 60% of the US millet market is grown in NE Colorado.
- There needs to be more communication between county officials and the railroads related to potential removal/maintenance of private railroad/roadway crossings.
- The former issues of the State Highway 71 crossing west of Limon being blocked due to UP’s switching movements with the Kyle Railroad have improved in recent months.
- The State Rail Plan should include Best Practices regarding how communities and railroads can co-exist (Quiet Zones, etc.).
- By working with small companies, the railroads would benefit by taking traffic out of congested areas.
- The infrastructure for sidings as currently required by Class I railroads is cost prohibitive.
- The quality of surface conditions at at-grade crossings is a concern.
- The movement of ethanol by rail raises the need for consideration of safety.

Denver Workshop/Open House Meeting Notes – August 23, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- How will energy impacts be integrated into the plan?
- Will this study educate the public on the safety aspects of various modes?
- Will this plan help identify state initiatives or funding sources for identified improvements?
- Will we perform an analysis to show how modes can complement one another and show how much transit improvements cost vs. highway improvements?
- What is the best way to deliver comments? What is the timing for commenting?
- What is the travel demand in the state? Does this study have a demand modeling component? How are we addressing these needs?
- Where are potential intercity passenger rail routes? How do we address the demand?
- How can we shift freight delivery to rail to free up highway capacity and improve environmental impacts?
- How will priorities be determined in this type of “high level” study?
- Will this study identify investments in rail that can shift freight off the roadways?
- How do we consider the future of population growth 30 years from now to determine high priority corridors and discuss appropriate transportation modes to accommodate those projections?
- Will we deal with bottlenecks in this plan so that we will be eligible for federal, state or private dollars?
- Can our train horns become quieter? Can we restrict using horns at night?
- How do we have conversations with the railroads to engage them in the process?
- What are “best practices” in dealing with railroads and developing relationships with them?

Comments:

- Bus and rail travel are safer modes than automobiles. Freight rail is safer than truck transport. We need to educate the public on the safety of rail vs. auto use.
- CDOT will be initiating two studies focusing on passenger rail transportation in the near future: The Connectivity Study and the Automated Guideway System (AGS) Study.
- There appears to be a gap in the study as it relates to analyzing potential passenger rail service.
- Engage metro-area elected officials such as RTD and DRCOG.
- The costs of dealing with railroads are always high.
- Put significant emphasis on I-25 North and other traditional commuter rail services and not just on high speed rail.
- This study needs to incorporate statistics on highway fatalities and injuries including those involving bicycles.
- CDOT’s website is too complicated and includes too much information.
- We should look at passenger rail, bus and auto needs from a statewide perspective and identify those services on one map.

- Colorado should come up with a list of priorities (from small improvements to major projects) to take advantage of federal dollars when they become available.
- Castle Rock’s issues generally lie within highway/rail conflicts. They also experience quality of life impacts due to noise. There is not enough funding for quiet zones. The southbound line can have long backups and trains are stopped through the middle of residential areas.
- Arvada also experiences quality of life issues due to noise.
- Economic development officials should inventory the different businesses served by rail to help the railroads predict future growth. The Rail Plan should encourage meetings between elected officials and economic development people to discuss opportunities. We need to better understand how to work with the railroads and understand the economic values rail brings.
- Loveland is divided by two rail lines, so their impacts are great. They have quiet zone issues and issues with utilities in the rail right-of-way.
- Locals do not have strong relationships with freight rail operators in their communities. There is a lack of communication between communities and railroads.
- BNSF would like to see state-sanctioned community planning guidelines to help guide local developments surrounding rail lines.
- Make sure the SFPRP identifies potential right-of-ways that might be abandoned, so we can take advantage of potential intercity passenger rail and interstate rail opportunities.
- The study should look at Loveland’s Aerospace Clean Energy (ACE) project for potential rail service.
- Consider demand where people and freight meet. Consult other studies and population forecasts to understand future demand.
- Leadville and Salida will need better transit connections to future rail passenger service.
- Reduced fuel use, or energy efficiency should be a project evaluation criterion of the SFPRP.
- A study has shown that a primary indicator of passenger demand is “what people want”.

Grand Junction Workshop/ Open House Meeting Notes – August 25, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- How would a community add additional rail-served industrial parks?
- What would it take to re-instate rail passenger service from Grand Junction to Aspen and Pueblo?
- Are there any good examples of community transloading facilities in Colorado?

Comments:

- The Grand Junction area needs additional opportunities for rail-served industry. There are only six parcels available where rail access is available. Five of those 6 parcels are in an existing industrial park within the town of Fruita.
- Team tracks could be a solution in the Grand Junction area. A team track is where several customers jointly utilize the same loading/unloading facility. This greatly reduces capital expenses associated with putting in the rail infrastructure as well as ongoing track maintenance costs.
- The town of Rifle has 142 acres available for a rail-served industrial park that is adjacent to the UP's Denver to Grand Junction mainline. The town would like a rail spur line to provide rail service to the park.
- The UP could use additional double tracks or passing sidings.
- Because of a lack of capacity on the UP's Denver to Grand Junction line, Amtrak is usually very much behind schedule.
- The at-grade rail crossing (near Loma, CO) serving the McClane Canyon coal mine is dangerous and needs to be improved.
- An existing crossing west of Rifle (serving the water treatment plant) that is currently protected by active warning devices would need to be grade separated if rail volumes increase greatly in the future due to the development of the Energy Innovation Park.
- The population of Rifle is expected to surpass Glenwood Springs in the near future.
- Both Grand Junction and Rifle would support high speed rail service connecting to Denver.
- Shell continues to have an operating oil shale research facility and its employees live in the Rifle area. If oil shale again becomes a viable energy source, Rifle will boom.
- The climate in Rifle is ideal for growing switch grass. There is currently a switch grass research facility in Rifle and this could become a key location for future switch grass ethanol technology.
- Halliburton has located three silos for varying types of "frac" sand near Cameo (east of Grand Junction).
- Major commodities moved by UP in Western Colorado are coal, "frac" sand, drilling pipe, and magnesium (mag) chloride.
- The Cameo electricity generating station is being de-commissioned but may become the site for another rail-served industry in the future.
- UP's goal for serving the North Fork of the Gunnison River coal mines in Gunnison and Delta counties is 120 trains per month (approximately 4 loaded trains per day).

- The quality of the infrastructure of the UP and other Class I railroads at this time is probably at an all time high.
- UP employs 43,000 people nationally and has many individuals very near retirement age. This means there will be good employment opportunities with the UP in the state.
- Additional freight capacity in the US would benefit the ailing economy.
- The Swan Ranch, a new industrial park being developed south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, will be served by both BNSF and UP, and is a good example to be modeled.
- The crossing on Grand Avenue in the vicinity of I-70B represents a safety issue that needs to be improved.
- Continuation of the rail system was identified as one of the most important outcomes of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.
- The UP representatives expressed a desire for better communication among all parties interested in rail.

La Junta Workshop/ Open House Meeting Notes – August 31, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- Who is responsible for maintaining the vegetation along the Towner Line?
- What is the status of the state's lease of the Towner Line and what will occur after December 2011 if the lease/purchase does not happen?
- Is it correct that the V&S has added a surcharge to any rail cars moved on the Towner Line?
- Does the UP railroad have any current involvement with the Towner Line?
- If the Towner Line is scrapped will the ownership revert to adjacent land owners?
- If CDOT buys back the Towner Line, will the state re-bid for operations on that line?
- How will urban vs. rural projects be prioritized in the State Rail Plan?
- Does the UP railroad have any current plans to re-open the Tennessee Pass route?

Comments:

- The Rail Plan should oppose movement of the Amtrak Southwest Chief from the La Junta – Trinidad line. The State of Colorado should create a 3-state coalition (Colorado, Kansas and New Mexico) to save this line.
- The new Governor of New Mexico had a campaign pledge to get Amtrak off of the Raton Pass route.
- The only other use of that line in Colorado is the US Army's shipments of equipment to Pinon Canyon.
- The proposed relocation of freight rail from the Front Range to the eastern plains should not be a project that is identified in the State Rail Plan.
- The overgrown vegetation along the Towner Line is causing a serious fire hazard.
- The poor condition of the at-grade rail crossings on the Towner Line is also hazardous.
- White wheat and millet are agricultural products that are now very much in demand and these products could increase the value of and need for rail service on the Towner Line.
- Kiowa County has lost \$6.3 million in tax revenues in the 12 years since the Towner Line was sold to the state. Crowley County has lost a proportionate amount during that time period as well.
- The Surface Transportation Board would be more likely to approve an abandonment of a rail line if there has been no service for a 2-year period.
- The Towner Line right of way could possibly be used for transmission lines for wind farms or water pipelines.

- Rail lines should be saved in Colorado because railroads are more energy efficient than other modes of transportation, they are environmentally friendly, they alleviate highway congestion and associated wear on the highways, and have a better safety record in shipping hazardous materials.
- The State Rail Plan should address programs such as those in Kansas that benefit Short Line railroads such as the Kansas Short Line Assistance Programs (low interest loans and grants) and also the use of Port Authorities.
- The state should see that all railroad infrastructure is maintained.
- The State of Kansas is implementing a \$15 million project on the Cimarron Valley Railroad for rail, ties and ballast upgrades. This project costs approximately \$750,000 to \$1 million per mile.
- The lack of a connection of the Cimarron Valley Railroad with the BNSF at Springfield isn't critical. The Cimarron Valley Railroad does connect to the BNSF at Boise City, OK and Dodge City, Ks.

Alamosa Workshop/ Open House Meeting Notes – September 1, 2011

Please provide us with your comments by October 14, 2011. Comments received at the Open Houses and Workshops, and via email and letters will be considered and used to help refine goals, objectives and priorities. CDOT does not intend to address each comment individually but all comments will be considered, included in the appendix of the report with a response provided as to how information was considered in the course of the study.

Questions:

- Would re-opening freight rail service into the Leadville area eliminate future truck traffic from the proposed re-opening of the Climax mine for the proposed mining of gold and silver?
- Will the State Rail Plan discuss the future of the Tennessee Pass rail line that has been out of service since 1998?
- Will the State Rail Plan prioritize rural projects differently than urban projects?

Comments:

- Short Line railroads are a very important sector of the San Luis Valley's economy. If the Short Lines lose business, the entire Valley suffers. Short Line railroads provide 400 jobs in the San Luis Valley.
- The State Rail Plan should propose programs that strengthen short line railroads whenever possible. Stronger Short Lines railroads attract even better businesses to the San Luis Valley.
- The connection between the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad and the UP Railroad at Walsenburg needs to be improved.
- The shipments of potatoes, grain and perlite make money for the Short Line railroads. Increased freight volume is what will keep the Short Lines viable. The tourism services create considerable goodwill but are not profitable.
- There is considerable excess capacity into the San Luis Valley for additional business.
- The State Rail Plan should oppose the removal of the Amtrak Southwest Chief from Colorado as a significant number of jobs in La Junta and Trinidad would be lost. Amtrak has estimated that it may take \$200 million for that route (Newton, KS; La Junta; Trinidad; and Albuquerque) to be upgraded and saved as an Amtrak route. A three-state meeting with Amtrak is anticipated to be held in the near future.
- If the Towner Line is sold and scrapped, the revenues should be utilized for programs to improve other Short Lines in the state.
- The Sand Dunes National Park and the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad should create a steam engine narrow gauge train providing access to the Park. This would be a great economic development effort that would benefit the San Luis Valley.
- A "dinner train" between Alamosa and Creede would generate additional tourism in the San Luis Valley.

- Re-instating regularly scheduled rail passenger service between Alamosa and Pueblo would benefit the San Luis Valley.
- The San Luis Central Railroad would benefit greatly if they could improve their refrigerated car fleet. New state-of-the-art refrigerated rail cars, owned by the UP and BNSF, cost approximately \$250,000 each.
- One semi-truck causes damage to roads and bridges equal to 5,000 passenger vehicles.
- Railroads are more energy efficient than trucks. A round trip San Luis and Rio Grande freight train between Alamosa and Walsenburg uses only 400 gallons of diesel fuel. Trucks moving the equivalent amount of freight would use considerably more fuel.
- The City of Alamosa should consider sharing the railroad right-of-way through Alamosa for widening US 160 through the city. Different concepts related to improving this highway have been evaluated for the last 20 + years.
- The State Rail Plan needs to be flexible enough to respond to “good ideas” that may come along.
- There should be ways in which citizens can contribute to transportation improvements if they believe in the projects.
- The San Luis Valley is discussing building a “Super Shed”. This concept would be similar to the Yakima Valley in Washington where the agricultural harvest is hauled/stored and consolidated in one area to provide more efficient transportation. It would be critical that such a concept in the San Luis Valley have access to the Short Line rail network.
- The State Rail Plan should be a corridor-based plan, not just a project-focused plan.
- There is potential for new mining operations in the vicinity of Creede which could enhance Short Line business.

Meeting Notes

BNSF Railway – Fort Worth, TX - May 5, 2011

1 – 4 p.m.

Meeting Attendees

BNSF Railway

Aaron Hegeman -	Group Director, Public Private Partnerships
Jim Nadalini -	Director- MidCon Corridor, Public Private Partnerships
Sarod Dhuru -	Manager, Public Funding

CDOT Project Team

Mehdi Baziar -	CDOT Project Manager
Wendy Wallach -	CDOT Deputy Project Manager
Randy Grauberger -	Parsons Brinckerhoff Deputy Project Manager

Following introductions, Randy Grauberger provided a brief description of the February 24th “Railroad Kick-off” meeting in Denver, attended by BNSF’s Jim Nadalini. At that meeting, the Class I railroads each suggested face-to-face meeting with individual railroads in Fort Worth and Omaha between the railroads, CDOT and the consultant team to discuss information related to the data requests and other information specific to each railroad.

Sarod Dhuru stated that he was in the process of compiling the data requested by CDOT and that there did not appear to be any elements of the data that BNSF would be unable to provide. Much of the data would be provided on Excel spreadsheets and PDF maps, and not in GIS format. GIS information requires data sharing agreements which BNSF is not prepared to do at this time. He indicated that a disk will be provided the week of 5/9/2011.

Aaron Hegeman next distributed copies of several materials/brochures that described the following:

- An overview of the BNSF’s profile for the state of Colorado. This document included several of the items that were requested on the CDOT data request forms.
- Descriptions of each of the BNSF’s three “Corridors of Commerce”; the TransCon Corridor, the MidCon Corridor, and the Great Northern Corridor.
- A brochure describing BNSF’s Public Private Partnerships principles
- A brochure entitled “A Brief Introduction to BNSF Railway Company”

1. Aaron asked about the status of the effort to create a Vision for Rail in Colorado. Randy noted that at the Steering Committee meeting on April 20th, a Draft Vision had been developed by the Committee. Randy provided a copy of the Draft Vision to the BNSF. He indicated that the Stakeholder Group met on May 4 and didn't have any substantive changes to the Draft Vision. Mehdi Bazar suggested that the Steering Committee was expected to adopt the Vision at its July 6th meeting.

Aaron commented that the Draft Vision specifically mentioned "public-private partnerships". He suggested that BNSF would like to see the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP) contain an outcome based analysis of what may come out of a public-private partnership. Wendy Wallach suggested "outcome oriented instead of project oriented". BNSF noted the vision should provide a framework for what the State Rail Plan aims to accomplish and how it can benefit the state. Goals and objectives could be measured by employing performance metrics. Some examples given were benefits associated with eliminated grade crossing delays, benefits associated with additional passenger capacity from removing freight trains, public benefits of reduced air pollution and noise, etc. Thresholds and performance measures could be employed to identify and prioritize projects that comply with the overall vision.

2. The group discussed the types of benefits that were considered to be a part of the proposed Eastern Plains Rail Bypass. Aaron asked what the Bypass was supposed to accomplish and Randy said that the previous CDOR Executive Director stated that CDOT's involvement related to investigating the feasibility of acquiring additional capacity to move people in the I-25 corridor. (relocating the "through" rail freight traffic to a rail alignment east of the metropolitan areas of the Front Range by instituting rail passenger service on the existing north/south front range rail lines between Denver and Pueblo). However, since the Rail Relocation Study was completed in 2009, the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority's High Speed Rail Feasibility Study recommended a Greenfield alignment for passenger rail between Denver and Colorado Springs instead of using existing tracks.

Wendy stated that CDOT's current administration's policy in regard to the eastern bypass was that "if a railroad or communities came to CDOT with a proposal for such a project, that CDOT would partner with them. However, CDOT would not be "taking the lead" on such a project to relocate the railroads off of the Front Range.

3. BNSF also indicated they would be interested in knowing the state's goals surrounding rail operations, passenger rail capacity, noise, safety, fuel consumption, etc. BNSF asked if there would be any benefit to a bypass related to grade crossing improvements and a savings in not needing to build grade separations. Mehdi described CDOT's Section 130 (federal grade crossing improvement funding) program and the limited funding for that program.

Randy suggested the State Rail Plan will include an analysis of these at-grade rail highway crossings in the state that might warrant grade separation at some point in the future. Many of the crossings identified having an exposure factor of 75,000 or greater in the original 1979 Colorado State Rail Plan have been built. However, with the population of Colorado continuing to grow along with the projected doubling of freight traffic in the future, additional grade separations are likely to be warranted. BNSF

encouraged the SFPRP to include this type of analysis because BNSF has partnered with other states for TIGER grant applications for such projects.

BNSF requested CDOT provide future CDOT highway projects in CDOT's Long Range Plans that may affect rail lines or require underpasses or overpasses. One example was a \$1.2 billion project in Council Bluffs where FHWA funding was utilized that involved rail infrastructure relocation that benefited both the state and the railroad. Randy stated that a similar project occurred in Oklahoma City when the relocation of I-40 was combined with railroad relocation that benefited both the state and railroads.

4. Randy Grauberger asked BNSF if there were any long range plans for the railroad in Colorado. Jim Nadalini described BNSF's "Corridors of Commerce". These major corridors are receiving emphasis for capital funding within BNSF. Aaron stated that BNSF's capital funding program for 2011 is 3.5 billion. Of that amount, \$300 million will be spent by BNSF making safety improvements related to an unfunded federal mandate: Positive Train Control (PTC). At this time, there are no major plans for Colorado but Colorado does receive some benefits from the "Corridors of Commerce".

Randy said that the consultant team would be initiating conversations with the State's short line railroads regarding the required data requests for the SFPRP. Aaron indicated that the BNSF's short Line contact is Mark Schmidt. Randy mentioned that the Cimarron valley railroad in extreme Southeast Colorado had recently suffered \$5 million in structure damage from a large prairie fire and that all of their traffic could NOT connect to the BNSF at Springfield since the switch with BNSF east of Springfield had been removed by BNSF.

Sarod noted Mark Schmidt would be contacted about this situation.

5. Randy Asked if there were any current plans to relocate BNSF's intermodal facility from its current location in North Denver. He was aware that BVNSF had looked at location in recent years in the Commerce City and Hudson areas. Aaron said he wasn't aware of any plans but would check on this possibility. He wanted to know how many lifts took place at the BNSF and UP intermodal facilities in the Denver area. Randy said he didn't know, but that this information would be included in the SFPRP. Aaron asked if the state had done any studies to see what the benefit to the state would be from relocating either or both of the intermodal facilities. Mehdi stated that there had been a recent study completed evaluating the feasibility of relocating UP's intermodal facility to a location between Brighton and Fort Lupton. It was not know if the study was done by the railroad or the communities.

BNSF suggested the rail Plan address supply and demand for railroad services, identify where resources are limited and consider the future increasing demand for freight transportation. In addition, look at public benefits associated with rail including livability, economic development, and affordability. The BNSF asked if the State Office of Economic Development was on the Steering Committee and suggested that it may be a good addition. CDOT agreed and invitation should be extended.

6. In closing, it was determined that BNSF would:

- Complete its effort to finalize the data being requested by CDOT

- Determine the potential to re-install the switch with Cimarron Valley Railroad east of Springfield
- Determine if there any plans to double track or extend sidings between Palmer Lake and Fountain
- Check on the status of relocating BNSF's north Denver intermodal facility

CDOT agreed to extend an invitation to the State Office of Economic Development to be a member of the Steering Committee.

PB would discuss at a Project team meeting on May 13 the possibility of utilizing “outcome oriented analysis” as suggested by BNSF.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Notes

Union Pacific Railroad and CDOT Rail Planning Team

Omaha, Nebraska, May 16, 2011

Meeting Attendees

UP Railroad

Joe Arbona -	General Director – Policy and Partnerships
Grant Janke	General Director – Network Planning
Joe Bateman	Vice President – Public Affairs – Northern Region
Mark Bristol	General Director - Network Planning
Steve McLaws	General Director – SL and Industrial Development
Candace Orr	Manager – Short Lines
Huy Pham	General Director – Capacity Analysis
Kurt Zalar (via phone)	General Superintendent - Denver Service Unit
Dick Hartman (via phone)	Director - Public Affairs

CDOT Project Team

Mehdi Baziar -	CDOT Project Manager
Wendy Wallach -	CDOT Deputy Project Manager
Randy Grauberger -	Parsons Brinckerhoff Deputy Project Manager

Following introductions, Randy Grauberger provided a brief description of the February 24th “Railroad Kick-off” meeting in Denver, attended by UP’s Grant Janke and Dick Hartman. At that meeting, the Class I railroads each suggested face-to-face meeting with individual railroads in Fort Worth and Omaha between the railroads, CDOT and the consultant team to discuss information related to the data requests and other information specific to each railroad.

Randy next provided a brief overview of the Scope of Work for the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. He provided some detail related to the 12 tasks in the scope of work. The study is expected to be completed in January, 2012. Randy then briefly discussed the Steering Committee and the Stakeholder Groups meetings that were held in April and May of 2011.

Joe Arbona next described an overview of the UP's operations in Colorado. Joe indicated that UP is the largest railroad in the country serving 23 states primarily west of Mississippi. There are 1535 main line miles in the state. He indicated that there are 1,294 employees in Colorado with an annual payroll of \$106 million dollars. Kurt Zalar stated that UP is seeing growth in coal, wind energy and natural gas related traffic, and grain traffic moving on the Kansas Pacific (KP) branch in eastern Colorado.

Nationally, the UP serves 25,000 customers, and has a payroll of \$3.6 billion. The UP's capital spending in 2010 was \$2.5 billion and is expected to rise to \$3.3 billion in 2011. UP has approximately 3000 employees at the Dodge Street location in Omaha with another 1000 at the Harriman location and another 1000 in Council Bluffs.

Randy asked how many annual lifts occurred at UP's northeast Denver intermodal facility. That figure was not available but UP noted that there are three inbound and three outbound intermodal trains per day at the Denver facility and intermodal traffic is increasing. According to UP, the Lowes facility in Cheyenne, WY is a large user of that intermodal facility.

Randy said that he would provide draft meeting notes for today's meeting and provide them to Dick Hartman to distribute for UP's review prior to CDOT providing these meeting notes to its Rail Plan Steering Committee and Stakeholder Group.

Kurt Zalar next provided information related to some upcoming maintenance and rehabilitation work taking place in Colorado in 2011. A tie replacement program (75,000 ties) will take place along the North Fork Branch with the next location to receive ties being the Greeley subdivision. A major rail rehabilitation project will take place on the KP between Denver and Sharon Springs in 2011.

DTR's Wendy Wallach next described the new Division of Transit and Rail. She also noted that the Division will soon be releasing a Request for Proposals for a \$2 million Interregional Rail Connectivity Study which will then be followed up by an I-70 Mountain Corridor Automated Guideway System (AGS) Alignment and Technology Study.

Dick Hartman asked if CDOT was going to take a position on legislation promoting higher truck weights and longer truck lengths. Dick noted that the Colorado short line railroads had sent a letter to CDOT urging CDOT to oppose the higher weights and lengths. Wendy indicated that she was aware of a series of e-mails that had been circulating on this subject but didn't know what policy position CDOT's Executive Director (Don Hunt) or Chief Engineer would be taking. Wendy will follow up and let everyone know what CDOT's position will be on this subject.

Dick Hartman next described the Colorado Public Utilities latest proposal to reduce the use of coal in 4 Colorado coal fired power plants. Such a proposal would seriously impact UP's coal movement from west central and northwest Colorado. UP has recently made major investments in these lines and services and believes the state should consider the impact of UP's "stranded assets" in the event there is a major change in the fuel used at these power plants.

With regard to Tennessee Pass, UP indicated that they do not have any near term plan and will be evaluating their options. UP also indicated that as part of the State Rail Plan, deficient bridges needs to be looked at. Randy Grauberger noted that the negative economic impact to the coal mining communities in Delta, Gunnison, Routt and Moffat counties should also be taken into account. UP next discussed their Annual Operating Plan and discussed the freight rail projects that could be included in the Colorado Rail Plan. Huy Pham described the process of working with the Marketing and Network operations staff at UP to see what future capacity needs might be. UP's Long Range Plan covers the next 5 years. The map provided by UP shows 14 projects and they are listed numerically according to UP's relative priorities.

Joe Bateman stressed that technological advancements in locomotives and the economics of freight railroading are creating longer freight trains. This creates a new series of issues related to the need for longer sidings and passing tracks. This may also require revisiting the need for rail/highway grade separations to keep the trains from blocking at-grade crossings in cities and communities.

The density map that was shown by UP should not be shown in the State Rail Plan for competitive reasons. Instead, the UP would prefer that the plan identify rail tonnages in increments of 5 million gross tons.

UP's share of the rail industry's requirements (\$10 billion nationally) to install Positive Train Control (PTC) is somewhere in the \$1 – 2 billion range. The railroads are encouraging the FRA to NOT use 2008 routes used for TIH (Toxic by Inhalation) movement, but rather the 2015 routes as the basis for requiring PTC since current routings have changed. Current legislation requires PTC to be in place by 2015.

Joe Arbona then briefly discussed the UP's Commuter Access Principles covering service, safety, liability, capacity and compensation issues, which he provided in writing to the group. UP wishes to preserve existing capacity for freight growth, and would look to any public agency to fund the incremental capacity needed for passenger operations. The next, more expensive capacity is to be included at the outset, leaving UP cost-neutral when it needs to invest in additional freight capacity. He added that the agency would cover all costs of developing the capacity plan (based on UP's actual cost structures and operating conditions), including UP's time and resources. UP wants to maintain dispatching control and control of track and signal maintenance. Joe noted that no curfews or restricted hours of freight operation would be permitted. UP will not accept additional liability not existing "but for" the new passenger service, requiring state or entity requesting service to take all additional liability and a minimum of \$200 Million in insurance coverage. Use of UP assets would require a reasonable return on investment. Passenger vehicles would have to meet FRA requirements. UP is to be made whole if passenger service increases UP's tax liabilities.

He also mentioned UP's five Partnership Principles. UP wants partnerships to be voluntary. Public entities must pay for public benefits not levied directly or indirectly from railroad or shipper sources. UP would pay for private benefits. UP would coordinate project planning and provides reasonable input. Public entities must not spend public funds to alter the existing competitive relationships between the railroads.

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Agriculture Stakeholders Meetings – August 3 and August 29, 2011

August 3 Meeting –

CDOT State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order and thanked every for attending and participating. After self introductions, (copy of sign-in sheets attached) CDOT Executive Director Don Hunt welcomed all in attendance to CDOT and expressed how critical the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP) was to the Department of Transportation.

Agriculture Commissioner John Salazar thanked CDOT for hosting this meeting to gain agricultural related input on the SFPRP. Commissioner Salazar noted that 905,000 trucks and 32,000 rail cars are moved through the state annually transporting agricultural products and goods.

Randy Grauberger, Parson Brinckerhoff's Deputy Project Manager for the SFPRP, provided a brief made a PowerPoint presentation highlighting state rail planning requirements and the consultant team's scope of work in completing this 12 month long project for CDOT.

Evan Kirby, of Felsburg Holt and Ullevig, a sub-consultant on the project, next provided an overview of several pieces of data regarding the transportation of freight by rail in Colorado. Evan noted that CDOT has received the Waybill sample data from the Surface transportation Board and the consultant team will be evaluating that data in the near future as it related to rail freight movement in and through the state.

Following these two presentations the meeting was opened up to a discussion of the issues related to the rail transportation network in the state as well as rail related service issues. The following comments were made:

- Industry sidings to agricultural facilities are not adequate. Many are in a state of disrepair.
- There need to be more shuttle loading (unit train capability) grain elevators in the State. The railroads need some incentives to load 54 car trains instead of focusing on 110+ car unit grain trains.
- Congestion in the Denver yards caused by coal train traffic is hampering grain traffic in the Commerce City area. Relocating the coal train traffic would benefit these Commerce City grain facilities. The Union Pacific Railroad (UP) refuses to serve these elevators.
- Locations of the shuttle loader facilities in Colorado can be found on the web-sites of the railroads. A new shuttle loading facility costs approximately \$18 million.
- There are \$300 million in inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, etc) required by the agricultural industry in Colorado.
- The dairy industry is a \$500 million business in Colorado and that figure is expected to grow to \$800 million in the near future due to the new Leprino cheese plant in the Greely area. An additional 50,000 to 60,000 head of dairy cattle will be necessary in the state to

- supply this cheese facility with milk. This will require significant amount of corn, soy bean meal and cotton seed oil to be shipped into the state by rail to supply these dairy farms.
- There is an issue with rail shipping rates for those shippers that are captive to one Class I railroad.
 - Car supply is a problem at times especially during the peak of a bumper harvest.
 - Smaller elevators are actually trucking their grain to shuttle loaders at various locations in the state.
 - The State of Colorado will probably receive a \$9 million payment for selling the Towner Line to the Victoria and Southern Railroad. If the railroad at some point determines that it wants to salvage that line, the State has a right-of-first refusal to buy it back for \$14 million.
 - Grain was exported to Asia in containers prior to 2008. Since that time, there are no excess containers that can be used for this purpose.
 - There is a real concern about the federal weight limits for federal highways; heavier loads are moving on state and local roads that aren't designed to handle these loads. This is putting a huge maintenance burden of state and local roadway officials.
 - Colorado is implementing a new initiative to move fresh potatoes from the San Luis valley to South Texas and into Mexico.
 - Class I railroads deal with large markets and short line railroads deal more with niche markets. There will always be commercial stress points between Class I and short line railroads.
 - The Department of Agriculture completed a study in September of 2007 "Transportation and Colorado's Agribusiness Industry". That study noted that there are 20,000 outbound rail cars carrying agricultural products and 10,000 inbound rail cars per year in Colorado.
 - Colorado is currently a net importer of corn and Corn will be an increasing market due to the increases in dairy cattle and ethanol production in the state. Also, corn is getting better yields due to new hybrids that have been developed that require less water.
 - The acreage of wheat in the state is about 80 percent of what it used to be. The current price is about \$7.00 per bushel.
 - The 2007 CDOT Rail Relocation Study completed in early 2009 is a negative issue to farmers and ranchers that would be impacted by such a new rail alignment. Splitting up private property doesn't benefit these land owners.
 - The top ten agricultural commodities account for \$6 billion in business for the state.
 - The San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad in the San Luis Valley lost 20 percent of their business to trucks in 2010 because of revised truck weight legislation passed by the Colorado Legislature. There needs to be a statewide dialogue related to truck size and weight issues.
 - Colorado needs to have a balanced transportation system and CDOT should push for this in its planning efforts.

August 3 Meeting -

An additional meeting was requested by the Department of Agriculture to meet with the corn industry representative. CDOT State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Project Manager Mehdi Baziar and Parsons Brinckerhoff deputy Project Manager Randy Grauberger joined the Department of Agriculture’s Tim Burleigh and Tim Larsen as well as Mark Sponsler , CEO of Colorado Corn to get input on the State Freight and Passenger rail Plan from the corn industry.

Randy provided a brief overview of the state rail planning requirements and the consultant team’s scope of work in completing this 12 month long project for CDOT. This was followed by an open discussion and the following comments were made:

- **Two comments were made on the map identifying grain elevators and agricultural production around the state. 1) It would be useful to have significant town name added to the map. 2) The two colors (shades of yellow) representing ‘urban locations’ and ‘dry land agriculture’ are too similar. A different color other than yellow should be used.**
- **Existing ethanol plants served by rail should also be shown on this map. These are located in Yuma, Sterling and Windsor. Before ethanol plants existed in Colorado, the state imported 40 million bushel of corn. Post-ethanol, the state imports an additional 45 million bushel.**
- **Agri-tourism could provide additional ridership to various rail passenger services in various locations around the state at some point in the future.**

Attendance
 Freight and Passenger State Rail Plan
 Agriculture Stakeholder Meeting
 August 3, 2011

Name	Representing	Phone	e-mail
1. RANOX GRANBERGER	PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF	303-390-5927	granberger@pbworld.com
2. MARK IMHOFF	CDOT/DTR	303 757 9007	mark.imhoff@dot.state.co.us
3. John Salazar	Dep't of Ag	720-431-2821	John.Salazar@state.co.us
4. WENDY WALLACHT	CDOT/DTR	303 757 9008	wendy.wallach@dot.state.co.us
5. DON HUNT	CDOT	303 757 9201	don.hunt@dot.state.co.us
6. Tammy Lang	CDOT/DTD	3/757-9811	tamela.lang@dot.state.co.us
7. Ed Bowditch	Rocky Mountain Farmers Union	3/489-8680	edbowditch@rol.com
8. Brent Boylston	Col. Farm Bureau	303-263-2672	bboylston@colo.fb.com
9.			
10.			

Attendance
 Freight and Passenger State Rail Plan
 Agriculture Stakeholder Meeting
 August 3, 2011

Name	Representing	Phone	e-mail
1. EVAN KIRBY	FHU - PB TEAM	(303)721-1440	EVAN.KIRBY@FHUENG.COM
2. Mehdi Bazial	CDOT-DTB	3-157-9047	Mehdi.bazial@dot.state.co.us
3. Tim Larsen	Colo D of Agriculture	3-259-4118	tim.larsen@ag.state.co.us
4. Cathy Shack	PROGRESSIVE IS	970-867-9667	Cathy@PROGRESSIVEIS.ORG
5. Steve Greenway	SL+RB PA	806-432-0421	gregorys@interpacinc.com
✓ 6. Scott Strait	Congressman Tipton	970-640-0680	SCOTT.STRAIT@mail.house.gov
7. Keith DeVie	RMMA - Rossen Farmers Elevator	303-9816560	KdeVoe@rossenfarmerelev.com
✓ 8. Mike Martin	Conagra Foods Commerce City, CO	303-227-1138	Michael.Martin@conagrafoods.com
✓ 9. Landon Gates	CO Wheat Growers	970.218.0284	Landon@CapitolFarmsLLC.com
10. Randy Traxler	CO wheat growers	970-5547567	traxler.randy@gmail.com

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Coal Industry Stakeholders Meeting Notes – August 22, 2011

CDOT State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order and thanked every for attending and participating. Mehdi asked those in attendance to make self introductions. (sign-in sheet attached)

Randy Grauberger, Parson Brinckerhoff's Deputy Project Manager for the SFPRP, provided a brief PowerPoint presentation highlighting state rail planning requirements and the consultant team's scope of work in completing this 12 month long project for CDOT.

Evan Kirby, of Felsburg Holt and Ullevig, a sub-consultant on the project, next provided an overview of several pieces of data regarding the transportation of coal by rail in Colorado. Evan noted that CDOT has received the Waybill sample data from the Surface Transportation Board and the consultant team will be evaluating that data in the near future as it related to rail freight movement in and through the state.

Following these two presentations the meeting was opened up to a discussion of the issues related to the rail transportation of coal in the state as well as rail related service issues. The following comments were made:

- Tom Canter Coal Transportation Association noted that he was concerned about how the Plan will address the future of coal transportation in the state.
- The ColoWyo coal mine ships only to the Tri-State generating plant in Craig (roughly 30 miles).
- Colorado Springs Utilities is currently utilizing about 25% of their two million tons of coal per year from Colorado mines. The rest is Powder River Basin coal and Colorado Springs Utilities will be moving to 100% Powder River Basin coal in the future.
- Utilities own and maintain their own fleets of cars (approximately 90 % of all coal cars) and the railroads provide the locomotives and train crews. Colorado Springs is leasing two sets of coal cars.
- The Denver Cherokee Station will be converting from coal to natural gas.
- Clean coal technology is essentially coal gasification and/or carbon sequestering.
- The re-opening of Tennessee Pass would be a big benefit to coal producers in Gunnison and Delta counties (on the North Fork of the Gunnison River).
- Flooding in the Mid-west has forced the railroads to use Colorado's Front Range corridor for many coal moves that traditionally go through the Mid-west.
- Any projects improving capacity would benefit coal transportation in Colorado.
- The coal industry is not expected to receive any benefits from Positive Train Control (PTC) technology that the railroads have been mandated to install. A better technological

improvement for the coal industry would be electronically controlled pneumatic brakes. These are currently being utilized in So. Africa and Australia. These would cost approximately \$4,000 per coal car and \$40,000 per locomotive. These improvements help quicken movements in and out of sidings and could provide an overall 10% reduction in round trip travel time.

- An average of \$20-\$30 million from mineral severance taxes go to Colorado schools yearly from Colorado coal production.
- Colorado Springs pays a “car tax” to both Wyoming and Nebraska for its coal cars moving through those two states.
- The coal contracts between the utility and the railroads to transport coal are no longer 20 year contracts; a three year contract is now considered a good contract.
- The three electricity generating units at the Drake plant in Colorado Springs are 40 and 50 years old. The Nixon Plant south of Colorado Springs is 40 years old.
- Colorado is required to consume 30 % of its energy from alternative energy sources by 2020; California is required to use 33% by 2020.
- The Cline Mining Company expects to open the New Elk Mine west of Trinidad and have initial levels of production of 3 million tons annually beginning in 2012. The group believed that this coal will be put on trucks instead of rail.

Sign in sheet

8/22
Coal Industry meeting

RANDY GRAUBERGER - PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF - 303-390-5927
graubenger@pbworld.com

Larry Gillenwater - Arch Coal / West Elk mine
Lgillenwater@archcoal.com

Mehdi Bazin CDOT 3-757-9047 mehdi.bazin@dot.state.co.us

EVAN KIRBY FHU 3-721-1440 EVAN.KIRBY@FHUENG.COM

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WENDY WALLACE CDOT DTR wendy.wallace@dot.state.co.us

Glenn Stoner Colorado Springs Utilities gstoner@csu.org

Kenneth Mulhall Tri-State G&T kmulhall@tristategt.com

Mark Imhoff CDOT - MARK.IMHOFF@DOT.STATE.CO.US

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Meeting with Office of Economic Development-
October 11, 2011

Attendees:

Mark Imhoff -	Director, CDOT Division of Transit and Rail
Mehdi Baziar -	CDOT Rail Plan Project Manager
Wendy Wallach -	CDOT Rail Plan Deputy Project Manager
Matt Cheroutes -	Colorado Office of Economic Development
Randy Grauberger -	Parsons Brinckerhoff – Deputy Project Manager

CDOT State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order and thanked every for attending and participating. Mehdi asked those in attendance to make self introductions.

Randy Grauberger, Parson Brinckerhoff’s Deputy Project Manager for the SFPRP, provided a brief of overview highlighting state rail planning requirements and the consultant team’s scope of work in completing this 12-month-long project for CDOT. Because Matt Cheroutes is a member of the Steering Committee so Randy didn’t need to provide as much detail as he normally would for other stakeholder meetings.

Randy noted that the theme of many of the six Workshop/Open House meetings was utilizing rail transportation to increase “Economic Development”. This was particularly true in the rural communities with short line rail service but there were also suggestions that the Class I railroads needed to improve their customer service in order to increase economic development.

Mark noted that economic development was also a theme in the Vision / Goals and Objectives of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and that he believed both freight rail and passenger rail could benefit economic development in Colorado.

Matt next discussed the Office of Economic Development’s recent series of meetings related to the state's economic development plan known as the "Colorado Blueprint." This was a “bottoms up” plan that began with the Governor traveling around the state meeting with communities in January. Matt noted that effective and efficient transportation was identified as a critical element of economic development all around the state.

Randy described a document that the state of Oklahoma was referencing in its State Rail Plan. “Bold Ideas for Oklahoma” (Sept.19, 2011) was developed by Oklahoma Governor Fallin’s Task Force on Economic development and Job Creation. Randy said that “Developing major rail infrastructure

improvements” was one of the 13 key ideas discussed in that report. Randy noted he would forward a copy of that report to Matt for his information and use.

Matt indicated that he would continue to represent the Office of Economic Development throughout the completion of the State Rail Plan.

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan



Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

November 15, 2011

Today's Meeting

- ▶ Informal, feel free to speak up whenever you want.
- ▶ There will be a short presentation today which will be posted to the web as well.

<http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/PassengerFreightRailPlan>

- ▶ Let you know where we are as a new Division. Answer any questions you may have and listen to your concerns.

CDOT Staff and Role Responsibility

Mehdi Baziar, CDOT Project Manager
mehdi.baziar@dot.state.co.us

Wendy Wallach, CDOT Deputy Project Manager
wendy.wallach@dot.state.co.us

Mickey Ferrell, CDOT Federal Liaison
Mickey.ferrell@dot.state.co.us

Irene Merrifield, MPO Liaison
Irene.merrifield@dot.state.co.us

Why A State Rail Plan?

- ▶ Supports the new division on Transit and Rail to provide future Direction for Improving/Expanding Freight and Passenger Rail Services
- ▶ Identifies Existing and Potential Funding Sources
- ▶ Required by Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) as a Condition of Future Federal Funding
- ▶ Rail Plan Links Rail Planning Activities/Projects to CDOT's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

- \$400,000 Grant from FRA's Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008
- Matched with \$400,000 State funds
- 15 month Project
- Steering Committee (SC) Members finalized

State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Steering Committee

- ▶ 2- BNSF and Union Pacific Railroads
- ▶ 2- San Luis and Rio Grande (SLRG) and OmniTRAX (Short Lines)
- ▶ 2- Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) and Colorado Municipal League (CML)
- ▶ 1- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- ▶ 1- State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
- ▶ 1- Colorado Office of Economic Development
- ▶ 1- Amtrak
- ▶ 1- Progressive 15, Action 22, Club 20
- ▶ 2- Transit (Colorado Association of Transit Operators [CASTA] and RTD)
- ▶ 1- Agriculture, Colorado Department of Agriculture
- ▶ 3- Colorado DOT Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager and Planning & Performance Mgr.

Vision

“The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, coordinated land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships.”

TASKS

1. Identify and Review Best Practices
2. State and Local Rail Programs
3. Rail System Description and Inventory
4. Prepare Stakeholder Outreach Plan
5. Conduct Stakeholder Outreach Plan
6. Economic, Environmental and Safety Impacts of Rail Transportation
7. Needs Assessment and Evaluation
8. Create a Vision for Rail in Colorado
9. Identify Potential Investment Opportunities
10. Long Range Service and Investment Program
11. Integrate Rail Plan into Statewide Transportation Plan

Status

- Tasks 1 and 2 completed
- Work on other Tasks is ongoing
- Workshops/Open Houses and other presentations, August 2011 – September 2011
- Had 3 Steering Committee Meetings
- Last of 3 Stakeholders Meeting 10/18/2011
- Next Steering Committee Meeting 12/2/2011
- Draft Plan for review and comments
January 2012

Questions/Comments

Check the website and provide your comments @

<http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/PassengerFreightRailPlan>

<p>Rick O’Connell (8/15/11) via Email</p> <p>Recently, we have lost two important industrial prospects in Logan because Class 1 rail service could not be obtained. We have the site locations, but BNSF and UPRR have not been able to agree to providing service. So my first comment: we need better communications with both rail companies. (2) How can we develop sites which CAN be expected to receive service in the future? Local government is willing to provide incentives, but our recent experience is that we are not included in the final negotiations. (3) We realize that our shipping tonnage out is limited at this time. We want to work with the rail companies, along with State, regional and national parties to improve our prospects for increased shipping.</p>
<p>Karen Schminke (8/15/11) via Email</p> <p>Quality of Rail Crossings in this part of the state is very deteriorated and dangerous. This study needs to tie into the Governor's Bottoms Up Economic Development Plan so local communities can work with the Governor's Office to better utilize inactive lines (such as a small inactive spur in Brush) to promote economic development and attract new businesses.</p>
<p>Ted Lyons (8/17/11) Comment Card at Limon Workshop</p> <p>I am a county commissioner and want to go on record as being opposed to the R2C2 study being included in any state rail study in the future, because part of the study was flawed and this should be revisited and resolved before this could be allowed in the study.</p>
<p>Taylor Rich (8/23/11) via Email</p> <p>(1) I would like to know what economic opportunities could be developed between Colorado, New Mexico and Mexico if the Trinidad, CO to Lamy/Albuquerque rail line were developed as a north- south corridor. How would it be valuable to Colorado business? What truck traffic could be diverted to save road maintenance costs? What international trade or foreign direct investment could be better facilitated by faster/more direct transit? In terms of saving and developing this corridor, I would like a response regarding what the state would support and benefit from via New Mexico's activities. (2) The El Paso Rail Gateway to Mexico is approaching capacity. In terms of having a long-term impact on Colorado economic development, what interest has the state considered in advocating capacity increases and facility improvements for this border crossing. (3) How will the state incorporate shipper needs and input into the planning process to ensure that the plan meets the shippers' demonstrated needs from an economic development/ commerce standpoint?</p>
<p>Helen Bushnell (8/25/11) Comment Card at Denver Open House</p> <p>Please run a second train to Chicago; Restart the Pioneer; Run a train to Leadville; Run an hourly bus from Salida to Trinidad to La Junta; Run an hourly train that runs Denver, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, Fort Collins.</p>
<p>Helen R. Kett (8/25/11) Comment Card at Grand Junction Open House</p> <p>I would like to suggest passenger rail service to Aspen. I am an adult figure skater who likes to skate again! Our local ice arena, the Glacier, closed down a year ago. I have previously taken Greyhound to Glenwood Springs, then G. S. bus to Aspen to skate at Lewis Ice arena. Unfortunately, buses take too long and time for skating are off with the time schedule for buses. Amtrak stopped running to Aspen years ago! I'm sure those here who also ski as well as skate would love to have train service to Aspen, especially at Christmas time. Thanks.</p>
<p>Helen R. Kett (8/25/11) Comment Card at Grand Junction Open House</p> <p>There is no train service to Pueblo. I have a dentist in Pueblo. Perhaps you can start train service to Pueblo again.</p>
<p>Kit Carson County Administrator (8/29/11) Comment Card at Limon Workshop</p> <p>Comment received via email 8-29-11 DOT #594-732C; M.P. #4719; Street or CR Colorado Ave. This crossing needs to be fixed. Co loading would benefit all grain elevators on the Kyle Railroad. 110 car line would benefit.</p>
<p>Clear Creek County (8/29/11) Formal Letter</p> <p>See A.5.1</p>
<p>Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation (9/1/11) Formal Letter</p> <p>See A.5.2</p>
<p>Leon Moyer (9/1/11) Comment Card at Alamosa Open House</p> <p>Would like to see passenger service to Front Range cities, especially Denver. Also should consider auto ferry or bicycle trains--so we can take our personal transportation with us on the passenger train. Keep it affordable and simple!</p>

Anonymous (9/1/11) via Email

My comments and suggestions from the La Junta workshop/open house: Studies have shown a freight rail bypass is not needed in Eastern Colorado. The railroads will continue to move coal and freight down the joint line along the Front Range with or without expensive freight rail relocation. Landowners, Kiowa and Lincoln County Commissioners are against this. Even the Class I railroads aren't interested in financing it, even though they plan to make 12 billion in capital spending during 2011. For these reasons, a freight rail bypass or R2C2 should not be a part of the State Rail Plan. Colorado purchased the Towner Rail Line in 1998 for 10.4 million after Union Pacific abandoned it. They wanted to preserve it for future use. Ironically, Union Pacific leases the line. It has been 13 years and has seen two damaging, expensive fires and little freight. Tall weeds line the 122-mile route. This line is limited, because Union Pacific removed miles of track in Kansas that the rail served. This line should be abandoned or receive the lowest priority in the State Rail Plan. Add an additional track along the present freight ROW on the Front Range to save money, increase efficiency, and reduce congestion.

John Firouzi (9/2/11) via Email

I participated in the recent Open House event for the State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan, where your team outlined tasks to analyze information and develop the long range plan by Jan 2012. I believe the study team has completed task #1 by developing an archive of best practices and you're off to the following tasks that highlight existing systems and compile stakeholder input on various interests. I wanted to be sure to provide comments on behalf of City of Arvada Public Works and perhaps leave a door open for my colleagues in Community Planning and Economic Development to add their thoughts as the plan moves forward. You asked several questions at the meeting such as "what improvements/revisions should be considered? and how should improvements be prioritized?" The questions are somewhat specific in relationship to broad range of interests. Therefore, I'm going to leave you with the following bullet points and ask your team to format my comments to fit the questions: We welcome passenger and commuter rail services along railroad corridors that make better use of transportation right-of-way, provide transit options for the public, and result in quiet zone and traffic operation improvements at railroad crossings. Develop a plan that would embrace the FasTracks and High Speed Rail systems and implement the subsequent community benefits as soon as possible. Bicycling advocates in Jefferson County have expressed an interest in bike trails along railroad corridors due to the direct and gentle alignments of the tracks. Trails are viewed as attractive neighborhood assets and could help offset social disapproval of railroad tracks. Enable cities to easily improve walkways along local roads that meet railroad tracks by installing pedestrian landing areas at the approach of crossings, improving walkways over the tracks, and pre-approving a set of ADA features to simplify/expedite the implementation process. Communities build around railroads are now experiencing a decline in their quality of life as a result of FRA safety rules that require train operators to blare horns at the approach of at-grade crossings. An increase in rail traffic and population growth is anticipated - identifying crossings within a metropolitan area and enabling quiet zone treatments, automated train horns that reduce the noise footprint, and grade separation projects using a shared cost approach is necessary. This should be considered as part of a near term priority. Program delivery mechanisms (e.g. federal aid) that would support a balanced and shared effort to harmonize rail line and metropolitan interests should be incorporated as part of the long range plan. Grade Separations, for example, are expensive undertakings that do not fit the "operational improvement" definitions under the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Specific funding sources for such improvements are needed to mitigate operational and safety enhancements at crossings, and supplement TIP funding. I wanted to echo one comment that we heard at the meeting: DRCOG Board (our elected officials) need to be aware of the CDOT SFPRP such that they can make balanced decisions. Realizing that you plan to present the plan to other MPOs... please include DRCOG as part of your outreach process. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and I look forward to project updates. Thank you.

Nancy Stilwagen (9/6/11) via Email

Right now, CDOT is creating a rail plan to help us improve our state's rail system, and the planners would like our help by answering a few questions. 1. What are the strengths of Colorado's rail network, both passenger and freight? We have passenger trains??? 2. What are the deficiencies of the rail system? Lack of passenger trains. 3. What improvements/revisions should be considered? Put the freight lines out on the eastern plains. Use the existing rails for passenger trains - Trinidad to Fort Collins. We need to emphasize mass transportation in this state, something we have not done yet. Moving in this direction will save wear and tear on the roadways, money that can be spent on the rails. 4. What should be considered in prioritizing improvements? Passenger rail, and not just light rail.

Bob T. Watts (9/6/11) via Email

1. Need to emphasize the need for the "eastern" rail corridor to remove coal train traffic from the metro areas along the Front Range. 2. Work with FRA on revisions to "Quiet Zone" regulations to make it easier and less expensive to implement the zones. 3. Continue evaluating the passenger rail projects linking towns and cities south of Denver to the Denver metro area. 4. Work with the public agencies on ways to mitigate impacts of train traffic on their citizens.

Jennifer Hinton (9/7/11) via Email

Right now, CDOT is creating a rail plan to help us improve our state's rail system, and the planners would like our help by answering a few questions. 1. What are the strengths of Colorado's rail network, both passenger and freight? I've never ridden an actual train in Colorado, but I used the light rail frequently while I was living in Denver. I can't comment much on the freight rail network, as I've not been directly involved. 2. What are the deficiencies of the rail system? The rail system is not connected, nor is it convenient for people to use. If you Google "Trains in Colorado", you get a bunch of tourist attractions. Whereas if you Google "Trains in New York", you get all kinds of information about how to commute from one place to another. Our rail system is not at all practical. 3. What improvements/revisions should be considered? It should be stressed that, as fossil fuel prices inevitably rise, people will increasingly need reliable, clean mass transportation in Colorado. It would be so easy to connect the front range cities (where the vast majority of people live). There should be a commuter train line that runs regularly along the front range. Maybe one going north from Denver and one going south. At commuter train stations, there must be connections with buses and parking lots. If this form of transportation was convenient, reliable and clean, it would be used and would greatly improve the quality of life of many people. 4. What should be considered in prioritizing improvements? Fossil fuels are a finite resource and, thus, gas prices will continue to rise, making driving in Colorado outrageously expensive. Also, any commuter trains should be the most accessible to most of the people. With budget constraints, there's no need to have the fanciest trains available; just comfortable and convenient. At the end of the day, they must be affordable to the average person.

Jane Dillon (9/7/11) via Email

Right now, CDOT is creating a rail plan to help us improve our state's rail system, and the planners would like our help by answering a few questions. 1. What are the strengths of Colorado's rail network, both passenger and freight? The existence of passenger rail through Denver is good but seldom on time. We seem to move an immense amount of freight through the state, particularly coal. 2. What are the deficiencies of the rail system? The passenger service is unreliable as to being on time and does not cover the Front Range or the southern part of the state. We need commuter rail on the Front Range. The majority of the freight trains on the Front Range have to go through several cities that they are not serving. I have been told that this prevents us from having commuter rail on the Front Range. 3. What improvements/revisions should be considered? Freight trains should be moved to the Eastern Plains where there is already most of the track needed. Only trains serving Denver, Colorado Springs or Pueblo should go through those cities. Commuter rail should be from Fort Collins to at least Pueblo and eventually to the southern state line. New Mexico has a very good commuter rail system connecting the largest cities. Commuter rail along the I70 route between Grand Junction and Denver. 4. What should be considered in prioritizing improvements? Get the major freight companies to agree to share the track and complete the track for freight on the eastern plains. Establish commuter rail between Denver and Colorado Springs; then expand to Fort Collins and Pueblo. Establish commuter rail along the I70 route. Improve timing on the Amtrak line through Colorado. Connect Amtrak in Denver with Amtrak near Albuquerque.

Ray Krueger (9/7/11) via Email

I feel light rail is inappropriate for intercity commuter service from both a speed and reliability standpoint. A study several years ago evaluated the possibility of building a new route for the current through trains, normally unit coal trains, on the plains east of the Front Range and found that of the 36 trains running through our region 17 were “local” that could not run in a new alignment. I feel we need real “commuter rail” service on higher speed technology up to 110 mph – just faster than the traffic flying past Greenland every commuting morning to get the attention of auto packs running 80-90 mph. Currently Colorado enjoys the services of two Amtrak routes and there are rumblings that the route through La Junta / Trinidad may be rerouted through the Oklahoma pan handle and enter New Mexico further south than the current Raton Pass entrance. Many states subsidize Amtrak service to offer intercity connections that could serve the Front Range if the current focus on I-70 / I-25 service is not adopted. While not high speed, Amtrak and the freight carriers have experience working together in other regions until the state is prepared to build a customized service under current study. Furthermore, I’d rather see a new, not Amtrak, service grade separated (raised) from the freight tracks for safety from freight train derailments and safety from incursions with humans and wildlife. Also, I often notice freight trains parked on passing sidings in our city or on the mainline between Colorado Springs and Denver which would cause commuter delays and destroy the service credibility. This track alignment would best be implemented as extensions or adjacent to the freight right of way property and would cost significantly less than the very high speed equipment I hear the CDOT is favoring at this time. CDOT will present the current view of a Statewide Passenger and Freight Rail plan study to our PPACG board next Wednesday morning at 9:00 as “Public Comment”. Please attend if you are interested to hear their presentation.

John Dunker (9/7/11) via Email

Here is my 2 cents worth for the questions sent to me by Ray Krueger. Right now, CDOT is creating a rail plan to help us improve our state's rail system, and the planners would like our help by answering a few questions. 1. What are the strengths of Colorado's rail network, both passenger and freight? Colorado has some decent rail capability to move large quantities of coal and grain. The cities are spread out enough to reduce congestions with roads. Rail is not extensive for freight and the primary destinations are here in the Ft. Collins to Pueblo corridor. Since Denver is the primary hub, I do question the capability of the available yards. The passenger network is basically non-existent. The only city with the economic potential of ‘light rail’, I believe is Denver. Look at the utilization rates and balance it with the investment and cost of operations and the cost/rider is extremely high. Without rider density this one doesn’t work. Is it possible to use the current rail infrastructure for passenger service? Can you share some of the financial data experienced by Denver on their light rail, ridership, operating costs, capital investment, and cost per rider? I could be completely ‘off base’ on this observation. 2. What are the deficiencies of the rail system? Potential rider density for light rail simply doesn’t exist. Demand for freight is weak compared to the East or Midwest; we do not have a strong industrial base. 3. What improvements/revisions should be considered? There are a few relatively high volume lines in our state. Improvements should be directed to these areas to increase efficiency. Trans state movement probably offers additional upside potential. 4. What should be considered in prioritizing improvements? A). Upgrade highly used lines. B) Consider service to communities where grain, livestock, mining and raw materials offer potential and some economic advantages. C) Share the real economics of ‘light rail’ and upgrade improvement. This is an area of importance to our state and communities. Information is power!

Carl Schuler (9/7/11) via Email

1. What are the strengths of Colorado's rail network, both passenger and freight? Few passenger strengths other than Denver light rail. Interstate coal traffic creates a demand that could theoretically be leveraged. Without this there is not much other current demand to use to leverage incremental improvements. 2. What are the deficiencies of the rail system? Very limited non-tourist passenger rail. System deficiencies and grade challenges along both I-25 and I-70. Low density development including Statewide proliferation of 35-acre tracts has created a dispersed constituency that makes it very difficult to get any new rail corridors approved in more rural acres. 3. What improvements/revisions should be considered? Modify federal and state laws and processes that now foster in-action on the part of railroads. State and federal governments need to take a leadership role because the railroads will not otherwise act. 4. What should be considered in prioritizing improvements? Passenger rail needs to focus on both N/S and E/W (I-70 and I-25 corridors) and it must connect the centers of major communities rather than go around them. Interstate passenger rail needs to be very high speed to compete with and

potentially supersede air travel as jet fuel prices begin to make that more untenable. Intrastate rail can be more conventional speed and still be successful. Freight can potentially go around communities with stubs into the centers, especially in the case of City of Colorado Springs' coal trains that mostly are on their way to Texas.

Dave Pohling (9/14/11) via Email

I attended the PPACG Board Meeting today and CDOT provided an update of the State Rail Plan. Below are some of the comments shared during the meeting: Medi gave a brief overview of the plan and status. Question from Commissioner Dennis Hisey asked what was hoped to be achieved with the Study? Response: Goal was to identify the deficiencies in the existing system as it relates to both freight and passenger rail. Question/statement from Craig Blewitt, Mountain Metro Transit Manager: Colorado Springs wants to have a seat at the table in the next phase of the study to weigh in on passenger rail alignment options and station locations. Question/Statement from Wally Miller, Chairman of the Colorado Springs Airport Citizens Advisory Committee, echoed Craig's comments above -alignment and station location is important for the Colorado Springs Airport. Jim Godfry, Citizen, Statement that there were not enough opportunities for public comment and input. Mickey Ferrell with CDOT government relations responded and provided additional detail as to purpose of this study "State Rail Plan" was at a Macro level. The next study "Interconnectivity Study", currently in the procurement phase, would study in greater detail North South corridors and East West corridor, and in the future third study would focus on I-70 high speed Rail proposal. Wayne Williams, Clerk and Recorder (former County Commissioner) provided background info on the "Rocky Mountain Rail Corridor" study. Consistent with the State Rail Plan both efforts have shared information. Costly project and funding would be hard to find. General comments expressed support of the effort and PPACG and member governments want to be sure they are included in future studies and understand the need to plan for both freight and passenger rail service and corridors.

Beverly Babb (9/14/11) via Email

I love TRAINS. That said, here are my feelings and understandings about the train challenges in southeast Colorado: AMTRAK needs fast smooth tracks going through country that visitors want to see. Freight trains need direct routes unimpeded by slowdowns for stop signs, small towns, etc. They generally go much slower than AMTRAK and therefore can utilize slightly less precise rail. The two AMTRAK routes currently crossing the country from Chicago to California and passing through Colorado seem primary for broad public demand. The routes are direct, scheduled through beautiful portions of the miles during daylight, reasonable in length of time and pricing, and every year becoming more popular. The U.S. population is growing older and those folks wish to travel, but want to leave the driving to others. A special attraction in summer time is the Trails and Rails programs in concert with the National Park Service. It is an awesome experience learning about the history, flora and fauna, along the way – it should be run all year on all the passenger trains. It truly allows folks to appreciate the country they are moving through. The California Zephyr goes through Glenwood Canyon and while the Southwest Chief's scenery is not quite that incredible, it is mighty nice, including it's elk, pronghorn, deer and bear sightings. (Much more interesting than the Oklahoma track could provide). The \$94 million dollar amount that was voiced at the meeting, plus the annual upkeep amounts, sounds like a large challenge but I think if the States get together with the local communities, that those dollars can be found/bonded/granted/donated, including whatever government dollars may be available. It can be done! The future: We need light rail from Fort Collins, Colorado to Trinidad, Colorado, which would connect all those stations into the primary east/west trains. The right of ways could go right alongside the freight tracks. They would carry a much lighter load, hence, not as costly as AMTRAK or freight track, but scheduled to facilitate interaction with cross country travel. Folks have had that dream for many, many years. It needs to go into the overall plan. Thank you for instigating the meetings that have carried the message about this challenge to the viability of our AMTRAK transportation. I will continue to stay in touch and deeply appreciate your interest and assistance.

Dee & David Salamon (9/15/11) via Email

My husband & I would LOVE to have a passenger rail system in Downtown Colorado Springs!! We are getting older and prefer not to drive to Denver. This would be an excellent way to get around, as in Europe, trains go everywhere. This is long overdue. Please consider putting one in Downtown Colorado Springs. Thank you.

Ruth Buller (9/16/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.3

Phyllis Nelson (9/16/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.4

<p>Catherine Scherler (9/16/11) Formal Letter See A.5.5</p>
<p>Freda Schmidt (9/16/11) Formal Letter See A.5.6</p>
<p>Theresa Weber (9/16/11) Formal Letter See A.5.7</p>
<p>Hazel Woelk (9/16/11) Formal Letter See A.5.8</p>
<p>Dave Ruble (9/23/11) via Email Here is my input into the State Rail Plan. 1. The Plan should provide language that supports the purchase of Tennessee Pass Rail Line from Union Pacific. 2. The Plan should include an aggressive high speed rail component that uses the median of I-70 (east of Denver), I-76 (Denver to Julesburg), I-25 (Wyoming to New Mexico). The use of the median of these interstate routes has several advantages. a. The Interstate System already has a level of access control. b. Vertical and horizontal alignments would allow high speed trains to reach speeds of around 100 mph or greater. c. These high speed trains would give rural areas access to urban centers where they can access air transportation, jobs, and health care. d. The use of interstate median would have a dramatic lower cost to construct. The station spacing should be between 30 and 50 miles. 3. Expand intercity passenger rail service by providing a connection between the California Zephyr and the Southwest Chief using the Tennessee Pass Rail Line. 4. The freight system should be stratified into three levels - interstate, regional, and local. For the interstate routes, double tracking should be provided with at least two quadrant protection. 5. The Plan should include: (1) passenger rail service along the Tennessee Pass Rail Line from Gypsum to Leadville; (2) passenger rail service from Glenwood Springs to Aspen using the Southern Pacific rail right-of-way; and (3) passenger rail service from Steamboat Springs to Glenwood Springs. I was wondering how CDOT plans on using the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Study results.</p>
<p>Nicole Rosa (9/23/11) via Email I think that it is absolutely absurd that there is no commuter train between CO Springs and Denver. Ideally it should extend from Pueblo up to Ft. Collins. We need to get our transportation system up to date!</p>
<p>Alejandro Gonzalez, M.D. (9/24/11) via Email Prerequisites to Successful Passenger Rail in Colorado Intercity passenger rail may or may not be practical, but it is almost certainly not worthwhile unless the four criteria below are met. 1. True High Speed Service. In short, passenger rail must surpass the performance of automobiles (measured in time) to be worthwhile. Please refer to the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Final Report for a more detailed discussion of this issue. In short, the faster the better. 2. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Tier II Waiver. What’s the difference between these two trains? FRA regulations. Though they might look the same, the one on the right can handle the Rockies, the one on the left can’t. A Locomotive Pulled Acela. Wikipedia A German ICE-3 EMU. Wikipedia. Because of Federal Railroad Administration regulations dating to the 1940s, US passenger trains are designed like tanks, designed to survive head on collisions with freight rail trains. The Acela Locomotive on the left weighs 90 metric tons, vs. 68 metric tons for the French TGV locomotive it was derived from. The difference in weight results in a huge performance penalty for US trains. This means trains that carry less passengers, which travel at lower speeds, and most importantly for Colorado, trains that struggle with steep grades. It also means that US operators cannot buy the latest, most modern designs from Europe and Asia, resulting in higher capital costs for equivalent trains. There is little to suggest that FRA regulations result in safer passenger trains than systems in Europe and Japan. Below is more obvious example. The train on the left is Hyundai-Rotem EMU (built in Philadelphia and designed for the US market), the model purchased by RTD for the East Corridor, designed to meet US regulations. On right is a Swiss EMU with equal performance. A Silverliner V EMU/Tank, like those that RTD purchased for the East Corridor. Wikipedia A Stadler FLIRT EMU in Switzerland (where they also have mountains). Illegal in America. Wikipedia. Any future rail system in Colorado should seek a waiver from the onerous FRA regulations. Caltrain, a commuter rail system in the Bay Area, was awarded a FRA waiver and is using it to purchase European EMUs for operation in a freight rail corridor. For a more complete list of ways the Federal Railroad Administration makes rail impractical, read this article at Pedestrian Observations. Also read former RMRA Chairman Harry Dale’s article regarding lessons learned from the RMRA. 3. A 4% grade in the I-70 alignment. In the mountains, speed and travel time are determined less by technology than by the</p>

alignment, more specifically, grade and track curvature. Just like cars, trains slow down for steep hills and sharp turns. The vehicle type is determined by its ability to climb those steep hills. For mountain corridor, the RMRA looked at two I-70 alignments, a 7% alignment that stays in the I-70 right-of-way (aka the consensus alternative in the I-70 PEIS and the I-70 Right-of-Way alignment in the RMRA report), and a 4% alignment that ventures outside of it (the I-70 Unconstrained alignment in the RMRA report). Therefore, depending on the alignment, the mountain corridor requires a vehicle with a power-to-weight ratio sufficient to climb a 4% or 7% grade. This is "the ruling grade" for the entire system, and determines the train sets minimum performance. Only two technologies, Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) and Maglev were deemed feasible in the I-70 corridor (diesel is a non-starter). According to the RMRA report: "Only the EMU and Maglev option will work for gradients in the 4-7 percent range. An EMU train with 50 percent axles powered (like the ICE-3) could maintain 60 mph up a 4 percent grade whereas in theory an EMU with all axles powered or with a separate Power Car (electric locomotive) added to each end of the train could maintain 60 mph up a 7 percent grade, curvature permitting. (This would be a very powerful train. For perspective, this same EMU with all axles powered could do more than 220 mph on level track.)" Electric Multiple Units (It only *REALLY* works on a 4% alignment) EMU stands for Electric Multiple Unit. Unlike older trains that are pulled by a locomotive (whether diesel or electric), an EMU powers the axels of each car. A lazy way to think about it is like the difference between 2WD and 4WD, (except that trains have a lot more than four wheels). Losing the locomotive also improves the power-to-weight ratio of the train. The problem with an EMU on a 7% alignment is that they are not designed for 7% alignments. Only half the axles are powered in off-the-shelf equipment. To power all the axles would require a major redesign. And it's unclear how practical the other alternative, putting power cars for and aft really is. Maglev (It's tomorrow's technology, and always will be). Operationally, a 4% alignment benefits both Maglev and EMU. However, opponents of a 4% alignment argue that The I-70 PEIS (which selected a 7% highway alignment) was a NEPA study and the matter has been settled. They also argue that the environmental impacts of a 4% alignment are too high. Try to build a 4% alignment through the mountains, and you end up in National Forest, or an EPA Superfund site. A 4% alignment runs through Clear Creek Canyon. This may be true, and it may be the case that regulation in the United States has reached a stage as a nation where it is no longer possible to build nice things. It does not mean that their preferred alternative, Maglev, along a 7% alignment is feasible. Maglev uses electromagnets to float and propel the vehicle centimeters above the track and has the power for a 7% mountain grade. The I-70 communities like this solution because it stays within the I-70 corridor (less environmental impacts). The I-70 communities, as codified in the I-70 PEIS, support Maglev. The I-70 PEIS AGS performance criteria are code for Maglev. Unfortunately, Maglev along a 7% alignment is fatally flawed. While technically and environmentally feasible, it is not politically or economically feasible. Because of the astronomical and unnecessary capital expense of building Maglev track on gentle 2-3% grades of the Front Range, a Maglev train in the mountain corridor would terminate in Golden (where passengers would transfer to RTD or a new conventional rail service). That means no direct connection to the mountains from either DIA or Downtown Denver, unless two sets of track (Maglev and conventional) are built at additional expense. What will ridership be for a mountain train that terminates in Golden given that DIA will be the #1 source of traffic in the state and Downtown Denver is #2? It is possible that at sometime in the distant future, Maglev will be affordable enough to use everywhere. But it's equally possible that Maglev is the technology of future, and always will be. And conventional rail technology will not stand still. Even granting that, would Front Range residents, where the majority of the taxpayers live, be willing to finance mountain Maglev, while they themselves get what will, rightly or wrongly, be branded "an inferior technology?" At some point, a statewide ballot question would be necessary. It's a political problem Maglev supporters need to address. A proposed Maglev system between Disneyland and Las Vegas was axed (despite support from Nevada Senator and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid) in favor of a more conventional approach because of cost. In Germany (from whence the Transrapid Maglev technology hails), steel wheel technology was chosen over Maglev for a proposed Hamburg to Berlin line because of escalating costs. The only line in operational commercial service is to the Shanghai airport, and it runs an operating loss. Moreover, even if a vehicle (be it Maglev or a high-powered EMU) can technically operate up a 7% grade, its passengers can't. Imagine standing unrestrained or having a cup of coffee while going 60 miles per hour down the 7% grade between the Eisenhower Tunnel and Frisco. Safety dictates that passengers in such a vehicle (like the drivers along this stretch of road today) wear seatbelts. A requirement of the AGS in the I-70 PEIS "Passenger Comfort and Safety". PASSENGER COMFORT AND SAFETY – While not "scientific" and quantifiable, the following observations are important factors to consider in evaluation of any technology on the I-70 corridor: Ability to have a cup of coffee on board without concern for spilling it. Work on laptop. Ride Comfort – ability to move around without

being slammed against a wall. 4. Cooperation from Union Pacific and BNSF. Many desirable alignments require the cooperation of the freight railroads, especially in Denver. The obvious location for a through station at Denver Union Station is the CML, adjacent to the new light rail tracks. If cooperation from the freight railroads cannot be secured while meeting the above requirements (i.e., using vehicles that are not FRA compliant in a freight rail ROW), then perhaps it is time to accept that intercity passenger rail in the state is not really feasible.

Beth Kosley (9/28/11) via Email

As a former Downtown COS advocate, I can only say that front range commuter lines along the urban areas of Fort Collins to Denver to COS to Pueblo and Trinidad is the most logical form of transit. It would accommodate those moving to and from jobs, plus serve as a mechanism to move leisure travelers from one destination to another and might even spawn some new forms of tourism, in addition to skiing. After all, urban attractions such as museums and botanical gardens have potential to attract even more visitation if the transit were more user-friendly between cities. As for Woodland Park and Teller County, which rely on access to jobs in the Front Range Area, too, our residents could more readily access rail if the departure place was in the downtown and not another hour drive across town to a system to the east of the city. And yes, we are trying to create more Teller County jobs to reduce commutes, but offering many options to a workforce is always a good idea. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Amtrak (10/3/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.9

Amanda Broz (10/5/11) via Email

Greetings, I am happy to hear that CDOT has been working on a plan for passenger rail in the Front Range. I live in Fort Collins and would love to see passenger rail as an option to Boulder, Denver, Loveland, and even into Wyoming (Cheyenne, Laramie) if possible. It would also be great to have passenger rail down to Colorado Springs. I recently heard that rail from Denver will likely not reach Fort Collins until around 2080, which is pretty disappointing. I think a passenger rail system is the best way to reduce traffic (and accidents!) on highways like I-25, while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint of commuters in our state. I would be pleased to use passenger rail, particularly on my way to Denver. Also, I think it would be great if there was some way that passengers were able to take bicycles with them on the rail system so they could easily get from the rail stop to their destination. I would like to see passenger rail in the Northern Front Range as a high priority in the planning for CDOTs rail system. Thank you for your time. (Fort Collins resident)

Mary Tesch Scobey (10/5/11) via Email

We need rail on the Front Range. As the population gets older many of us who want to be a part of Denver's active cultural and athletic scene are being denied access to these wonderful events. I understand that rail is a long time coming. How about a bus that goes hourly down I-25. It could go from the Fort Collins Harmony Park N Ride to the Park N Ride at 120th. From there we could take the RTD city bus to connect us with the rest of Denver. It is a travesty that the Fort Collins and Loveland population does not have easy access to the metro area. Please make public transportation the highest priority for the Front Range population.

Bob Michael (10/5/11) via Email

Light rail passenger service from Ft. Collins south should be absolutely highest priority in any planning process. (Fort Collins resident)

Steve Lynch (10/5/11) via Email

Recommendations found in the North I-25 Final EIS (EIS) issued on August 2011 suggest residents and businesses along the north I-25 corridor would benefit greatly from the development of a new commuter rail system between Fort Collins and Longmont Colorado. With a significant portion of the infrastructure already in place, operation of a commuter rail system offers distinct environmental and economic advantages over traditional regional highway travel. According to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, population growth in Colorado is projected to increase 20 percent by 2030, adding nearly an additional one million residents, and potentially, adding one million more automobiles to Colorado roads. These figures provide clear evidence that costly upgrades and additions to existing roadways and highways will be required within the next 20 or so years. Although the EIS identifies commuter rail as part of the solution of the region's future transportation needs, it postpones development of a passenger rail system to well beyond the year 2035. The three-phased approach found in the EIS fails to address the immediate need for offering transportation alternatives (beyond roadway travel) to Northern Colorado. Furthermore, the study's recommendation of limited Tolledd Express Lanes (TEs) unfairly relegates commuters who cannot afford to

pay both toll premiums and vehicle operating costs to traffic congestion, delays, and potentially more hazardous driving conditions. Bringing commuter rail to the Northern Colorado region in the near term would provide commuters with a safe and efficient alternative to highway travel while minimizing traffic congestion, vehicle accidents and injuries, increased highway construction and maintenance costs, and numerous environmental impacts associated with automotive vehicle traffic. Likewise, the addition of a rail system would likely entice future business growth, and economic development to occur in proximity to the recommended rail transit station locations. Formulating a plan to create a safe and reliable passenger rail system and securing funding resources for its construction is both within Colorado's interest and capability. To be proactive – instead of reactive to existing and future transportation infrastructure needs, CDOT should begin developing a contingency plan to have an operational commuter rail system in Northern Colorado by 2020.

Carolyn Taylor (10/5/11) via Email

I attended a Loveland City Council candidate forum this week sponsored by the League of Women Voters and learned that in forty years the population of Loveland will double. The subject of passenger rail was brought up and the candidates' responses were pretty awful. Few candidates voiced the connection that many more people means to double the number of cars. One response was that "we" don't want trains running through our city. Others were just not interested in the subject. I think about the pollution that cars emit and the effect on climate change. I doubt that we can keep on widening roads for double car capacity. I support passenger and freight rail and place it as high priority. Please do what must be done in your planning to receive Federal Rail Administration funds?

Christine Maslin-Cole and Raymond Cole (10/6/11) via Email

You only have to try to drive to Denver once on a Friday evening to know that we have (1) a huge demand for southbound transportation from Northern Colorado and (2) current available means of getting to Denver (driving I-25) is inadequate and many times dangerous. Our family whole-heartedly endorses passenger rail to/from Fort Collins and Denver. We would use it on a regular basis since we attend church weekly in the downtown Denver area, like to go to shows and other art-related events in Denver often, and travel to the airport several times throughout the year and would use rail if connections were possible. We have friends and neighbors who also would use this means of transportation for both work and pleasure activities. Many of us in Northern Colorado are frustrated with the lack of transportation options to Denver and the traffic on I-25. These issues are regular topics of conversation among those of us who live in Northern Colorado. Convenient mass-transportation (passenger rail) from Fort Collins to the Denver Metro area is needed not only for convenience and safety but for environmental and financial reasons as well. Please count our vote in favor of this service and pass our sentiments on to the planning committee. We support tax increases or other funding measures to support passenger rail along the I-25 corridor.

Mike Tupa (10/6/11) via Email

It is my understanding that you are compiling input regarding an upgrade of the transportation system up the I-25 corridor and that the alternates include a widened Interstate highway system, SH85 alternate corridor, and variations of passenger rail network. I am writing to share my travel experience on I-25 and relate why I believe a passenger rail system would be a wise direction to spend transportation dollars. We are a small office with clients all across Colorado. But, almost 2 times a week I am driving I-25 for meetings with clients or on other business in downtown Denver. The trips normally are reasonably timed, with an hour of travel for the 60+ mile transit taking about an hour. But over recent months the trips can last 2 hours or if caught in rush hour traffic north of 136th all it takes is one foolish, or sleepy, driver to make a mistake and the 1 hour trip can last 4 hours. The traffic has grown over the last 8 years since we moved to Fort Collins. The speed of most commuters mixed with slower tourist and slow 18 wheelers is dangerous. And as the traffic levels have grown the chance of a 2-4 hour passage has grown more to be more and more frequent. I could, and often do, cancel meetings while waiting on the highway, only to turn around back to Fort Collins. And to have to drive the corridor again the next day. I do shift travel to non-rush hour times but those windows are narrowing each year. A simple trip to Denver for the ball game ends up requiring a 2-4 hour combined trip. We just don't come to Denver for anything now other than business or an occasional visit with old friends, and of course business reasons. I strongly urge CDOT and the Highway Commission to consider an upgrade to the northern Colorado rail system to allow passenger traffic. It would be nice to link Cheyenne to Denver and south to Trinidad but I know that's asking a lot. The corridor between Fort Collins and Denver is in major need of alternate travel modes and a passenger rail system is now something I urge

<p>you to consider. We have seen plans for making this happen but the timeline for that construction is well beyond my use, and maybe beyond anything my children could use. Colorado, northern Colorado, needs an efficient transportation system to become competitive with the rest of this country. Construction of this system puts people to work, provides business a modern system to move goods and services, and results in a stronger definition of our NOCO community centers. Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.</p>
<p>Town of Red Cliff (10/6/11) Formal Letter See A.5.10</p>
<p>Ruth Inglis-Widrick (10/6/11) via Email I could not say it better than you do: "The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, coordinated land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships." If we want to transition smoothly into a time of decreasing availability/greater cost of fossil fuels, this is a critical component. Please make this a high priority. Thank you.</p>
<p>Jonnie Westerop (10/6/11) via Email Passenger trains, bike trails and walk ways – all in the same corridor – including the ability to ride your bike to the station, put your bike on the train, so you have it available in your destination city. There is a park area available behind the Dairy Queen in Fort Collins – this was the mobile home park that flooded in the late 90s – this would be a great station area with access to the train, trails and plenty of attractive space for commuters to park bikes. Good luck.</p>
<p>Aaron Fodge (10/6/11) via Email Here are my comments for consideration: 1. Northern Colorado Representation – A review of the project committee reveals an absence of representation from Northern Colorado. I believe having one representative serve that role for 5 MPOs a difficult task. Northern Colorado is the fastest growing The majority of communities of Northern Colorado have freight rail lines traveling through the heart of each of their communities (http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20111006/OPINION01/110060326/BNSF-Railway-reminds-us-train-safety). When you include the recommendations of the North I-25 EIS, Northern Colorado deserves a seat at the table for any commuter/high-speed rail discussion (http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/north-i-25-eis/documents/brt_cr_cb_tech_memos/ft_collins_south_transit_center_deis_brt_cr_10-10.pdf). I would request that future efforts include a call to each MPO in Colorado to seek a recommendation for committee representatives. 2. Northern Colorado Open House – For all the reasons mentioned above, an Open House omission for Northern Colorado residents is astounding. Large stakeholder meetings in Northern Colorado (2006 - Summit: Transportation Choices and 2008 - Time Out for New Tomorrow) indicate commuter rail as “top of mind” topic for the residents of Northern Colorado. The recent 2035 NFRMPO Regional Transportation Plan Update found a repeated theme amongst elected officials regarding the future of commuter/high speed rail. Finally, an ongoing regional visioning effort, Embrace Northern Colorado (http://www.embracecolorado.com), will likely evaluate the rail through this process. While I am not huge supporter of open houses for soliciting public feedback, I strongly believe this plan would have yielded above-average comment. The materials created for your open houses are very informative about the current conditions in Colorado. I look forward to seeing the plan vision/recommendations.</p>
<p>Lucin Turner (10/6/11) via Email I strongly support the inclusion of two rail projects in the State Plan: 1. Passenger Rail along the Front Range from Cheyenne which will connect the cities of Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, Boulder and Denver at a minimum and further south if possible. 2. Passenger Rail west from Denver to the Ski Resorts currently accessible by I70. The highest priority must be Passenger Rail along the Front Range. Thank you.</p>
<p>Jonnie Westerop (10/7/11) via Email One other idea. At the Prospect station, keep the small local shops, even add a farmer’s market, local craftsman element, bike shops, and local government supporting local businesses. Another bike/train station could be located where the Sustainable Living Fair was held this year, by Martinez Park. And one other major bike/train station could be at the Loveland Airport - the planes are getting louder and bigger there, it’s hurting the</p>

atmosphere of that Boyd Lake area. Hook the train to DIA – make it focused on trains/bike parking. We could call it “Jaibaly Station” after the good doctor who was killed on his bicycle a number of years ago. Have a local farmer’s market there as well.

Eliz Carney (10/8/11) via Email

I urge you to make passenger rail a high priority in CDOT planning, especially for the Northern Front Range. My husband and I benefit from the Denver light rail when we visit our daughter in Denver, and we would love to be able to use a commuter rail from Ft. Collins to Denver, rather than having to fight traffic on I-25. The economic, environmental, stress-reducing, and all the other benefits of rail over more and larger highways are obvious. We just need common sense and political will. Thank you for all your work to make information about this project available to the public.

Karen Benker (10/10/11) via Email

Hi, I wanted to add my comments to the Front Range Rail Plan. I am very much in favor in funding the rail project starting in Fort Collins and linking to Thornton where the rail line can tie into the FasTracks line. I live in Longmont and our city will greatly benefit for being the transfer point between Fort Collins, Boulder and Denver. This line will save fuel, clean the air, and relieve traffic congestion on I-25. We need to find funding for this rail plan before we widened I-25. Why does rail always have to take the back seat to more highways? It's time to change that old thinking. Thank you.

Gary Thomas (10/10/11) via Email

Please add these comments to the open house / public input for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan currently under development: There is a “perfect storm” gathering regarding changes in how people and freight need to move: The price of fuel is already high and expected to only go higher, there is growing congestion on Colorado roads and that is only expected to get worse, there is growing concern about the environmental impact of transportation on ozone and carbon monoxide, and there is growing evidence of the impact of transportation emissions on global climate change. Rail services stand poised to provide safe, cost effective and environmentally friendly solutions to the needs of the citizens of Colorado to move themselves and freight. In particular there is growing interest in passenger rail service. Certainly here in Larimer County we hear many people asking what are the chances that we will have commuter rail service to Denver and ultimately inter-regional service to the west coast. However, today the railroad industry only sees freight as its mission. There seem to be plenty of plans and visions to increase the capacity to move freight. But the view of the rail companies is best captured in the notes from the CDOT visit to Union Pacific Headquarters where it was expressed that the railroad does not want any impact on its operation that would not occur “but for” the presence of passenger service. In other words they see any passenger service as a barrier to their success. There needs to be a fundamental change in the approach of the railroad industry to see that passenger service is as important to their corporate missions as the movement of freight. Back in history that was the case and must be again. Having passenger service “tiptoe” around and take second class status to freight movement is not a workable long term solution. To address that situation, the new rail plan should include several sections not necessarily in the current vision: 1) The history of passenger rail service in Colorado (and by reference in the nation) should be examined in the light of how much service was available and why the railroads quit providing passenger service. 2) The factors that led the railroads to abandon passenger rail service should be analyzed in the context of the current and expected changes in fuel costs, regulatory environment, environmental and climate considerations and the true costs of the various other modes of transportation. 3) The railroads should be asked to provide concrete numbers and other requirements as to what it would take to put passenger service on equal, or even superior, footing with freight operations. It should be noted that in World War I, the railroads were nationalized in order to protect the movement of strategic war material which included troops themselves. Hopefully with the right regulatory and financial environment the State and the railroads can find a common ground to expand needed rail services for both passenger and freight in a mutually beneficially fashion. Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Bersh (10/11/11) via Email

I have the following comments to offer on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan: The first thing that needs to be marked for funds is anything to do with the immediate safety of rail transportation in Colorado. Secondly, we need to put the plans for re-establishing commuter rail along the north Front Range as described in the North I-25 EIS on the front burner of the state rail plan. This alternate transportation along the existing BNSF line is greatly needed by the growing population of the north Front Range. It is in high demand and needs to be in place ahead

of the timeline outlined in the EIS Preferred Alternative. Could we please see commuter rail re-established in my lifetime, 2025 or sooner! Thank you for the opportunity to provide citizen input.

Bonnie Adamson (10/11/11) via Email

Thank you for considering my thoughts regarding passenger rail service in Northern Colorado along the Front Range. I think passenger rail is a high priority. I hope you will consider the placement of passenger rail through Fort Collins, Loveland, and Longmont. Rail along the I-25 corridor will encourage development along the interstate and harm the three cities that I've mentioned. Also, more people are going to need to drive their cars in order to connect to the train if it goes along the Interstate rather than through the cities. Also, I hope you will consider it a priority to work towards passenger rail for our area as soon as possible. Already, it is dangerous to drive on I-25 to Denver because of the density. Many of us are reaching an age where it is getting harder to drive. Also, passenger rail will be a huge benefit to the environment. Thanks for your time in considering my opinion.

Dianne Thiel (10/11/11) via Email

I am writing to comment on CDOTs efforts toward a Passenger / Freight Rail Plan. I am very supportive of work that will increase passenger rail facilities, service and interconnectedness along the Colorado Front Range, including from Cheyenne WY to Albuquerque NM. This corridor is the largest in the state in terms of population, so first priority should be given to it, as there will be a guaranteed ridership. Construction of a Front Range corridor would be cheaper per mile because of the terrain. Also, I believe the Front Range corridor would be a corridor for the 99% (income level) of Coloradoans, not the 1% wealthiest. Coming energy resource shortages and rising energy costs will mean that people will drive and fly less. They will need commuting and travel options that are energy efficient, reliable, quick, direct and cost effective. The answer is rail. We need this Front Range service by 2025 at the latest. While CDOT should certainly start out by sharing existing freight tracks, plans should be made to expedite a dedicated passenger track for this Front Range service. This is because more and more freight will have to be carried by train rather than trucks and planes in the future, and the freight companies will be unwilling to allow unlimited growth in passenger service. AMTRAK has had problems for years with the freight lines, even though they have legislative rights to jointly use some track (see *Waiting on a Train: The Embattled Future of Passenger Rail Service: A Year Spent Riding across America.*) All of these reasons could mean that it will be cheaper to run trucks on the East-West interstates because of reduced congestion. After the Front Range corridor has been completed, the next priority should be an East - West line from Eastern Colorado through Denver to the state line, with the intention of working with Utah to improve service to the Salt Lake City region. There are at least four reasons to delay the East - West line until 2025. The first is that the rising cost of fuel, the on-going sluggish economy, rising joblessness, and the slow uptake of hybrid cars are likely to decrease passenger road traffic on the East-West freeways. Second, the effects of climate change may mean a shorter ski season, further reducing demand for winter travel. Third, if consumer prices continue to increase and salaries stagnate, as they have been doing, residents of the Metro area may not be able afford to go to the mountains for recreation, also reducing peak travel. And fourth, the state and Federal government are not likely to have the financial resources to build both corridors at the same time, since we are well past the flush days of the past fifty years when these projects could have been afforded more easily. That leaves East-West freight train traffic as the main reason for expanded rail service. We already have freight lines on this corridor to provide service. Minor improvements could be made to these lines in the short term. Since I believe the days of 2000 mile food and consumer goods are coming to an end, I see more freight coming from regional sources, not the coasts. By waiting to do the planning until we see what the real demand for East - West transportation will be, a system can be designed and constructed to meet real demand, not the demand that is currently estimated based on present economic conditions. In other words, CDOT won't over-build a system that won't be needed. Some of the reasons behind my thinking include the economic predictions associated with Peak Oil, and the book: *\$20 A Gallon: How the Inevitable Rise in the Price of Gasoline Will Change Our Lives for the Better.* I really don't believe CDOT should be doing straight-line growth estimates without taking into consideration new thinking about our likely future. Finally, I would like to urge CDOT to begin incorporating the economic analyses being done by STEEP, the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project in all future highway/bus/ rail projects. I heard Robert Yuhnke's presentation at the ColoRail meeting in Longmont on Saturday, October 1, 2011. Mr. Yuhnke discussed ways to reduce VMTs, calculate avoided fuel costs, and how mass transit and other measures can keep money in the state's economy. I encourage CDOT to study this SWEEP analysis and include such information in all future CDOT project studies.

<p>Ashley Kasprzak (10/11/11) via Email</p> <p>Hello. I am writing in support of passenger rail. As a northern Colorado resident I find the transportation options to Denver unsatisfactory. I am a well-educated professional who happens to specialize in a field that has few opportunities in Loveland. My husband and I chose to be close to our families who assist with our children's frequent activities. I have been unable to secure employment near my home and commute to Denver. In 2005 the commute was required just one day a week, but as the economy tanked and the small business where I am employed faced new pressures, I was asked to be in the Denver office four out of five days a week. This is personally expensive in terms of unproductive time, gas money and vehicle wear; not to mention the negative environmental effects. It is wonderful that RTD now goes from Denver to north Fort Collins, yet that takes 2 hours each way and is unrealistic for working parents to make that commute daily. I strongly encourage your office to consider investing in commuter rail for the health of individuals, small communities and the environment!</p>
<p>Earl Sethre (10/11/11) via Email</p> <p>We want a passenger train serving N. Colorado -Denver and DIA.</p>
<p>Nancy Kubik (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I am a resident of Berthoud, CO who firmly believes the rail component of the NI25 Environmental Impact Study should be given the highest priority in the state. Connecting cities along the north front range would preserve farmlands that are vital to the quality of life in our area, while also supporting business growth and development in designated, high-traffic areas along the commuter and passenger route. The passenger rail component of the plan would make it safer and faster for residents in this part of the state to work, shop and play throughout the area, preserving both our economic vitality and our quality of life.</p>
<p>Marolyn Lemming (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>Support for passenger/commuter rail on North I25 corridor. It is estimated (as you probably know) that a train on average goes 436 miles per gallon of gas. Which proposed rail projects should be included in the plan? A: The rail component of the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS). Is the proposal a high or low priority? A: The rail component of the NI25 EIS should be given the highest priority in the state.</p>
<p>Mary Beth Buescher (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>Please Support passenger/commuter rail in the North Front Range and give rail in general a high priority in the state.</p>
<p>Bill Franzen (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I am in support of a State Rail Plan that addresses the need for passenger service connecting Front Range cities; including service to Cheyenne. This has been a missed opportunity that should have been followed through when the first oil crisis occurred in the 1980's. New Mexico addressed a shorter line from Albuquerque to Santa Fe as a public initiative several years ago. They have had challenges of ridership resulting from the scale of the project, but through good planning and designing to the overwhelming need of the front range, the State Rail Plan could be a tremendous step towards providing a strong and lasting economic and environmental change to Colorado.</p>
<p>Tracy Hoff (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I am in support of passenger rail and believe that the rail component of the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS) should be included in the plan and that it should given the highest priority in the state.</p>
<p>Deanna Ball (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I have listened to the reports on rail coming to North front range by 2035, that is not soon enough. The traffic is unbelievable coming in and out of Loveland every morning and evening. What a wonderful way to travel to work, by rail, time to read or just relax instead of the fight on I-25 every day.</p>
<p>Roger E. Clark (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I again write to advise that I support the rail component of the North I 25 Environmental Impact Study. It should be given high priority.</p>
<p>Janet Rosetta Schockner (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I want to express my enthusiastic support for the rail component of the North I-25 Environmental Impact Study. In my opinion, the rail component should be given the highest priority. Passenger rail service connecting Larimer County city and town centers is desperately needed and would do so much for the economies and the quality of life in all of the communities served by it. Please approve this proposal and put it on a fast track to be completed as soon as possible.</p>

<p>Tiffany Zerges (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I'm a resident of Loveland and I'm in support of a rail component in the N125 Environmental Impact Study. Please put the rail component at the TOP of the priority list. The residents of Northern Colorado are in dire need of public transit to the southern part of the state and, if possible, New Mexico. This rail is of the utmost priority not only for environmental reasons, but also for our safety (to prevent the frequent and deadly accidents on I25) and our economy (to provide jobs and save people money by using public transit). Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<p>Nancy Kain (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I want you to know that I support passenger rail in the North Front Range, connecting Larimer County city and town centers such as Fort Collins, Loveland, and Berthoud with Denver, Longmont, Boulder and Cheyenne. I was a City Council member in the 80's and some people could see then that it would be beneficial to Loveland's economic development to have easy commuter transportation along the front range. The problem has only gotten worse and the solution more obvious. We taxpayers (and the environment) simply cannot afford to pave our way out of this problem. We must have mass transportation. I support including the rail component of the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS) and that it should be given the highest priority in the state. Thanks for your commitment to solutions.</p>
<p>Mark Betz (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>My name is Mark Betz and I am a resident of Loveland, Colorado. I want to advocate strongly for the rail component of the NI25 EIS. I believe that this project should be given paramount priority for immediate consideration. Although I now work in Loveland, I spent 10 years previously working in either Boulder or Denver. For eight and a half of those years, I commuted to Boulder and took an RTD bus from Longmont to Boulder which I very much appreciated. I valued an easier commute as well as knowing that my vehicle was not part of "the horde" coming into Boulder every day. Given the number of commuters who travel into the greater Denver metro area every day, a rail project connecting Larimer county to the metro area makes tremendous sense, environmentally and economically.</p>
<p>Moofie Miller (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I absolutely support passenger rail in the North Front Range, connecting Larimer County and town centers such as Fort Collins and Loveland. I support the rail component of the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS). The rail component of the NI25 EIS should be given the HIGHEST PRIORITY in the state of Colorado. I am a native of Colorado, been here my whole life. WE NEED PUBLIC RAIL.</p>
<p>John Freeman (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I support passenger rail in the North Front Range, connecting Larimer County city and town centers such as Fort Collins, Loveland, and Berthoud with Denver, Longmont, Boulder and Cheyenne.</p>
<p>Kathi A. Wright (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>I support passenger rail for Larimer County, esp. Fort Collins, and Loveland to Denver/Colorado Springs/Pueblo.</p>
<p>Ira P Schreiber (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>These are my personal comments on the proposed state rail plan. I will key on only one segment; passenger rail. We all know our history of passenger rail both statewide and nationally. The great Interstate Highway experiment has reached its end. We cannot maintain what we have and there is no economic sense to continue to expand and build mega-highways. The cost in dollars and land use is prohibitive. The North I-25 corridor should be expanded with rail FIRST, not highway. Use the I-95 corridor in Florida as a poster child. Then, if required, expand the highway. Remember, no one has ever paved their way out of a traffic jam. It just moves to a different choke point. The Front Range, with relatively minimal expense and railroad cooperation, offers an ideal throughway of connectivity. The rail model has been proved worldwide and Colorado can be a leader in showing others how to combine modes to give the best options. Just look to California, North Carolina and even Switzerland and many other European countries to see how it is done. I hope the rail plan, when executed, will show favorably how modern passenger rail can go a long way to providing sound transportation for the future.</p>
<p>Dr. Florine P. Raitano (10/12/11) via Email</p> <p>The one MAJOR concern that I would have with this particular study is that they are sticking their nose into the I-70 and I-25 corridors when there are already TWO other studies dealing with those corridors – the AGS Feasibility Study and the Interregional Connectivity Study. You remember the old saw about too many cooks spoiling the broth? That is my biggest concern here. And there is not a representative from the I-70 corridor sitting on the Freight and Passenger Rail plan steering committee. There is a comment in the 5-4-11 workshop about high speed</p>

<p>rail on the I-70 corridor. That scares me, because if they recommend using the existing UP line through the Moffat Tunnel, then that would be in direct conflict with what will come out of the AGS study. And they don't seem to have decided precisely what high speed rail means. In most countries, it means in excess of 150 mph. In the US, we seem to be ok with the concept of 75 – 90 mph. I have grave concerns about this.</p>
<p>Gary Carter (10/12/11) Formal Letter See A.5.11</p>
<p>ColoRail (10/12/11) Formal Letter See A.5.12</p>
<p>Margaret J. McCreary (10/12/11) via Email Please sir I urge you to add the rail component to the I-25 Corridor transportation plan and EIS. I am a native of Loveland, Colorado and lived away for over thirty years. When I returned 5 years ago, I was dismayed to realize that there was no direct route to Denver by public transportation, be it Greyhound bus or light rail or train. This is of utmost urgency for those of us who care about efficient and clean transportation and affordable transportation. This should have the highest priority for rail projects in the state given the large numbers of people who live in Northern Colorado. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<p>Carol Rush (10/12/11) via Email Thank you and those working with you for the work that is going into the development of the state plan for freight and passenger rail. You people are making every effort to develop a superior plan for Colorado. Hearing about it from you last Wednesday morning when you drove up to Loveland to meet with our League of Women Voter's group was very helpful and instructive to us, and now we are spreading the word about this to our fellow League members. My main interest in this plan has to do with the development of multi-modal transportation system that will serve the needs of those of us who live along the Front Range. I'm not informed enough to make comments about what other areas of the state would like and need. Along the Front Range, however, I think that it is crucial to offer passenger transportation that is an alternative to I-25. Population growth, gasoline shortages, growth of pollution from gas emissions -- all of these are conditions that cause me, and many others just like me, to look to more efficient ways to transport out population. I am glad that bus transportation has become more available to those of us in the North Front Range area, but buses still use gasoline, still pollute, and cannot move populations over longer distances as quickly as trains. It seems logical to use existing railway lines to develop a passenger rail system. When I study the proposals but forth by the N I-25 EIS for commuter rail, it looks reasonable to me. I hope that the state plan can incorporate this preferred alternative. My greatest concern, however, is the long timeline in the EIS plan before any rail would be available along the Front Range. I think that the proposed State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan could address this problem. A commuter rail line connecting Fort Collins to the FasTracks in Longmont would be a good first step. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to the next step in this process of providing the best multi-modal transportation system for Colorado.</p>
<p>Larry Roos (10/12/11) via Email I wish to give input on the long term rail plan your group is preparing. I live in Loveland, CO; and am retired. I support the following broad categories for Colorado: 1. Smart Growth for cities and counties. 2. Less fossil energy use to benefit us economically and environmentally. 3. Less dependence on autos for transportation and more use of mass transit. 4. Smart investing in our infrastructure for the future. I do support and wish we would develop a rail mass transit system to run from Fort Collins to Denver. We have used rail for traveling in Europe and Japan. We have become converted to this type of travel. It is safe, dependable, reasonable cost, and efficient. As a senior, it would make sense to make trips via rail as opposed to a congested freeway. I would believe this would make sense for commuters and others. Colorado needs to be a leader in mass transit; and a laggard in creating more concrete highways. This takes a long term vision.</p>
<p>Cathleen A. McEwen (10/12/11) via Email Just adding my voice to the many who clamor for rail here in Northern Colorado, to connect us to other communities along the Front Range. We need this ASAP.</p>
<p>Philip and Beverly Weber (10/12/11) via Email Having spent 3 years in the city of Chicago, 8 years in the suburb of Shaker Heights, Ohio (Cleveland suburb) and 25 years in Summit and Maplewood, NJ (New York City suburbs) prior to relocating at retirement 14 years ago to Loveland, Colorado, my husband and I are advocates of public transit. Shaker Heights in the 1960's had its own rail line that connected to the City of Cleveland system. We could go by rail transit from our house on the East Side</p>

all the way to the Cleveland Airport on the far West side. It was great. The Shaker line was two blocks from our house. In both towns in NJ, we were a half mile walk to the train station. At the time of the proposals, we responded – supporting N125 EIS. We still strongly are in favor of this, especially with the growth we have seen in the past 14 years. We feel this should be a top priority.

Janice M. Finch, City and County of Denver (10/12/11) via Email

Here are some general comments from the Denver perspective. We will provide additional detail with some statistics and a map next week. 1. The City and County of Denver represents a unique and complex situation of dense urban development crisscrossed by a significant number of major rail corridors – both freight and passenger rail -- as well as rail spurs, existing grade separations, and at-grade crossings. The future FasTracks corridors add even more challenges, including a number of new at-grade crossings as well as additional delays and safety issues by adding passenger rail to existing at-grade freight rail crossings. 2. If not specifically owned by freight railroads or the Regional Transportation District, Denver assumes major on-going infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation costs, and has limited funding for new construction needs. These funding needs for Denver and other impacted cities and counties should be taken into account as part of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. 3. For example, maximizing Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) funding and seeking dedicated state funding for highway-railroad grade separations should be emphasized in future funding scenarios because of the age and deficiencies of current overpasses and underpasses. These deficiencies include structural and functional concerns such as safety, condition, clearance, capacity, ADA compliance, pedestrian and bicycle access, etc. Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the existing structures is quite costly. New grade separations currently cost up to \$60M each. These significant costs should be accounted for in the Plan. 4. The alignments of any high-speed rail service or other intercity rail corridors should directly access Denver Union Station and Downtown Denver, rather than bypassing the Central Business District. 5. CDOT should continue to explore relocation of major through freight rail traffic to the east of Denver in order to provide rail corridor capacity for passenger rail, and to reduce negative impacts on surrounding residential and commercial development by freight rail such as noise, potential dangers of hazardous cargo, congestion, unsafe crossings, and accidents. Please contact me with any questions.

M. L. Johnson, Ed.D., Ph.D. (10/12/11) via Email

Please include passenger rail service to the Northern Front Range in the transportation plan.

Front Range On Track (10/12/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.13

Irene Fortune (10/12/11) via Email

Regarding Federal and State \$\$ to facilitate transportation in Colorado, please keep in mind all of the folks in northern Colorado who need more affordable transport to Denver, Longmont, Boulder, Cheyenne. Rather than spend billions to pave another lane or two in each direction on I25; and maintain same in the future - Light Rail using the existing BNSF tracks would transport thousands more people to jobs, shopping, school, leisure pursuits. It would also be an easy, affordable way for visiting tourists to get around. I know there are people (me included) who would love to go to Denver or Boulder more often for shopping, or dinner, or a museum. The thought of driving and trying to park (and paying for the gasoline and parking fees) is daunting at best. Light Rail would make trips so much easier and more affordable. I could do it more often!! Of course, the converse is also true. There are folks in Denver who would love to come north to hike or go to a festival or just visit family. Light Rail does go in both directions. \$\$\$\$ need to go where they will do the most good for the most people. Remember, no more lanes, light rail is the future.

Robert Brewster (10/13/11) via Email

I would like to offer some comments regarding the potential role of rail as a valuable pillar in our state's transportation infrastructure. Colorado trails many states in the realization and implementation of rail solutions to myriad mobility challenges. Yet it hosts invaluable but privately-owned rail corridors that parallel some of the state's most impaired thoroughfares. It is incumbent upon Colorado's transportation visionaries to partner with these veterans of commerce in order to bring their expertise in moving product into the realm of moving people. Any such partnership must be mutually beneficial, as well as respectful in that the railroads' first priorities are owners and customers. Regrettably, these partnerships were not established in earlier administrations for they will now cost us much more in time and dollars. Why is rail important? It is unmatched in fuel efficiency. East coast carrier CSX advertises it can move one ton of freight almost 500 miles one gallon of fuel. That's remarkable

by any standard. Rail alternatives remove untold internal combustion engines from our environment and clogged, crumbling pavements. Colorado rails penetrate the cores of our communities along our principle corridor of commerce, I-25. They exist where the bulk of the people are and often want to go. Rail capacity can be increased incrementally, as dollars and demand predicate. Phased in. Rail solutions garner popular support as evidenced by the passage of the FasTracks tax and the levels of rail ridership. The public is way ahead of those charged with solving our transportation problems. And not just in Denver or Colorado. With adequate resources, rail services could be operational in a fraction of the time as new highway projects, largely due to the nature of improving existing infrastructure. Rail operations are virtually impervious to inclement weather, not unfamiliar to Coloradans. Our safety and mobility should not be compromised due to a thunderstorm or snowfall. Rail is the safest mode of surface transportation. Highways are deadly and dangerous. Rail is a catalyst for efficient and sustainable development. Rail riders make more productive use of valuable time. These are some of the compelling justifications for expediting the implementation of passenger rail in Colorado. They simultaneously apply to improving the efficiency of freight movement. A natural and necessary pairing. Colorado cannot afford to postpone rail by one, two, or three decades. Our needs are too great and our populace deserves better. Indeed, our citizens demand swift action.

Sylvia McCune (10/13/11) via Email

I support passenger rail in the North Front Range, connecting Larimer County city and town centers such as Fort Collins, Loveland, and Berthoud with Denver, Longmont, Boulder and Cheyenne. The rail component of the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS) is vital to the area. This rail component of the NI25 EIS should be given the highest priority in the state. This will help decrease the heavy traffic on I25 and will be needed.

Nate White (10/13/11) via Email

I am writing in support of a robust passenger rail system that connects Fort Collins to Denver, and eventually the entire state of Colorado and into Wyoming. I support a quick transition to this future by using existing BNSF freight lines in Northern Colorado as a beginning to this project. Cities along the northern Front Range (such as Fort Collins and Loveland) built their historic city centers around passenger rail lines, and this infrastructure should be revitalized as part of a 21st century transportation system. Passenger rail is also a very efficient way to move people, and is especially more efficient than cars. I find that the "Energy Efficiency Travel" study listed on Amtrak's website is helpful in explaining this fact. Passenger rail travel also leaves less of a carbon footprint than cars. In an era of expected carbon regulation, as well as rising oil prices, I believe passenger rail is a solution to lowering emissions and reducing oil consumption. Please keep my comments in mind when deciding on the future of passenger rail in Colorado.

May Magruder 10/13/11) via Email

I do support passenger rail in the north Front Range. I used the trains when I was in Europe, and it was great! I would love to go to Denver, but travel on the interstate highway is not for me. A train would be much better for people and the environment.

Conejos County Clean Water Inc. (10/13/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.14

John Nuwer (10/13/11) via Email

I am commenting on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan as a private citizen but as a member of CTAB, PPRTA CAC, and BAC I have made my opinions known and encouraged the members to comment themselves. I believe Mr. Ray Krueger of the Green City Coalition of Pikes Peak, Transportation Working Group (TWG) has done an eloquent job of outlining a position that I agree with and so I am forwarding his comments to you as my own.

Charlotte Hinger (10/13/11) via Email

Please make passenger rail service along the Front Range of Colorado a high priority. There are numerous economic development coming to fruition, especially in Loveland, where I live. Good transportation is essential at this point.

Elia Fisher (10/13/11) via Email

I am a resident of Denver. I am writing to submit my comments regarding the state rail plan. I feel that it would be very important to emphasize the importance of cost savings when comparing rail transit to building new roadways when outreaching to communities with this plan. Many studies have shown that rail is far more cost effective than its asphalt counterpart when considering the subsidies that go toward oil exploration and importation, etc. Second, I feel that rail should be given higher funding priority over roadways and highways. I forgot one very

important comment that I also wanted to include: I feel that priority should also be given to preserving connectivity such as existing rail stations and transfer points. In Denver the DUS Terminal was designed for redevelopment that does not appear to meet the need of the daily commuter. On top of a 3 block walking distance for transfers between the light rail and commuter rail stations, the terminal was also designed to preclude access from intra-city trains from south and west of the property. I feel any similar redevelopments would hurt ridership when stations aren't designed to integrate different technologies.

Pete Rickershauser (10/14/11) via Email

I would suggest a state vision for freight rail be included in the Colorado Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, with the following points made: Colorado State policy should work with freight railroads and others to encourage the diversion of freight traffic from highway to rail, and that future freight growth have the option of using either highways or freight rail for goods movement. This should be done, among other reasons, to: a. Provide the State with environmental and highway safety benefits - emissions reductions, for example, carry Federal funding implications. b. Moderate State expenditures for highway repair and expansion. c. Provide state shippers, receivers, manufacturers and distributors with competitive options for shipping and receiving traffic which do not involve long-distance trucking. d. Spur economic development throughout the state by making Colorado more competitive for industries which require viable freight rail transport options to locate new manufacturing plants, warehouses or distribution centers, or other facilities. To achieve this goal of enhancing freight rail competitiveness, access of Colorado businesses and communities to the benefits of freight rail, and driving toward a total transportation plan for the Department of Transportation which provides users with enhanced transportation mode options while getting the most "bang for the buck" from the State's highway network long-term, the following are recommended: 1. Active freight rail lines in Colorado should be upgraded to uniformly handle the industry standard carload shipping product of 286,000 pounds (car and lading combined) where weight restrictions currently preclude such shipments. The State can assist in this program by undertaking, cooperatively with freight railroads and communities including economic development agencies, a revolving loan program which provides for rail line upgrades to the 286K standard and provides incentives for freight rail users to upgrade or locate new freight rail-served facilities on freight rail lines in Colorado. A number of states have such programs; I suggest Iowa's revolving loan program be considered, as it balances line upgrades with incentives tied directly to economic development, but there may be other models more viable for the State to consider in reaching its goals. The program should also consider establishment and upgrading of teamtracks on freight railroads, which are public loading/unloading tracks maintained by the freight railroads along their lines for the use of periodic or infrequent freight rail users, to also encourage more freight rail use in lieu of highway transport. 2. The State of Colorado should join with neighboring states and partner with BNSF and UP to establish competitive high-cube double-stack intermodal service through Colorado, paralleling I-25 north-south, and I-70 east-west, as well as I-76 Denver east. Purpose of this program would be to squarely position Colorado on the emerging freight rail equivalent to the interstate highway network for highway traffic. Using Denver as a hub on both BNSF and UP, this would encourage the development of high-cube doublestack cleared routes as follows: •Paralleling I-70, between St. Louis and Kansas City on the east, via Limon, through Denver, and out through Grand Junction to Salt Lake City on the west, with ties to ports in the Oakland/San Francisco area, via existing UP routes. From Denver to Stockton, this route would also be available for use by BNSF on a trackage rights basis. This route would need clearance projects to be completed between Denver and Salt Lake to handle such traffic. •Paralleling I-25, between Cheyenne and points north to and including Calgary, AB, through Denver and Colorado Springs, then to Albuquerque and El Paso via existing BNSF routes. At Belen, just south of Albuquerque, connections can be made via BNSF to southern California including the nations' largest import/export container handling ports, Los Angeles and Long Beach. At Sweetgrass, MT, this corridor would provide access via BNSF to the north Pacific range of ports between Portland, OR and Vancouver, BC. At El Paso, this corridor would provide access into western and central Mexico including Mexico City. •Paralleling I-76 between I-80 in Nebraska and Denver via existing BNSF routes, this existing intermodal route links with Chicago and points east as well as Minneapolis. It would connect at Denver to the two corridors above going west to Salt Lake and south to Albuquerque. •Paralleling US 85 from Cheyenne to Denver via the existing UP line, this existing intermodal would connect with the intermodal corridors radiating south from Denver; at Cheyenne, it provides access to the US north Pacific range of ports including Portland, OR; Tacoma and Seattle, WA. •Loosely paralleling US 287 between Denver, Amarillo, Dallas-Fort Worth, then I-35 to Laredo, TX (largest Mexican gateway) and I-45 to Houston, TX, this would provide significant access to the Texas Gulf Coast as

well as Mexico. At Denver, the route would connect with routes above north via Cheyenne and west via Grand Junction and Salt Lake. From Denver south, the route could be shared by BNSF and UP - in this case, UP has overhead trackage rights on BNSF between Pueblo and Amarillo via BNSF which mirror the BNSF rights spelled out above relative to Denver-Grand Junction-Salt Lake-Stockton. To the best of my knowledge, neither railroad has placed a high, or any, priority on developing these corridors. However, looking far ahead (by 2040), these corridors should be developed to remedy the current situation in which Denver and the Colorado Front Range finds itself - far off the nation's freight rail intermodal corridors, with implications for accessing domestic, North American, and international trade flows for business in, or seeking to locate in, Denver. Also, these corridors take a long time to finance and put in place if the public and private partners are willing to see them developed. However, in the East, both CSX and Norfolk Southern have paired with states and Federal agencies to develop such high-cubed double stacked corridors, including development of inland terminals. These two railroads have used distinctly different models to bring these projects on line. These models would be worth examining from the standpoint of developing such corridors throughout Colorado and the West. If the preferred rail alignment in the North Front Range EIS is built, the new construction and upgraded trackage between Longmont and Denver should be constructed to support freight as well as passenger traffic, and BNSF provided the ability to use this route in conjunction with regional passenger rail. This route has the ability to reroute through BNSF traffic between Cheyenne, Fort Collins and Denver to a shorter route. Public benefits would be the removal of through freight train traffic through the communities of Boulder, Westminster and Arvada, among others. Finally, I recommend that the final State Rail Plan contain a map shows Rail-to-Trails in Colorado. While these corridors exist to provide right-of-way for future freight rail development, their current use as trails may lead some segments of the public to believe they do not have a possible future reverting to freight rail use. Clarifying the purpose of the Rails-To-Trails program in Colorado would help communicate the possible role of these rights-of-way in future rail development in Colorado. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Tim Johnson (10/14/11) via Email

Here are some of my thoughts for the Colorado Passenger and Freight Rail Plan. 1) I live in Fort Collins and see many of the freight trains passing through town. I have been concerned about community security issues for a long time since derailment (including accidental or deliberate) is a serious concern which would create a huge community hazard. The freight contains many cars marked hazardous and which contain solvents and gases. A derailment has the possibility for massive chaos in our urban settings if the contents of these freight cars were released. I think it imperative that the freight lines (especially those carrying hazardous materials) be moved out of urban corridors. A rural eastern corridor is much needed. 2) For various reasons including safety, freight trains are required to slow down to low speeds in urban areas, which as urban areas grow will increase the time lost for freight movement. A rural corridor will minimize the time factor. Of course, the corollary is that urban traffic is frequently disrupted creating great inefficiencies for business and health (ambulance corridors separating folks from emergency care facilities). A rural freight corridor with faster freight movement will likely move some of the freight off of the I25 corridor. How much? Perhaps you have some data. 3) The urban corridors are well placed for intercity connections through the heart of our communities. The BNSF connections between Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont are essential for folks moving up and down this corridor for our local needs. This corridor links the central downtowns of these communities with easy access for most folks. Interstate 25 corridors are more difficult to access considering the time it will take folks to get to the I25 from inner city areas. Longmont is envisioned as the hub for those connecting to the Boulder area or to Denver through RTD. It is important that the Fort Collins-Boulder (which obviously includes CU-CSU) connection be considered of vital importance for the future of Colorado as well as connections to Denver Metro. 4) Crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. I understand the hazard issue but, new, at grade crossings are virtually impossible for these modes requiring outlandishly expensive grade separations. This makes access to destinations "across the tracks" difficult and increases "unnecessary" indirect auto trips to nearby destinations. Note, that this is Fort Collins experience with the Mason Street - BNSF Corridor. There are many, many old, existing crossings on streets and sidewalks which are at grade and connect easily when the trains are not passing. There are walkover crossings on the CSU campus, near and south of Laurel Street, that connect campus buildings. But, to get a new crossing requires grade separation south of Prospect. This requirement is grossly expensive and nearly impossible to achieve leaving many people disconnected from easy access to College Avenue and the businesses there. I can imagine many cheaper solutions for this access including variations on "mini-arm" crossing blocks such as are in place for major street

crossings. What do other countries do, such as The Netherlands? Please address sensible, modest cost solutions for crossing access which will serve to connect neighborhoods to neighborhoods and to businesses. Thank you.

Anonymous (10/13/11) via Email

As you consider where to put Federal and State \$\$ to facilitate transportation in Colorado; please keep in mind all of the folks in northern Colorado who need more affordable transport to Denver, Longmont, Boulder, Cheyenne. Rather than spend billions to pave another lane or two in each direction on I25; and maintain same in the future - Light Rail using the existing BNSF tracks would transport thousands more people to jobs, shopping, school, leisure pursuits. It would also be an easy, affordable way for visiting tourists to get around. I know there are people (me included) who would love to go to Denver or Boulder more often for shopping, or dinner, or a museum. The thought of driving and trying to park (and paying for the gasoline and parking fees) is daunting at best. Light Rail would make trips so much easier and more affordable. I could do it more often!! Of course, the converse is also true. There are folks in Denver who would love to come north to hike or go to a festival or just visit family. Light Rail does go in both directions. \$\$\$ need to go where they will do the most good for the most people.

Dan Gould (10/14/11) via Email

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the State Passenger and Freight Rail Plan vision statement. The present statement falls short by failing to communicate that a 21st century rail system will be essential for maintaining the economic vitality of Colorado. Our present rail system is based on a 19th century land-use and transportation template. There is little passenger rail, and rail freight operates inefficiently and unsafely in urban areas. Components of a 21st Century Rail Plan: The key for a 21st Century plan is the physical separation of freight and passenger rail operations. Land-use planning and public-private investment should promote redevelopment of passenger commuter rail in the existing urban corridors and development of modern freight/logistic corridors away from urban zones. For example, in the urban areas of the North Front Range associated with highways US85 & US287, efficient passenger commuter rail could be redeveloped on present and upgraded UP and BNSF tracks. New transit-oriented urban development would be promoted to complement the improved passenger service. A new rail/logistic corridor for the North Front Range should be developed between the 2 existing urban corridors. Such a logistic corridor would provide for high efficiency, intermodal freight operations. Closely associated land-uses like warehousing, distribution and manufacturing would be included. As fuel prices continue to climb, the new rail/logistic corridors would provide adequate capacity for the transition from inefficient truck freight to energy-efficient rail freight. The new logistic corridor could be designed to accommodate future high-speed passenger rail. It could also provide abundant right of way for renewable energy sources that could be used for transportation. Such a logistic corridor would move rail freight transportation out of the 19th Century and into the 21st. Needed Background Information: This planning process should be designed to provide important background information on a number of questions; 1) Future costs of fossil fuels and the economic attractiveness of rail freight relative to highway truck freight in a world of rising fuel costs. 2) Potential for electrified rail using renewable energy generation on railroad rights of way by wind and solar technologies (including photovoltaic and concentrated solar thermal, as well as large-scale, stationary electricity storage devices). This approach would be essential if adverse effects of climate change escalate to result in public acceptance of assigning a cost to releasing carbon dioxide into the environment. Fuel pricing would greatly favor renewable sources in this case. Colorado is very favorably positioned to exploit renewable energy technologies. 3) Investigate models of regional land-use planning for aligning shared interests of businesses, consumers, and land owners to provide for development of new rail/logistic corridors. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Best wishes for a productive planning process.

Gina Janett (10/14/11) via Email

I'm writing to comment on the Colorado passenger rail plan. I have been following multiple CDOT studies for years including one from the 1990's that looked at multiple possible passenger rail corridors and found the North Front Range to be one of the best for attracting passenger trips. The most recent I-25 EIS also spells out a component of passenger rail to Fort Collins through our existing communities. I am writing to support the rail component of the I-25 Corridor EIS as the number one priority for passenger rail in the state. It is time we move forward to push up the schedule for providing passenger rail along the Front Range and specifically to the North Front Range. I specifically support provision of passenger rail on the existing freight tracks that run from Fort Collins through Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont to connect these already vibrant, higher density town centers to the Boulder and Denver metro passenger rail and bus systems. The City of Fort Collins will be completing its Mason Corridor Project in the next year or two which will provide rapid transit bus service along this same rail corridor and provide

a basis for future passenger rail. Already, the land along the route is increasing in value and density of development to further support the density needed for passenger rail. We have a large University with over 26,000 students and 5,000 employees adjacent to the rail line as well as a growing downtown and a large amount of retail and commercial development along the route. CDOT has lagged behind most other states in the provision of both mass transit bus and rail systems. It's time to catch up. The North Front Range is the corridor to prioritize and the existing rail tracks through our downtowns is the location to provide it.

Joan Teresa Shaffer (10/14/11) via Email

Thank you and the State Passenger and Freight Rail Plan Steering Committee for your efforts in developing and proceeding with the plan. I am writing in support of your efforts and to ask the Colorado Department of Transportation to consider the commuter rail component of the N-I25 EIS the top rail service priority in the state. I also ask that CDOT do everything possible to reduce the implementation timeline from 2075 to 2025. Re-establishment of passenger/commuter rail between Cheyenne, Wyoming and the Denver Metro area through city and town centers of Fort Collins, Loveland, and Berthoud through Longmont and Thornton is the lowest hanging fruit for any rail project in the state. We know that the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad is the most willing of rail companies in combining freight and passenger service and that they are the operators of the Northstar line running between Minneapolis and Saint Cloud. This service is running a similar distance, largely on single track and took 12 years from start to finish. Coloradoans can do the same. There is simply no reason for delay. Residents of Northern Colorado and throughout out the state are ready to see rail service implementation in our lifetimes. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for all your good work.

Georgia Locker (10-14-11) via Email

I am pleased that CDOT is working on its first state plan for passenger and freight rail. Because northern Colorado has a significant population and has been growing at a fast rate, I hope that it will be an area that is important for consideration when building passenger rail lines in Colorado. FasTracks would need to be completed from Denver to Boulder and Longmont. Hopefully, tracks would be built through the cities, to make access easier for a sizable population and prevent sprawl. When that is completed, work could begin on adding a line from Longmont through Loveland to Fort Collins and possibly beyond to Cheyenne. Exploring the use of existing freight tracks (BNSF) would make sense to me because of its location close to population centers. Freight rail also needs to be examined for expansion, to help with reducing truck transport, which is polluting and destructive of highways. In the 44 years that I have resided in Fort Collins, vehicle numbers on U.S.287 and I-25 have hugely increased, making personal safety, diminished air quality, longer travel times, and energy use a concern. All of these could be addressed by adding passenger train transportation to the mix and getting some cars off the road. We cannot build our way out of these problems by adding more lanes to highways. Improved bus transport locally would also likely be helpful. Thank you for considering my comments and concerns on this issue.

Anonymous (10/14/11) via Email

I live in Fort Collins and want a way to escape the congestion that plagues this region. I am thrilled that CDOT is undertaking this opportunity to look at the rail network in the state and find a way to better utilize it, for passenger and freight needs. The AAR found out that demand for freight trains will double by 2035 requiring the addition of second or even third tracks on rail lines. The United States is expected to hold another 100 million people by 2050, each with pressing mobility needs. Widening the freeways has not worked for the last 50 years, and won't work for the next 50 years. We need alternatives, and we need them now. During the I-25 EIS comment period most people were in favor of a passenger rail alternative to the congestion on US 287 and I-25. What CDOT proposed is simply unacceptable. We would get a wider highway, with more pollution, deaths, carnage, increased health care costs, etc. The people expressed multiple times during the comment phase that we do NOT want to look like Southern California. Waiting until 2075 for passenger rail to Fort Collins is too long of a wait, we need rail today. Is there a better alternative? I think so. A 21st century solution for the traffic problems on the Front Range would be a modern, fast intercity train such as the Stadler FLIRT (Fast Light Innovated Regional Train) or similar vehicle running along a double tracked BNSF Front Range Sub from Denver to Cheyenne. Trains would be every 15 minutes during the day and with freight trains running at night. The tracks there only see 10 freight trains daily anyway, therefore has excess capacity that can be used for passenger trains. The railroad would be elevated above the city streets of Fort Collins, Loveland, and Longmont so traffic and emergency vehicles can freely flow again. Stations would be built with shopping integrated, so the shoppers ride transit and the transit riders shop. The old

timey American way to run a regional rail line, with overweight, noisy, slow trains that only run hourly, if at all, is not the way to run a 21st century network. The FRA regulations need to go. RTD and CDOT should explore options to get a waiver like what Caltrain, Capital Metro in Austin, TX, and the A-train in Denton did. There is no reason why American trains must be the heaviest things on the tracks considering that Caltrain found out that the lighter European trains were safer in nearly all aspects. A state sponsored passenger train route down to Albuquerque and El Paso should be a goal for CDOT. This would connect Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and places in the south part of the state to each other in a traffic free way. In order to avoid fouling up the freight trains, especially considering that demand for freight trains will double, the passenger trains to the south should be on a separate track next to the freight tracks to use their right-of-way and spare the use of Eminent Domain. I don't see the need to spend \$15 BILLION to build a train up the mountains, especially considering that there are no major population centers towards the west nor the year round demand necessary for a well-functioning rail line. The needs of the people living on the Front Range, who are here year round should be first priority. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I look forward to the result of the study.

Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs (10/14/11) Formal Letter via Email

See A.5.15

Ray Krueger, Green Cities Coalition (10/14/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.16

City and County of Denver (10/14/11) Formal Letter via Email

See A.5.17

Ryan Stachelski (10/17/11) via Email

I have been sharing information about CDOT's State Freight & Passenger Rail planning process with my colleagues at the City of Arvada. We are appreciative of your efforts to compile data and wanted to add a statement about our economic development ambitions - my colleague Ryan Stachelski from Arvada Economic Development Association (AEDA) mentions the following: The City of Arvada has a history of recognizing the importance of manufacturing and primary employment not just within Arvada but within the Region. When Rocky Flats closed in the late 80's the City of Arvada doubled it's efforts to create a local environment that embraced non-retail employment. As such, the City created the Arvada Economic Development Association, which, since its inception in 1991 has helped to create over 6,000 non-retail jobs in Arvada. Part of that success is understanding, and advocating for land uses that allow for industrial uses, including having access to rail. Arvada is very interested in being able to provide rail accesses to businesses both along the UP and BNSF. Our particular interest is in SE Arvada East of Wadsworth past Tennyson. Arvada is also interested in developing Industrial property along the BNSF rail spur in NW Arvada south of Rock Flats and along highway 93. One of our City Council Goals is to create an "Energy Corridor" in Arvada by attracting businesses working with NREL. In addition to Energy businesses, the City of Arvada works closely with a number of local economic development organization that attracts a number of different types of businesses that all need access to rail. Not having/limiting access to rail for businesses deeply impacts the State and regions competitiveness in attracting and retaining quality companies to Colorado.

Forrest Whitman (10/17/11) via Email

I'd like to underline the comments I made in Alamosa. We all agree that passenger rail is a good thing, but the studies we did at Rocky Mtn. Rail Authority point to some pretty strong data saying it's an essential thing. Some kind of rail along I-70 and links to some kind of rail along I-25 will one day have to happen. We can't build more miles of concrete forever. Also, we need to do whatever we can to keep the Chief operating in eastern Colorado and servicing Santa Fe and Albuquerque, as it does now. And, yes, rethinking the out of service former main line of the D & R G W (Minturn to Pueblo) as a way to get some of the freight off both interstates needs to seep into the U.P.'s mind. Other than that the general rationale for passenger rail is admirably expressed in the missives of Jay Southby & COLORAIL.

Dolores Williams (10/17/11) via Email

Thank you for undertaking the first state plan to look into passenger and freight rail. What I would like short term (2025), is for FasTracks to complete the DUS-Boulder-Longmont line and I would like commuter rail connecting Fort Collins to FasTracks at Longmont, through downtowns so maximum numbers of people can access rail without driving to reach the stations. Longer term, 2035, I would like the same commuter line extended to WY state line and Denver Union Station. If FasTracks doesn't want to build the North Metro line, then the Fort Collins-Longmont train should run all the way to DUS. Also longer term, freight rail needs thorough planning. Freight rail expects to

double its business at minimum. Unless working people resume working AND getting higher wages however, they won't buy or construct at the same rate of increase as the last decade. If manufacturing returns to the US, shipment distances will shorten too. Freight volumes may not rise as quickly as projected. Still, freight volume and train whistle noise (freight and passenger) need to be addressed and a long range plan built with input from a wide variety of stakeholders. I hope the State Rail Plan stakeholder meetings will continue and result in a workable plan followed by implementation. My motivation for supporting passenger rail comes from my concerns over: air quality, transportation expense, safer travel options, overall monetary burden due to household reliance on personal vehicles and regional competitiveness for high tech industry.

1. Hot summers put the North Front Range at the brink of ozone non-attainment at the existing 75 ppb level. Ozone exacerbates asthma, heart disease and lung conditions. NFR needs a non-private vehicle transportation choice to lessen ozone production in city centers.
2. Ire with good transit spend up to 20% less on transportation. Here, by contrast, it takes 3 hours to travel from Loveland to DUS by bus and that is only possible a few times Monday through Friday. Drivers would drive less if there were efficient alternative transportation here but there isn't. Most of us are forced to pay gas, insurance, repairs at whatever cost is charged.
3. It's a little known fact that private vehicles are hazardous to our health. The National Safety Council website states that "Motor vehicle crashes are the No. 1 cause of occupational fatalities and the leading cause of death for ages 2-39 and ages 50-72." Further, there are 3,500,000 injuries each year, severe enough to require medical attention, with ensuing costs of \$244 billion. The odds of incurring an injury from a traffic accident are 1:90. That's high risk to me.
4. When Americans spend as much as we do on vehicle ownership, fuel, repairs, medical attention and recovering from tragic accidents, it far outweighs the investment in passenger rail as a safer way to travel.
5. Other regions with less population already have a passenger rail system or are evaluating one. High tech industries look for infrastructure like transportation alternatives as a prerequisite to move into a region. I believe commuter rail would be an economic catalyst but at minimum, I don't want the North Front Range to fall further behind in competitiveness. We need relief from the "road lobby." We need passenger rail. Soon.

Becky Thompson, CARR (10/18/11) via Email

As an Eastern Colorado resident as well as the Secretary for the Citizens Against Railroad Relocation, I would like to add a few public comments regarding the state rail plan.

1. If high speed rail is pursued-it needs to be with the following considerations:
 - a. Needs to have its own corridor and NOT share freight tracks. The RMRA study clearly showed that high speed and freight can not share tracks and efficiently provide for passenger rail.
 - b. Be cost effective vs. ridership-and able to support itself in operational expense.
 - c. Needs to be created without the relocation of freight rail onto Eastern Colorado. A positive for the problems of the Front Range should not be at the expense of residents in other areas of Colorado.
2. Short line tracks need to be able to access UP and BNSF lines with more ease so that commodities from all over the state can be moved more efficiently.
3. Regulations over the railroads in management of their corridors needs to be put in place:
 - a. Rail right of way fencing and noxious weeds are not monitored which costs county and city governments as well as farmers and ranchers thousands of dollars in additional expenses that they should not have to incur.

Kiowa County Farm Service Agency (10/18/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.18

Forrest Whitman (10/19/11) via Email

I probably wasn't clear yesterday about the out of service former main line of the D&RGW. Our discussions centered around the fact that many trucks could come off I-70 (and out of the Moffat tunnel) if that freight could once again go over the Pueblo to Minturn line. Obviously the UP wouldn't even consider putting that line back in service unless we somehow paid for a big study etc. Again, thanks for including all of our RMRA studies and ideas in the draft project list. It will be interesting to see what the 8 member "super committee" decides about it all. Keep up the good work!

Eagle County Board of Commissioners (10/20/11) Formal Letter

See A.5.19

Ray Krueger, Green Cities Coalition (10/20/11) via Email

A final suggestion for the rail plan process is to distinguish the markets served by passenger rail technology in the rail plan report. In my earlier comments I addressed commuter rail service. I see the RMRA mag-lev service targeting destination travelers with limited attraction to commuters due to the fares required to support the operation. Few commuters would pay more than \$15 per trip unless it offered extremely convenient station stops for their destination.

Karen Updegrove-Peek (10/20/11) via Email

I am contacting you to let you know I want passenger/commuter rail in the North Front Range. For many years I have thought it was a need and would be a convenience for commuters if you set it up with a reasonable fee for service. I feel the North I25 Environmental Impact Study (NI25 EIS) should be included and we should take advantage of access to Federal support. The rail component of the NI25 EIS should be given the highest priority in the state.

Dave Menter, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (10/20/11) via Email

The attached list are the rail projects specifically included in the public transportation portion of the current draft of the Pikes Peak 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. This is for inclusion into the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. In the attached document please see projects: #28, #32, #33, #34, #35, #51, #54, #56 (highlighted in yellow). The map below is also part of the transit plan showing passenger rail alignment and stations: Access existing freight rail track for Front Range Commuter Rail (vision); Monument Intermodal Rail Station (vision); North Colorado Springs - Woodmen Rd/Air Force Academy Intermodal Rail Station and PNR (vision); Downtown Colorado Springs Intermodal Rail Station (environmental clearances already in place); Fountain/Ft. Carson Intermodal Rail Station and PNR (vision); Please contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. See A.5.20

Scott Weeks, Denver Regional Council of Governments (10/21/11) via Email

This message is being sent in response to additional information requested on the preliminary passenger rail and freight rail project lists presented at the CDOT State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan stakeholder meeting held earlier this week. Please see the attached list of future at-grade crossing and grade separations as documented in the DRCOG 2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. I am available to discuss this information with you should you have any questions or need additional information. Thank you for incorporating these at-grade and grade separation crossings into the project list for passenger and freight rail related projects. See A.5.21

Daniel Davis (10/21/11) via Email

I am a retired Army Sergeant, Registered Nurse, and world traveler. I wish to address the rail situation between Western Kansas and Northern New Mexico that is and will affect Amtrak as well as freight services in our area of La Junta, CO. As you know the BNSF does not wish to keep up the rails in this area which will cause Amtrak to divert its service to another line bypassing all of SE Colorado. This is not in the best interest of the state or our community. As a priority, this section of rail needs to be maintained. AMTRAK cannot afford the initial costs although they have said once the rail line has been improved to meet the standards required for passenger service, they will continue the maintenance above the level required for freight operations which BNSF should maintain for continued service. AMTRAK serves all of us in southern Colorado bringing tourism, families, and business to our area or thru our area. It affects us economically with business with local stores, hotels, and tourist sites as well as for the needs of the older generation in particular to travel across this country without having to drive to Denver to catch an airplane and go through the inconveniences of that particular service. As you know SE Colorado is experiencing job losses and loss of business due to the closing of the Fort Lyon prison in Las Animas and ending AMTRAK service might be the final blow to our area economically. know that there are plans being considered for extending the light rail system on the front range - the same light rail system that has empty cars running all daylong through Denver at an enormous cost and zero benefit. Continuing to fund programs such as these that people do not want or use is a total waste of our money. On the other hand, the AMTRAK service in our area has been the highest growing in all of the country. Why would you not want to invest in something that is used, wanted, and more importantly is growing and showing that it will be used more in the future than now with actual data, not imaginary political dreams. Please consider the initial improvement of the rail line from the Kansas border to the New Mexico border in cooperation with Kansas and New Mexico as the number one priority in Colorado, so that AMTRAK services will be continued and continue to grow in the future. Thank you.

Rick Klein, La Junta City Manager (10/21/11) via Email

The City of La Junta is against the change in alignment to the Amtrak Southwest Chief. Attached is a resolution passed by La Junta City Council. We are starting a coalition of communities along the route to work with the Federal Government, State of Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico to secure funding for maintenance of the track to an acceptable level for passenger rail. We are also in the process of working with the State of Colorado, Amtrak, bus companies, and BNSF on improvements to the parking and platform areas. See A.5.22

Stan Bucher (10/22/11) via Email

Please try to keep the Amtrak going through La Junta and this part of Colorado. Thank You

Janet E. Golding (10/22/11) via Email

Good Morning. This email is in support of keeping Amtrak in La Junta. In April, my husband and I took a railroad vacation to the Grand Canyon. We had a WONDERFUL time leaving from La Junta, and doing all of our travels by rail. Thank you for supporting our La Junta Amtrak.

Beverly Babb (10/22/11) via Email

Thank you for requesting comments from the general public in relationship to the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. This comment is primarily passenger plan oriented. I have attended three public presentations to gain knowledge on future plans for our rail lines, most recently your Denver meeting on October 18th. Here are my additions to comments made at that time. Why ride the train? Because it is a fun adventure! There are fabulous views of the country side that you can't get from an aerial view, nor can you look at everything if you are driving a car. Benefits include: Meeting interesting other tourists, very comfortable seating, great food and you get to see pronghorn, elk, fox, eagles, deer, bear and a variety of bird life. Travel is easy, with quick ticketing, and no problem with baggage. The trip is stress free, and relaxing. Read a book, sleep, visit, and watch the beautiful world go by. Heritage on the Southwest Chief: Santa Fe Trail, Bents Old Fort, Koshare Kiva, Boggsville, Sand Creek Massacre Site, Camp Amache, Vogel & Picketwire Canyons of the Comanche Grasslands. Raton Pass, Wooten Ranch, Raton, Capulin volcano, Kellogg Ranch, Imus Ranch, Mora river, remnants of Civil War corral, Glorieta Pass and Civil War bridge, and into Lamy where you can disembark for Santa Fe or continue past four Native American pueblos and into Albuquerque. The option of taking AMTRAK through Oklahoma and into Albuquerque would eliminate all of the above heritage sites, as well as the gorgeous wooded areas and rock formations that make up the country side going south from the La Junta Depot in Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico. It is also hoped that the enumerated items in the Draft #3 under A2, and B7 plans will come to fruition. It sure wouldn't hurt if there were a connection from La Junta to Pueblo. Once upon a time we could get from La Junta to Denver by train – "the good old days". Dollars needed: In those "old days" millionaires bought trains. Today we might think about billionaires buying trains. Anschutz just bought The Broadmoor Hotel. Tourism, particularly Heritage Tourism, is a major income source in Colorado. With a good tax incentive, it might be an interesting proposition. Implement Trails & Rails on all your scenic AMTRAK trains - tourists love it! Thanks for listening.

Anonymous (10/23/11) via Email

I believe that the Amtrak service through La Junta and Raton Pass should definitely be continued. We are a depressed area. We have no bus service! We will be losing Fort Lyons. The Government is trying to take more land at the Pinon Canyon site. What more can the state do to this part of Colorado to turn us into oblivion?

Danny and Mickey Jantz (10/23/11) via Email

I agree with Beverly Babb, Rails and Trails volunteer, in La Junta that Amtrak is our tourism link to Southeast Colorado and beyond. Quote from La Junta Tribune-Democrat: Posted Oct 20, 2011 @ 02:00 PM--La Junta resident and Trails-and-Rails volunteer Beverly Babb told the group about the excitement shown by Amtrak passengers at traveling along the old Santa Fe Trail and seeing bison next to the train. She pointed out the importance of the Southwest Chief for tourism in this area. Tourism is such an important part of Economic Development, which is one of the criteria for evaluation of the proposed projects, that it should be explicitly stated, she said. Jim Souby of the Colorado Rail Passengers Association agreed with Babb, proposing that excursion packages be developed, including Amtrak transportation, lodging in La Junta, and tours of Bent's Old Fort, the Otero and Koshare Indian Museums, and the dinosaur tracks. Other packages could be developed for a number of sites along the route of the Southwest Chief, he suggested. My husband and I take Amtrak when traveling and would hate to see this link to the past be discontinued. Our granddaughter had the opportunity to go to New Mexico with the school she attends on Amtrak, starting in La Junta. What a gift the school gave those

children. Amtrak is probably the only exciting transportation left in this fast paced world of hurry hurry hurry. Amtrak is stress free. What a great commodity. There needs to be a newlywed train. So many possibilities, so many opportunities to dream and explore. Amtrak sees life through lands that roads many times miss. History passes by the passenger of Amtrak and transports them into another world. Please find a way to keep Amtrak in La Junta, the gateway from our past into our future.

Phil Malouff (10/23/11) via Email

I have been a lifelong resident of La Junta. I am also the municipal attorney for several municipalities along the rail line. The rail line is of critical importance to the heritage of this area as well as to the transportation of commerce and tourists. The loss of the line would be catastrophic to the area and the points along the line. I believe the communities wholeheartedly support the continued operation of the Southwest Chief. Please do not shortchange this area by allowing some to take a cavalier view of things which are vital to our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Hengel (10/24/11) via Email

The train should go thru downtown with a VERY RELIABLE Bus System to the airport. I live in Colorado Springs so this is a concern to me.

Ray Krueger (10/24/11) via Email

Thank you for the project lists. I believe my written comments are summarized in PassangerRailProjectlistDRAFT_3.PDF, item B-8 except I specified new grade-separated track through or adjacent to the freight ROW for safety, avoidance of freight delays, and higher speeds necessitating curves with greater radii. The difference is critical to attracting ridership and to possibly alleviate the freight railroads' concerns for sharing the ROW.

Sara and Bob Miner (10/24/11) via Email

We should like to go on record in support of the continuation of Amtrak's Southwest Chief. It indeed unfortunate that Former Governor Bill Richardson previously negotiated agreement to have NM purchase that stretch of track from Raton Pass to Lamy by is being overturned by the current Governor Susana Martinez. This historic Santa Fe route and their Chief traveled through some of the most beautiful scenery that the southwest has to offer; to no longer permit our current generation the opportunity to enjoy this experience would be sad indeed. Do what you can to support the survival of this route.

Jonathan Hutchison (10/24/11) via Email

Hello: Thanks for sending this and three items on the passenger projects. First, I think something should be added around ensuring all of the state's Amtrak stations and platforms are in a state of good repair and ADA accessible, which isn't the case right now. Regardless of how intercity rail develops within the state, it's reasonable for the existing facilities to be functional, safe, and present a positive image. Regarding the idea of adding capacity between Denver and Grand Junction, should the idea be stated as "adding capacity between Denver and Grand Jct.," as opposed to specifying an equipment type? I understand the regional sensitivities related to the builder, but the reality is that folks want more seats between those two places, as opposed to the seats being provided via a specific equipment type, which happens to be operational incompatible (end-of-car diaphragms don't match) with the equipment currently used on the Zephyr. Again, the operational matters are details from a policy perspective, but wouldn't it be more accurate to state the desire for additional capacity. Thanks.

Hello: I just reread the idea and caught my error about the DEN-Grand Jct. item. However, I still think it should be framed as "additional frequencies/additional service," as opposed to being linked to a specific technology, which may or may not be suitable for this desired route. Thanks.

Bill Jackson (10/24/11) via Email

I would like to comment about the passenger rail service here in La Junta to NM and Kansas and the freight service. The Southwest Chief is a vital player in the economic success to our rural community. If we have any future we need to plan for connection to passenger service to Pueblo and Denver to allow commuting to the Front Range on high speed passenger rail. The Rail service is one of the key components in the economic sustainability for business, agriculture and the local economy.

It is imperative that the lines between La Junta, Trinidad and Raton be maintained in order to support high speed as well as freight traffic. The railroad has historically been a major employer in the area and continues to be a vital supplier in the job market. Thank you for allowing my comments.

Bob Radosevich (10/24/11) via Email

The Town of Palmer Lake has had discussion to the proposal of creating a "Quiet Zone" within the Town of Palmer Lake. This would include, but not be limited to, new circuitry, remove and replace 2 gates with 4 gates, traffic signaling, and road widening. We would like to be added to the Passenger and Freight Rail Plan. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Irene Thompson (10/24/11) via Email

I am e-mailing you concerning the Southwest Chief train that has been a service La Junta, CO for 40 years plus. It is a necessity that we keep the rail line open to service La Junta and surrounding cities. It would be devastation to La Junta as well as the other neighboring communities that Amtrak gives service to if we no longer had this service. We are in a depressed area, with many folks out of work, this would mean more folks out of work, the La Junta office employs 9 people and the train crew does stay overnight here which gives business to La Junta. I saw only this morning when the Southwest Chief stopped in La Junta that there were extra passenger cars added for the trip today. Approx. 400 passengers pass through La Junta on a daily basis, the train is usually full. We need to keep our little towns in southeast CO alive and keep as many services as we can in our area. Folks travel many miles to board the train in La Junta. There are only three airports within 10,000 square miles that serve this area. Folks use the services of this train to go on business trips, as well as vacations, it is a great service and very convenient in many ways. The elderly use this service to visit family, it is a very safe way for them to travel. The Trails and Rails Volunteers held their annual banquet recently in Sept. 2011 and reported 40 active volunteers who made 63 trips and came in contact with 14,389 passengers on the Southwest Chief. There are folks who just travel the Southwest Chief to follow the Santa Fe Trail, we have a lot of history here. School children travel on this passenger train on their field trips to study the history of the Santa Fe Trail and Bent's Old Fort. Our children need this education and experience. It seems there are several locations requiring the reduction of speed limits due to poor conditions on this track. Surely there are funds that can get this taken care of. Railroads are repaired every day, so please don't pull the Southwest Chief out of our area, we need this service very badly.

Derek Esposito (10/24/11) via Email

I support a passenger rail service from Fort Collins to Denver. I commute this stretch of I-25 every day and would definitely switch to commuting by rail if the option were available.

Herbert Rixse (10/24/11) via Email

I make several trips each year to Albuquerque to visit family. I use to drive there, but now that I am older I don't like driving that far. I like to go from La Junta to Albuquerque by Amtrak, so I want Amtrak to keep running between those two Cities. That is the only way left for me to go.

Reverend Cliff Clusin (10/24/11) via Email

I live in Longmont and currently travel at least weekly to both central Fort Collins and central Denver. I would definitely use rail. This travel habit of mine is likely to continue for a couple decades (God willing). I would really like the majority of those 2 decades to be on rail vs. auto. I believe the energy efficiency of rail will help the State tremendously, somewhat environmentally, but particularly economically, as eventually fuel costs and shortages will further increase the efficiency of rail over auto travel. Other states and countries that already have rail, would be at an increased economic advantage. Thank you.

James Woods (10/25/11) via Email

If the economics of keeping the Raton Pass line open for rail passenger service don't pan out in the future, then I would encourage Colorado DOT planners to try and extend the current Amtrak service from Kansas City to La Junta and on up to Pueblo. That is assuming the Southwest Chief will eventually be rerouted to the BNSF's transcon main track to the South through Amarillo, TX on its way to Albuquerque. That way, Southeast Colorado maintains some semblance rail passenger service and could ultimately see potential growth in ridership between Kansas City and the Front Range. Thruway Bus connections to Colorado Springs and Denver will be the key to making this a success. Realistically, after ridership builds on the busses, a case could be made to extend the train further North, although the freight train traffic issues on this line are well documented. I think getting to Pueblo is an important goal, as La Junta is well off the I-25 corridor, and from a passenger's perspective, a bit too long of a bus ride to Denver. Most importantly, this is the probably the only way we can justify retention of rail passenger service West of Newton, KS where the Southwest Chief will divert South. In other words, running a stub remnant of the current train thru Western Kansas to La Junta will not be viable. Personally, I would like to see the Raton Pass route maintained, but spending millions of dollars for just one train over hundreds of miles of track just doesn't add up.

I may be wrong about this, and the federal government may be crazy enough to pay for it, but unless you add another train, the passenger revenue doesn't even come close to paying for those capital costs. Eventually, the State of New Mexico or the BNSF railway will push the issue, and Amtrak will have to make a business decision. Asking the BNSF to allow use of their track to Pueblo would seem to be a good bargaining chip in return for releasing any obligation to keeping the line over Raton Pass open.

Judy Hensley (10/25/11) via Email

I would like to encourage CDOT, BNSF, Amtrak and anyone else who is interested in rail travel, Colorado and New Mexico to keep the Southwest Chief on its current route through southeastern Colorado and northern New Mexico. I am a Trails and Rails volunteer, so several times each summer I board the train in La Junta and serve as a guide to the geology, ecology and history from here to Albuquerque. The following day, we repeat all our stories northbound. Our trip follows the Old Santa Fe Trail from La Junta to Lamy, and then El Camino Real the rest of the way into Albuquerque. There is so much colorful history to tell! We always see pronghorn antelope, elk and birds of prey. Often there are deer, coyotes and even bear. The adults on the train are often as excited as the children when we see wildlife! The scenery is spectacular, and passengers marvel over the changes from the high plains to the Rockies. Of course I get to talk to many passengers on these trips. There are many Boy Scouts and leaders on their way to and from Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico. There are Amish families, who can take the train but cannot drive, seeking to show the West to their children, to accomplish business, or to keep medical appointments. There are tourists from the Netherlands, the UK, France and many other countries, seeing America by rail, and specifically choosing the SW Chief for its route. And there are travelers from the US, also interested in seeing the West and learning about our Southwestern culture. They come from the east coast, the west coast and every place in between, including folks from Colorado Springs and Denver. The vista dome/lounge car is usually full of passengers until dark as they enjoy the view. Southern Colorado and northern New Mexico would miss all these travelers even more than they would miss us. Lamar, Las Animas, La Junta, Trinidad, Raton, Maxwell, Springer, Las Vegas and Lamy/Santa Fe have enjoyed access to rail transportation and we have enjoyed the visitors who come to our communities on the SW Chief. I volunteer at Bent's Old Fort near La Junta, and often meet visitors there who have come by train. Our college in La Junta has discussed the development of an Elderhostel program that would feature Bent's Old Fort and the Santa Fe Trail, Boggsville, Native Americans and the Koshare Indian Museum, the Koshare dancers, and the petroglyphs and dinosaur tracks, all in our area. Participants could come by train. Excursion trains could bring people interested in the Southwest, stopping for a day or two at each of the stops in Colorado and New Mexico that would be lost if the route were moved to Oklahoma. Heritage tourism here would lose some great opportunities if the route is changed. I hope and pray that we can keep the Southwest Chief on its current route. La Junta grew up as a railroad town; it would be our great loss if the Chief left us. Please keep it here. Thank you for keeping the public informed and for welcoming our input.

Diana Greer (10/25/11) via Email

I have enjoyed using "light rail" in Denver and in Minneapolis, just recently. With the expected population growth along the Front Range, we are in desperate need of commuter rail from the north toward Colorado Springs and even Pueblo. I-25, anymore, is a clogged nightmare to negotiate during peak travel times. So is U.S. 34, frankly. While the major highways/interstates are important, so much of our travel in northern Colorado is between the smaller communities along the existing north-south railroad track. We do have limited bus service, but dependable passenger rail could take a lot of pressure off I-25 where trucks/trailers increasingly slow and clog traffic. With one vehicle accident, the interstate is shut down for miles. U.S. 287 can be a good alternative, but that is governed, more and more, by traffic lights which slow commuters who have to be some place at a certain time. As more people move into our state looking for jobs, going to school, or retiring here for the milder climate and quality of life, we will gather people who are not only familiar with passenger rail, but expect it.

Elaine Bickel (10/25/11) via Email

I am an avid Amtrak rider--and ride several times a year from Lawrence, KS to La Junta, CO and beyond. I have also ridden Amtrak to Chicago, IL on many occasions. My primary concern is the track from Lawrence, KS to La Junta, CO, per the article in the La Junta Tribune Democrat on 10/20/11. I hope very much that the Passenger/Freight Rail Plan will find a solution to keeping Amtrak service over Raton Pass and through La Junta. I am now retired and use Amtrak even more. The Southwest Chief and La Junta have a long history and I hope it continues. Thanks for your time.

Dale Lockwood (10/25/11) via Email

I am writing regarding the State Rail Plan and strongly encourage the North I-25 EIS option for commuter rail to be put at the fore of the plan for the development of passenger rail. The growth in the region, coupled with the existing track, make this the ideal rail project for CDOT to pursue at this time. The economic benefits of commuter rail in reducing wasted hours of workers, reduced nitrogen deposition, reduced carbon emissions and the public health benefits should be explained to the public and should indicate the need for this project now and not in 50 or 60 years as has been proposed. Colorado should follow the lead of many other states that are implementing commuter rail in regions with similar growth and demographic patterns.

Scott Carman (10/25/11) via Email

I am writing to voice my fervent support for the establishment of passenger rail service along the existing BNSF line between Fort Collins and Denver, and ideally the entire Front Range. As a recent transplant to Fort Collins from the Boston area, I have many years of direct experience seeing the benefits of rail travel. In addition to societal benefits such as reduced congestion on I-25 and the resulting reduction of air pollutants, the benefits to the individual commuter are many, including reduced stress from driving in traffic, extra time to work or nap, and ease of access to the many population centers along the Front Range. As a frequent commuter to Denver, I eagerly anticipate the day when I may board a train to make the trip. While I believe rail service would provide a great social and economic boon for all areas of Colorado, the Front Range, as you know, is the most densely-populated and heavily-traveled corridor in the state and should therefore receive priority funding in the State Rail Plan. With much of the infrastructure already in place, this seems like a winning proposition for the state. I look forward to following the progress of the plan as it develops and will continue to ardently support the establishment of Front Range passenger rail service in the coming years.

State Representative Dave Young, HD-50 (10/25/11) via Email

Thanks so much for taking the time just now to answer my questions. I'm writing in support of proposed project C2, which would be passenger rail service from Wyoming through Greeley and Denver to El Paso on the BNSF/UP line. It's my understanding that the line runs into the Denver Union Station, which would make passenger rail service from Greeley and northern Colorado to Denver an attractive transportation option. I'm going to forward your message to Greeley Mayor Tom Norton (who, as you may recall, is a former executive director of CDOT) and Greeley City Councilperson Donna Sapienza. I talked with Donna just now. She and Tom may be able to generate more comments in favor this particular project, though it may take a day or so to do so.

Kendal Stitzel (10/25/11) via Email

Please accept my compliments on the CDOT State Passenger and Freight Rail Plan. It seems to be well researched. As a commuter between Fort Collins and the Denver/Boulder metro area, I am keenly interested. Several comments: * Like many others, I support re-establishing commuter/passenger rail on the existing BNSF tracks between Fort Collins and Denver, connecting with the RTD/FasTracks project in Longmont and Thornton. (This option is previously discussed in the CDOT N-I25 Environmental Impact Study.) I think this service should be given top priority for any funding made available from the current plan and should be targeted for completion by 2025. * We can look to the past for inspiration for state rail. One hundred years ago, there was a double-tracked electric interurban railroad between Denver and Boulder, as well as trolley systems in Trinidad, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, and more. * Regarding financing: There was a state passenger rail study done back in 1994. It discussed costs of various rail options. One of the conclusions was that the state could build out a number of systems throughout the state (including the Fort Collins to Denver option I advocated above) for about the same cost as DIA, which was built with public construction bonds.

Ron Davis (10/25/11) via Email

Thank you for the opportunity to convey my opinions. I am the Director of Economic Development for La Junta, Colorado and I hope the evaluation team will strongly consider the economic importance to the State of Colorado of doing everything possible to retain the Southwest Chief Amtrak route through the Southern part of our State. Southeastern Colorado has been hard hit since 2006 by job losses (500 between Lamar and La Junta business closures in 2006 and another 200+ in Las Animas this coming August). Prior to that and immediately following that our agricultural producers were devastated by severe snow storms, followed by drought. Another blow was delivered this past summer to our cantaloupe producers, ironically a mainstay menu item in the Harvey Houses and in the dining cars of the many passenger trains that used to pass through our communities. In response to these tough economic times, these communities have banded together to try to capitalize on our tourism assets

and now one of those assets is in jeopardy. We tout Historic Preservation in our State and it would be a travesty to allow the rail route that replaced the Santa Fe Trail to be moved to a southern route. The Southwest Chief allows travelers the opportunity to parallel the old Santa Fe trail through the greater parts of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico. Hopefully Colorado's rail plan will include this as a priority as we move forward. The Southwest Chief offers a learning experience to hundreds of Boy Scouts each summer who ride the train along the Old Santa Fe Trail enroute to Philmont Ranch in New Mexico. Many of those troops overnight in La Junta at the Koshare Kiva where there are able to view a museum of Southwest art which could only be rivaled by the Smithsonian's display. Through all of the years that the Kiva has been in existence many years, the numbers of Boy Scouts who have had this experience is in the thousands. Once again, we would hope that the Colorado Rail plan will consider the importance of the Southwest Chief to our nation's youth and to their education. Finally, I would hope that Colorado's Rail Plan would eventually involve offering travelers a "loop" where they could visit every section of the State and ride on various types of rail. For example we could offer a loop which would bring travelers to Colorado from Chicago on the Southwest Chief, have them continue on to Trinidad and travel by highway (car or shuttle) over the Highway of Legends to La Veta, where they could board a totally different type of train on different rail and end up in Alamosa. While there, they could ride another type of train on different rail and then travel by highway (same options as above) to Durango for a truly unique experience. They could then travel by highway to Grand Junction and catch the Zephyr back in to Denver where they could enjoy the Mile High City and then head back towards Chicago. The same loop could be modified for travelers from the West as our international travelers show more and more interest in rail travel in the United States. Eliminating the Southwest Chief would eliminate this "tool" from our Colorado Tourism Organization's toolkit before they ever discovered it was there! In closing, we have begun dialogue with Kansas and New Mexico communities to try to explore viable options that can be explored to keep the Southwest Chief coming through Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico. It is our hope that the State Departments of Transportation will do the same. Thank you for conveying my thoughts.

Paul Gessler (10/25/11) via Email

I'm writing in support of the Environmental Impact study for Rail. Passenger service along the Front Range from Fort Collins to Denver. Build it and they will use it. Or if you're a fan of Field of Dreams, Build it and they will come. Either way is a winner. It's needed. Let's start.

Gwen Richardson (10/25/11) via Email

Greetings! I am writing to encourage you to keep the Southwest Chief running through southeastern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. This summer was my first summer as a volunteer interpreter for the Trails and Rails program, operating out of Bent's Old Fort in conjunction with Amtrak. I took two wonderful trips from La Junta, Co. to Albuquerque, reading our script that relates historical events and provides more information about the sites that the train passes by as we travelled. I got a number of very favorable comments from the passengers who enjoyed our program, presented in the comfort of the lounge car. I originally signed up to be part of this program as I very much wanted to learn about the history of our area. I live in Rocky Ford, Co., a neighbor of La Junta. I have always been intrigued with the history of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. On the two trips I took this summer, I fell even more deeply in love with beautiful New Mexico which truly is the Land of Enchantment. Some of the folks I talked with as I gave my presentation were traveling from their homes in Chicago and northern New York state. They had never seen the prairielands of the West. They were astonished at the wide open spaces and then amazed as we traveled into the mountains as we passed through the tunnel at Raton Pass. These people were on their way to Los Angeles. They got to see so many fascinating areas, from busy cities to the plains, then the mountains, and finally our deserts. The route of the Southwest Chief cannot be duplicated anywhere else, only by the diverse lands that it currently passes through. If passenger service is discontinued for our area, it most likely never can be restored. Please help us to keep our beloved Southwest Chief running on the track it is traveling today. The ride is incomparable. We just can't lose it!

Eric Fried (10/25/11) via Email

Just a quick note - I understand the comment period has been extended. I think getting alternatives to driving cars is the most critical, even though I love to drive. I want choices! Here it is the 21st century and I still have no choice to get to Denver, or Longmont or Boulder but driving (Greyhound is not practical). Only acquiring right of way in the next 25 years is not acceptable. Put in the plan: acquire right of way, plan commuter rail, build commuter rail, get commuter rail operational. Paving more lanes of highway can wait. If we can get folks, including me, out of our cars, we might not need to pave so much of our planet anyway. Thanks.

Dan and Tricia Swann (10/25/11) via Email

I agree with Beverly Babb, Rails and Trails volunteer, in La Junta that Amtrak is our tourism link to Southeast Colorado and beyond. Quote from La Junta Tribune-Democrat, Posted Oct 20, 2011 @ 02:00 PM. La Junta resident and Trails-and-Rails volunteer Beverly Babb told the group about the excitement shown by Amtrak passengers at traveling along the old Santa Fe Trail and seeing bison next to the train. She pointed out the importance of the Southwest Chief for tourism in this area. Tourism is such an important part of Economic Development, which is one of the criteria for evaluation of the proposed projects, that it should be explicitly stated, she said. Jim Souby of the Colorado Rail Passengers Association agreed with Babb, proposing that excursion packages be developed, including Amtrak transportation, lodging in La Junta, and tours of Bent's Old Fort, the Otero and Koshare Indian Museums, and the dinosaur tracks. Other packages could be developed for a number of sites along the route of the Southwest Chief, he suggested. My husband and I take Amtrak when traveling and would hate to see this link to the past be discontinued. Our daughter had the opportunity to go to New Mexico with the school she attends on Amtrak, starting in LaJunta. What a gift the school gave those children. Amtrak is probably the only exciting transportation left in this fast paced world of hurry hurry hurry. Amtrak is stress free. What a great commodity. There needs to be a newlywed train. So many possibilities, so many opportunities to dream and expore. Amtrak sees life through lands that roads many times miss. History passes by the passenger of Amtrak and transports them into another world. Having Amtrak in La Junta allows us to travel with our children on family trips for low cost. Please find a way to keep Amtrak in La Junta, the gateway from our past into our future.

Ann Harroun (10/25/11) via Email

I strongly support passenger rail service from Fort Collins to Denver along the existing BNSF rail line as soon as funding becomes available. This would take traffic off of our overcrowded highways, conserve energy, and benefit the downtowns of communities along the way. Opponents say that we do not have the density of population necessary to support commuter rail. The nice thing about commuter rail is that it's possible to run a few cars now and add to them as density increases. Waiting for the density to increase means waiting until the cost of land acquisition for parking and for a possible second track becomes prohibitive. Let's do it right the first time.

Georgia Locker (10/27/11) via Email

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to Draft #3 of the Colorado State Rail Plan. I am very pleased to see that the Draft is acknowledging the need for rail along the Front Range to Fort Collins, and possibly also to Cheyenne. I hope that CDOT will proceed with design studies for the projects and build segments as funds are available.

Heather Balsler (10/27/11) via Email

Hello – I am forwarding comments from the US 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition which includes the Cities of Broomfield, Boulder, Louisville, Westminster the Town of Superior and Boulder County. Please add the following language to the Passenger Rail Project List: The Northwest Rail Line, connecting Denver to Boulder and Longmont, is a significant regional commuter rail that will link the northwest region of the Denver metropolitan area to the FasTracks system at Denver Union Station. The North I-25 EIS recommends that commuter rail service is then extended from Longmont to Fort Collins, making this a project of statewide interest.

Thomas Clarke (10/27/11) via Email

Hi, I would like to see CDOT give a high priority to improving and developing (where needed) rail transportation in all of the Front Range corridor of Colorado. With the Colo. population projected and expected to double by 2050, we will not be able to build enough highways to meet the demand for regional mobility. Developing passenger rail transportation - conventional or high-speed rail - will help steer future growth toward Transit Oriented Communities and help us reduce sprawling growth that is detrimental to our environment and is unsustainable in the future. Special attention should be given to the potential development of high-speed rail in the I-25 right of way between Ft. Collins & Pueblo so that new growth in this corridor can be public transit oriented. I believe that many more people would use public transportation in Colo. if it is available & and is convenient. We know that public transportation is very cost effective once the infrastructure is in place and that it is a good investment of public funds

Norman Bishop (10/27/11) via Email

I hope the Southwest Chief can continue to take visitors through La Junta, Colorado, on the old Santa Fe Trail that ran from St. Louis, USA to Santa Fe, Mexico, then on El Camino Real to Albuquerque. Why? Any alternate route would forfeit the natural, scenic, wildlife, and rich cultural values available to U.S. and international travelers that

they enjoy on the present route. I think of Henry David Thoreau's choice of "the road less traveled." Why, too? On a personal note, I was born in La Junta. My father had been a civil engineer on the Atchison-Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. He was a friend and contributor of wildlife specimens to Francis "Buck" Burshears, who founded La Junta's Koshare Indian Dancers. My grandfather was a pattern maker for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. As a kid, I rode the Vista Dome to Aspen for the 1949 Goethe Bicentennial Convocation and Music Festival, where I heard violinist Nathan Milstein play Bach's Violin Concerto with his eyes closed. -Rich memories, all associated with rail travel. After a 36-year career in the National Park Service as an interpretive ranger, I have returned several times in recent years to La Junta, and have visited Bent's Old Fort. What I found in that restored structure is a rich revelation of a time of pioneering commerce on the frontier of a new nation. The country is well served by the living history programs there that recall for us the enterprise and the endurance of our forefathers. My sister is volunteering as a Trails and Rails guide. She adds to passengers' enjoyment of the trip from La Junta to Santa Fe and beyond by interpreting the geology, history, wildlife, and esthetic features along the route. All that would be absent from a straight shot through Oklahoma. In this age of hurry, hurry, hurry, perhaps we should add not to the speed, but to the richness of experience for travelers on the rails of our country. Please retain the present route of the Southwest Chief. Thank you for considering these comments.

Dylan Bernstein (10/27/11) via Email

I would like to encourage CDOT, BNSF, Amtrak and anyone else who is interested in rail travel, Colorado and New Mexico to keep the Southwest Chief on its current route through southeastern Colorado and northern New Mexico. I am a Trails and Rails volunteer, so several times each summer I board the train in La Junta and serve as a guide to the geology, ecology and history from here to Albuquerque. The following day, we repeat all our stories northbound. Our trip follows the Old Santa Fe Trail from La Junta to Lamy, and then El Camino Real the rest of the way into Albuquerque. There is so much colorful history to tell! We always see pronghorn antelope, elk and birds of prey. Often there are deer, coyotes and even bear. The adults on the train are often as excited as the children when we see wildlife! The scenery is spectacular, and passengers marvel over the changes from the high plains to the Rockies. Of course I get to talk to many passengers on these trips. There are many Boy Scouts and leaders on their way to and from Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico. There are Amish families, who can take the train but cannot drive, seeking to show the West to their children, to accomplish business, or to keep medical appointments. There are tourists from the Netherlands, the UK, France and many other countries, seeing America by rail, and specifically choosing the SW Chief for its route. And there are travelers from the US, also interested in seeing the West and learning about our Southwestern culture. They come from the east coast, the west coast and every place in between, including folks from Colorado Springs and Denver. The vista dome/lounge car is usually full of passengers until dark as they enjoy the view. Southern Colorado and northern New Mexico would miss all these travelers even more than they would miss us. Lamar, Las Animas, La Junta, Trinidad, Raton, Maxwell, Springer, Las Vegas and Lamy/Santa Fe have enjoyed access to rail transportation and we have enjoyed the visitors who come to our communities on the SW Chief. I volunteer at Bent's Old Fort near La Junta, and often meet visitors there who have come by train. Our college in La Junta has discussed the development of an Elderhostel program that would feature Bent's Old Fort and the Santa Fe Trail, Boggsville, Native Americans and the Koshare Indian Museum, the Koshare dancers, and the petroglyphs and dinosaur tracks, all in our area. Participants could come by train. Excursion trains could bring people interested in the Southwest, stopping for a day or two at each of the stops in Colorado and New Mexico that would be lost if the route were moved to Oklahoma. Heritage tourism here would lose some great opportunities if the route is changed. I hope and pray that we can keep the Southwest Chief on its current route. La Junta grew up as a railroad town; it would be our great loss if the Chief left us. Please keep it here. Thank you for keeping the public informed and for welcoming our input.

Velma Simpson (10/28/11) via Email

I am a fourth generation Colorado native. I have watched as much of the history of the state has been covered by concrete and asphalt or demolished and abandoned in the name of progress and speed. All of my genealogy leads to the railroad in Southern Colorado. My great grandfather was a foreman on the Royal Gorge railway construction. Another grandfather was a boilermaker and the other a coal tender. I grew up riding the railroad from Denver to Salida. If you go to Salida now, you would have no idea that railroad ever existed. The tracks and station are gone. When my husband moved to La Junta, I was thrilled to find that Amtrak came to La Junta. I dreamed of riding the train to Denver to work using wifi on the way only to find out that I needed to go through Chicago to get to Denver by train. Connecting SE Colorado to Denver by train through full implementation of

FasTracks would do more for SE Colorado than any other economic development. Folks could live in small low cost areas but still get to Denver and be on the job the moment the train left the station-just as I did when I lived outside Washington DC and commuted by train for more than an hour each way. The ability to learn about the Santa Fe Trail and area history is an added bonus for the trip to New Mexico. Folks who want speed take other forms of transportation. When I rode Amtrak from Denver to LA and on to Seattle with my two children in 1992, we weren't looking for speed we sought an experience. We weren't disappointed. I've also ridden the auto train from DC to Florida and enjoyed that trip even though the trees were often so thick that you could see little else. Growing up in Colorado I remain more attached to vistas that the SW Chief provides in a wonderful way. Please preserve the wonder of history and railroad for future generations of Americans along the Santa Fe Trail. Once it's gone it disappears forever and will just be a line on an old map. Thank you for your public service at CDOT.

Bobbie Fleming (10/28/11) via Email

I'm writing in support of keeping the Southwest Chief running through La Junta, Co and down through Lamy, NM to Albuquerque. My mother comes to see me in Santa Fe, NM and that's the best way for her to get here. She lives in La Junta, and our whole family rides the train back and forth during the year. It's a beautiful, interesting ride and it would also be a shame for all the people whose jobs depend on that route to be left without work if the route changes. Thank you for your consideration.

Wayne Grogan (10/30/11) via Email

Please don't let the Southwest Chief stop running through La Junta. It would mean economic devastation to a lot more than the Arkansas Valley. I appreciate everything that you can do to keep it running. Sincerely, a National Parks Service Volunteer.

Bruce Gillie (10-31-11) via Email

I am a resident of Eagle County and would like to participate in the advisory committee from a citizens committee if that is possible. Specifically as it pertains to the following state study: Feasibility Study Completed For Potential Major Rail Trail; the 178-mile Union Pacific railroad corridor over Tennessee Pass has been proposed for a trail. By Tom Easley, Colorado State Parks. A study of the potential for trails and recreation in the 178-mile railroad corridor from Cañon City to Gypsum has been completed by Colorado State Parks. Several months of work and research went into the project, which was directed by a Steering Committee that included planners and managers of the four counties along the railroad plus representatives of various landowner, recreation, business interests, and federal land management agencies. After examining several alternatives, the Steering Committee recommends that, if the tracks are ultimately removed, the corridor should be converted to trail use. Initial estimates indicate that by investing between \$6.4 and \$10.4 million, the corridor could be transformed into one of the nation's most spectacular long-distance trails, offsetting the loss of rail service by annually generating up to \$6.6 million for the regional economy. Annual operating costs are estimated to be in the \$440,000-\$567,000 range. The Steering Committee identified nine future actions to carry forward the trail alternative: 1. Prepare a detailed Corridor Development and Management Plan before opening the corridor to trail use. 2. Adopt strategies to ensure trail use will be compatible with adjacent land uses. 3. Pursue opportunities to link the trail corridor with other regional outdoor resources. 4. Develop strategies to protect and conserve the corridor's valuable biological resources. 5. Pursue preservation and interpretation of the historic and cultural resources of the corridor. 6. Secure the resources to fund the capital and operations costs of the corridor. 7. Ensure that hazardous materials are cleaned up to a standard that will accommodate public uses of the corridor. 8. Pursue legislative actions that will strengthen liability protection for adjacent landowners. 9. Pursue land exchange transactions with the railroads that would yield mutual benefits. 10. Develop a volunteer network to assist in construction and operation of the trail.

Bruce Gillie (11/1/11) via Email

My understanding is that UP may have entertained the abandonment of the tracks up to the point of the merger with Southern Pacific and then the interest was withdrawn. We do have a tentative plan that would overlay the tracks without tearing them up and normal operation could be restored in a matter of weeks. That might require only a lease.

Mary and Frank Barry (11/13/11) via Email

We have lived in Colorado for over 35 years and have always urged our legislature and others to consider this plan. We are in favor of this!! PLEASE push this great plan.

Don Elsborg (11/14/11) via Email

Proposal for bus and railcar travel under Moffat tunnel to Winter Park. I would like to outline a proposal to get mass transit to the mountains utilizing a low budget approach. Most of the publicity regarding mountain mass transit has always focused around high speed rail via the I-70 corridor. I would like to propose another idea. I envision a link up of RTD Regional bus services connecting with a small diesel railcar service to take people to Winter Park. This would include: RTD bus service up Coal Creek canyon terminating at Rollinsville. Extension of RTD service from Nederland to Rollinsville. Creation of a small railcar service to ferry people from Rollinsville to Winter Park. It might even be possible for the railcar to make the journey all the way from Denver with pickup locations along the way up to Hwy 93. Here's a link to railcars that outline the idea: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railcar>. The key to this proposal is that we shouldn't invest in an overly complicated railcar solution. It might be possible to use the same DMU railcar that's being envisioned for FasTracks. It should be possible to schedule many railcars through the tunnel during peak hours. There should also be a way to schedule the railcars without hindering existing freight traffic. Freight traffic through the tunnel is few and far between. Railcar stops should also be easier and quicker to build than a full fledged train station. I believe this service can be quick, efficient, and inexpensive. I believe if it's done properly it can eliminate a fair amount of weekend car traffic from I-70 and Berthoud Pass. The City of Denver will receive an additional benefit of increased utilization of the Winter Park resort. This proposal is very different from the original ski train. The ski train was a high priced nostalgic system to ferry people from Denver to Winter Park. The problem was that it took a very long time, was over priced, and only served people from Denver. We need to move beyond this vision of rail with 19th century nostalgia. Please consider this idea in your transportation discussions.

Ray Krueger (11/18/11) via Email

I am Ray Krueger, a community advocate for mobility and facilitator of the Green Cities Coalition Transportation Working Group. I am also on other boards and committees related to focused transportation issues. Today I stand before you advocating for commuters who choose to ride, not drive, an hour or two to work every weekday with the freedom to transfer their responsibility to be safe drivers to a driver with fewer distractions in a train locomotive than auto drivers. I advocate for commuters to have the freedom to check their email at work or work on a report due soon before the bustle of office life interferes with their concentration. I advocate for community groups seeking to attract money from outside their community in the form of salaries earned elsewhere. I advocate for the 2 year old who sees their first fast train streak by their Mommy's car window with the sense of power and majesty I felt as a young toddler watching the steam engine dragging passenger cars. I do not advocate for the sound of a distant train whistle in the middle of the night that still echoes in my memories of decades ago when I lie in bed and hear the 9:47 night train flying through my small village outside Chicago. Enough of the past; today I must ask: 1. What is the purpose of passenger rail in Colorado? Is it a service for occasional destination travelers headed to Eagle County, or everyday commuter travelers? This is a fundamental question for taxpayers to consider. In my mind it should be optimized for the entire multimodal network of Colorado's mobile travelers whether visitors heading to a skiing weekend, a wheelchair user in Colorado Springs needing to visit his specialist in Denver, or some worker at the Pueblo Arsenal who happens to live in Castle Rock. 2. The southern Front Range has tens of thousands of commuters flooding the I-25 corridor every day. I joined the flood for 11 months in 1998 when I wished I could avoid the daily drive. 3. A FAST commuter service is needed along the southern Front Range that is FAST enough to attract the attention of drivers traveling 80-90 mph as they pass Greenland. I define FAST as significantly faster than the drivers because a relative few are traveling to destinations along the freight line. It would use equipment capable of speeds up to 120 mph north of the Palmer Divide which would inhibit the speed after leaving a station at Monument. The downgrade north of Palmer Lake would quickly assist acceleration to 120 mph. I am NOT seeking the high speed technology evaluated in the RMRA report because it would not offer a comfortable ride given the curves in the current freight tracks. 4. Safety is obviously a high concern since neither drivers nor wildlife are accustomed to such fast trains in the corridor. Thus I advocate for grade separation and fencing to protect the commuter rail line from road and wildlife crossings. Permission and cooperation of freight lines to share some of their corridor will reduce the cost of right of way and protect their service from interruptions and urgent pleas to allow the passenger trains to pass the coal unit-freight trains which can barely crest the Palmer Divide faster than 11 mph. The new grade separated track could also relieve the tight curves designed for train travel 120 years ago. 5. While the CDOT Interregional Connectivity Study will determine needs for local intermodal services and rail line connections, I will advocate for a favorable fare structure for monthly

riders to share van pool vehicles at their morning destinations. The van pools could be offered and facilitated by the local jurisdictions or private parties. An early market could be identified by current interregional van pools that originate in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Monument, Castle Rock, Littleton, and Denver. A new FREX service for Ft Carson service personnel traveling from Denver Downtown or stations along Santa Fe Drive, Castle Rock and Monument may be other sources of commuter rail riders. An Amtrak train subsidized by the state to link the Southwest Chief and California Zephyr between Trinidad and Denver Union Station would increase the interstate rail passenger traffic serving destination travelers. 6. The easy commuting between jurisdictions will benefit the economic vitality of each as workers enjoy the comfortable mobility and communications facilities aboard modern commuter coaches. They must also follow their career opportunities. 7. Finally, I propose the commuter rail service brand name to be the Range Runner Express to pick up on the name of New Mexico's commuter rail, Rail Runner Express. This could advance cooperation between the states' programs and realize the dreams of families which have become strung out along the Front Range and encourage a high level of mobility to improve our economic well-being.



Clear Creek County

POST OFFICE BOX 2000
GEORGETOWN, COLORADO 80444

TELEPHONE: (303) 569-3251 • (303) 679-2300

August 29, 2011

Colorado Department of Transportation
Attn: Mehdi Baziar
4201 E. Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Mehdi.Baziar@dot.state.co.us

RE: Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Baziar:

Thank you for hosting the Open House to receive public input on Colorado's State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. Clear Creek County has been vitally interested in the future of rail – and especially passenger service – for many years. We congratulate CDOT for taking on this important task.

The information displayed at the August 23 Open House demonstrates that Colorado's rail system has been heavily committed to freight. As an economic driver to the Colorado economy this has been necessarily so. However, the Open House presentation did not sufficiently discuss the future. While freight rail is obviously expected to remain a heavy economic driver, passenger service has not received a level of attention commensurate with its potential demand, in part because it is not compatible with the freight rail service in location or design. Clear Creek County would propose that inclusion of a statewide passenger rail system, independent of freight rail, be incorporated into the State Rail Plan as a priority for the future. The RMRA study referenced in the open House display and the AGS study currently underway could provide guidance to that component of the plan. The CIFGA – FTA Urban Maglev study should be incorporated also, as should the potential role of the FTA in the future of long range passenger transit.

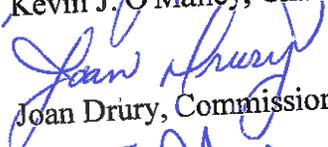
Clear Creek County would further urge CDOT, as a multi-modal transportation agency, to incorporate the State Rail Plan into the Colorado 2040 Transportation Plan. At this juncture the Transportation Plan remains a "highway only" document. The inclusion of the rail plan would permit and promote a comparison of the highway construction, operation and maintenance costs with that of proposed transit elements. The inclusion of both highway and transit elements would also announce to the world that Colorado is open to the possibilities of public-private partnerships for both modes of transportation. We will be looking for that comparison.

Please keep Clear Creek County informed of the development of priorities with the Rail Plan. We are happy to participate in this planning process.

Cordially,

CLEAR CREEK BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Kevin J. O'Malley, Chairman


Joan Drury, Commissioner


Timothy J. Mauck, Commissioner



September, 2011

Gentlemen:

Several years back, Kiowa County, Colorado faced the discontinuation of the viable use of the Towner Rail Line, spanning our entire east/west corridor. As a sparsely populated, very rural area of southeast Colorado, the loss of revenue and marketing abilities from this act has been devastating to the county and its residents.

Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation (KCEDF) is now joining in the fight to save the Towner Rail Line and turn it back into the productive entity that it once was. Our foundation truly believes in the economic development that this rail line could bring back our area of the State of Colorado.

Being a predominantly agricultural area that must now rely on over the road hauling of our grain yields, we believe the regenerated use of the rail line would not only facilitate our residents, but also the population of the United States and beyond that rely on us for their agricultural needs.

There are always struggles in rural areas, but when we find a cause that will enrich our way of life, we can only hope that our voices will be heard.

Most sincerely,

Jan Richards, Community Coordinator,
Along with the entire KCEDF Board

Jan Richards

Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation

P.O. Box 250

Eads, CO 81036

Phone: (719) 438-2200

Fax: (719) 438-2280

September 16, 2011

Dear Madame,

I am writing today on behalf of the farmers on the east end of Kiowa County. We are very close to the Kansas state line, quite a distance from large cities and other places that have many conveniences and advantages. The rural setting has advantages of its own and we are thankful to be living in this beautiful part of Colorado.

I came to this part of the Kiowa County 15 years ago and I enjoyed seeing the trains come through the country but really had no idea what advantage they were to our area. I was new to farming. Shortly after I came, V and S Railroad purchased the Towner line and shut down the regular trains that were coming through multiple times a day.

My husband and I operate our farm southeast of Sheridan Lake, Colorado. I have become more and more aware of the distance we have to truck our grain to get it to an active rail line. With fuel being a bigger and bigger issue, it seems that the rail would once again become something that would benefit the rural county elevators on this line. It would certainly help the farmer if we were able to truck directly to the local elevator rather than trucking grain for an hour one-way.

I am often amazed at the number of semi-trucks on our aging roads. The rail line would be one way of cutting back on the shipping via truck if it were competitive. It is my understanding that the rail line that comes through Kiowa County will be removed for salvage.

If we lose the existing line between Pueblo and the Kansas state line, we lose the ability and opportunity to take our grain to market using this method. Without the rail, we have no other option than to truck our grain, adding wear and tear to the roads, and adding expense to our farm operation via fuel costs.

We would appreciate any help that you can give to help us keep the Towner line. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ruth Buller
8550 County Road 72
Sheridan Lake, CO 81071
719-727-5295



WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics

September 16, 2011

Mehdi Bazair
Project Director
Colorado Sate Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
4201 E Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Sir:

As a member of Kiowa County WIFE Chapter #124, my husband and I have farmed together for forty-eight years in Kiowa County, my husband having farmed for 63 years total. Our son, with the help of his two children, is engaged in the farming business in Kiowa County.

We feel that the abandonment of the Towner Railroad Line to the Avondale exchange would be a great detriment to all communities along the line.

If at all possible, keeping the rail line operational would be of great benefit, not only to the grain growers, but also our schools, businesses, the job sectors, the transportation issues which affect the agricultural community, but the revenue generated from the use of the rail line is needed in each of the communities.

Increased heavy truck traffic does considerable damage to the highway which runs adjacent to this rail line. If the rail line is abandoned, the farmers would be forced to haul grain greater distances, forcing even more expense for those producing grain and causing more damage to the highways.

WIFE urges the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all shippers (elevators, etc.), especially those who have reasonable access to only one railroad. WIFE further urges the STB take into consideration the effect of their decisions on rural America.

I would urge you, as elected officials, and the Directors of our Colorado Department of Transportation to consider the effect of your decisions on rural America.

Respectfully yours,

Phyllis Nelson
President of Kiowa County WIFE Chapter #124
P.O. Box 185
Eads, CO 81036
719-438-5682



WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics

September 16, 2011

Mehdi Bazair
Project Director
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
4201 E Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mehdi:

As a member of Kiowa County WIFE Chapter #124 I am deeply concerned about the abandonment for the Towner NA Junction to Avondale rail line.

Fifteen years ago I wrote a letter to the Surface Transportation Board opposing the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific merger. It is sad to know that what we feared would happen, did indeed. Once VS railway purchased the line in 1999 it has virtually been abandoned to any freight. The tracks need lots of repairs and I know there will be substantial costs incurred to bring it back to a viable rail line. Surely there must be some company that would want to purchase the line and "bring it back to life."

We live nine miles north of Brandon, Colorado, and we hauled grain to Sheridan Lake and Brandon grain elevators before the merger. Our highways have suffered since the VS rail lines took over. I plead with you to preserve the Towner to Avondale line. Kiowa County's agricultural producers and residents need it!

William Jennings Bryan said "Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic, but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

I realize that these 120 miles of effected rail lines might not be important to you in the grand scheme of things. However, I would ask you to consider the effect your decisions will make for Rural America and especially Kiowa and Crowley Counties.

Sincerely,

Catherine Scherler
Kiowa County WIFE Chapter #124
21899 County Road 59
Sheridan Lake, CO 81071
719-729-3367



WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics

September 16, 2011

Mehdi Bazair
Project Director
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
4201 E Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Sir:

I am a member of Kiowa County Women Involved in Farm Economics, Chapter # 124 in Towner, CO.

I am writing about proposal to take up the tracks of the Towner line from CO state line to the Avondale junction, a distance of 122 miles of line. These rails have been virtually abandoned since V&S Railroad took over the line in 1999.

The Towner line has moved a lot of the wheat over the years it was active and could do the same in the future. We need a west line making connections to the West Coast.

Reasons for resurrecting the Towner line are as follows.

1. The Towner line will save energy costs for the state & nation & save large amount of fuel;
2. It will help protect the environment;
3. It will alleviate highway congestion and reduce new construction costs;
4. It will provide a safety advantage to the area, and
5. Will provide economic growth for the area and the state through direct benefits to counties, improved ag markets, development of value added ag markets and reduce shipping costs for many products.

In Kiowa and Crowley Counties we need adequate rail services to help our economy. Women Involved In Farm Economics (WIFE) urges the Surface Transportation Board (S&B) to ensure fair & especially those who have reasonable access to only one railroad. WIFE further urges the S&B take in consideration the effect of their decisions on rural America.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Freda Schmidt
20120 County Road 78
Towner, CO 81071-9618
719-727-5151



WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics

September 16, 2011

Mehdi Baziar, Project Director
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
4201 E. Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Sir:

I am Theresa Weber, a member of Kiowa County Women Involved in Farm Economics. I am writing to express my concern over the possible abandonment of the 122 miles of rail between North Avondale junction east of Pueblo and Towner, CO.

Our farm is located just south of State Highway 96 which parallels the railroad. This farm was established in 1919 by my husband's parents. Crops raised were taken to our local elevators. Now we are required to haul our grain, at a minimum, 60 miles round trip. This is not only an added expense but impacts our highways in a negative manner.

Although the Towner Line was purchased by the VS Railway in 1999, the line has virtually been abandoned to freight service since that time. Small amounts of grain have been shipped from the point at Towner to connect with other lines for markets to the east and south. In 2007 Kiowa County alone produced 9,811,000 bushels of wheat.

Abandonment of the Towner Railroad Line and removal of the railroad tracks from that line would result in the permanent loss of that line. Also, it would damage the economy and jeopardize the continued viability and physical condition of other transportation infrastructure in our area.

In Kiowa County most jobs are related to agriculture. The loss of the railroad has a direct and indirect effect on the business community. With fewer jobs more of our young people are forced to move to the city. The loss of tax revenues from the railroad will have a detrimental effect on our schools and hospital.

The Towner Line needs to be preserved but it also needs to be an operable and functioning railroad once again. Our railroads have always been a link in our country between the producer and consumer. Also, in times of natural disasters or time of war our railroads have been crucial to moving supplies and troops.

I would urge you to support the effort to preserve this railroad.

Sincerely,

Theresa Weber

65676 St Highway 96
Sheridan Lake CO 81071



WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics

September 16, 2011

Mehdi Baziar, Project Director
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
4201 E. Arkansas Ave.
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Sir:

My name is Hazel Woelk. I live in Sheridan Lake, CO across the highway from the railroad. I objected the closing of the R.R. years ago and now I'm opposing the selling of the rails for the railroad. Once these rails are taken up and sold, that's it! In our area here where we all farm, it's bad not to have any transportation for all the grain that is hauled away from this area. Why can't these men who are proposing this deal, realize how the farmers here need a railroad. Knowing the need for a railroad here should make some difference in these men's thinking.

Our roads have gone to pot from all of the truck traffic. The Department of Transportation is parked along the highway to catch all of the trucks without proper licenses. The farmers have enough expenses without being fined.

If the men in authority have any say about this situation, please stop and think of the position this will put the farmers in. With no railroad and no hope of ever getting one, if this one is done away with, will be a hardship on people in the area, not only the farmers, but other residents.

Please take this into consideration. Thanks for listening to what I have to say.

Respectfully submitted,

Hazel Woelk
Hazel Woelk
67170 Buffalo St.
Sheridan Lake, CO 81071



October 3, 2011

Mehdi Baziar
Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E. Arkansas Avenue
Shumate Building
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) applauds Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) efforts to develop a comprehensive plan designed to facilitate rail's ability to make greater contributions to the state's economy and livability. Regarding the plan's components relating to intercity rail, Amtrak offers the following:

1. Preserve Existing Utility – For reasons associated with reduced federal operating funds, Amtrak serves fewer Colorado communities and operates fewer routes today that it did twenty years ago. Amtrak acknowledges its presence in Colorado does not reflect the market, which is sufficient to support more than four trains.

However, enabling intercity rail to begin offering a market-based level of service requires not only adequate public sector capital and operating support, but it also involves capitalizing upon the existing routes. Therefore, Amtrak hopes CDOT's Freight and Passenger Rail Plan will acknowledge the importance of preserving Amtrak's existing national network, and includes an examination of the opportunities associated with preserving the *Southwest Chief's* current routing.

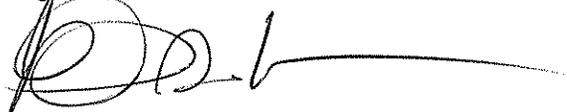
2. Incremental Investments Yield Results – Amtrak understands CDOT is exploring High Speed Rail (HSR) as an option for the I-70 and I-25 corridors. Clearly, high performance intercity trains on dedicated, grade separated alignments have demonstrated their effectiveness worldwide, and Amtrak believes HSR has a role in the United States. However, Amtrak encourages CDOT to assess whether there is sufficient political will and financing available at both the local and federal levels to support HSR. If the plan concludes there isn't, Amtrak hopes the document will offer an interim vision for improved utilization of intercity rail based on incremental improvements that result in passenger trains that are more frequent, faster, and more reliable.

For example, over the past twenty years, California has invested ~\$1.8B in its network of conventional trains, and now the state hosts 20% of Amtrak's total riders. These trains share tracks with freight and commuter trains, and none has a top speed exceeding 90mph. Regionally, Oklahoma and Missouri are among the fifteen (15) states that pay Amtrak to operate corridor service (<750 miles), and CDOT may find it useful to debrief with these states in order to understand the value of an incremental approach; Amtrak could facilitate these conversations.

3. Thruway Bus Connections – Amtrak encourages CDOT to explore using Thruway buses to enhance the utility of the two existing routes. Additionally, Thruway buses can also serve as modal incubators demonstrating the attractiveness of alternative intercity travel options as a precursor to state-funded intercity service, or as a way to augment future, state-supported Amtrak service.
4. Importance of Partnerships – The document should articulate that realizing any vision for intercity rail will require effective partnerships. Specifically, Amtrak hopes the plan will identify that one of CDOT's key responsibilities related to improving intercity rail, is creating a forum for CDOT, Amtrak, and the state's freight and commuter rail operators to work together to help CDOT realize its vision for intercity rail, while protecting the business needs of the other operators.
5. Economic Impact – Amtrak encourages CDOT to quantify the economic benefits of intercity rail, and public transportation generally. Similar to airports, and highways, public transportation facilitates economic activity through passenger spending, employee's wages and taxes, payments to suppliers, and station area development. A potential model for articulating these benefits may be found in the 2008 study of the economic impact of Colorado's airports (<http://www.metrodenver.org/files/documents/transportation-infrastructure/air/ColoradoAirports2008EconImpact.pdf>).

Amtrak applauds CDOT's efforts to develop a comprehensive rail plan and believes intercity rail should play a more prominent role in the state's intermodal network. The Corporation looks forward to collaborating with CDOT, and thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Regards,



Jonathan Hutchison
Senior Director, Corridor Development
 510-238-2671



Town of Red Cliff
40 Pine St.
Red Cliff, Co. 81649

10/06/2011

Mehdi Baziar
4201 E Arkansas Ave
Shumate Building
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Sir,

The Town of Red Cliff is looking for your support with Union Pacific Railroad. The Town would like to fertilize the planted seed that the “**Tennessee Pass Line**” should be abandoned. I met with a UP representative a few weeks ago who confirmed that they have no plans one way or another for the line.

The Town of Red Cliff would like to convert the rail bed to recreational purposes. The rail bed could easily be used as a very scenic bike path removing the dangers of riding a bicycle on Highway 24. In the winter time it is already used as a Nordic skiing and snowmobiling area (illegally). We envision games, competitions, and other events designed to promote tourism for Red Cliff & Minturn.

Funding this route could come from a collaboration of GOCO, Eagle County, Red Cliff, Minturn & CDOT.

This is a brief history of updates in the annual plan regarding this line.

In **1976** the line was listed as a viable coal route for Utah & west central Colorado to Pueblo & points east.

In **1997** CDOT published it’s 20 year multi-modal transportation plan.

The update listed the Tennessee Pass route as a high priority line between Leadville & Avon for passenger traffic, 1 of 5 lines in the state that were listed as “high priority” for passenger rail service.

The other four listed were, Denver to Colorado Springs, Craig to Steamboat Springs, Glenwood Springs to Avon, and Fort Collins/Greeley to Denver.

There were no cost evaluation studies conducted.

This list was later refined to include Leadville to Avon, to Glenwood Springs, to Aspen.

The list was refined again and included Aspen to Glenwood Springs as an immediate action item.

The Aspen line has since been abandoned and is now the ‘Rio Grande Trail’ bike path.



Considering the other locations listed for consideration in any of these updates this line would most likely have fallen to the bottom of the list even then.

In **1999** the update changed the “High Priority” status of the line.

Now the “High Priority” was in reference to the only corridor in Colorado on the danger list for possible abandonment!

CDOT was to monitor and take action if the line is abandoned.

The best thing that could happen for this property would be to release it to other uses.

Somehow the 2010 summary that was presented to the Colorado State legislature the opinion changed, stating that there were “no lines in danger of abandonment”.

They recommended to “continue to watch” the Tennessee Pass line.

The majority of discussions since then have revolved around transportation on the front range and the I-70 corridor. Whether it is in regard to some sort of high speed mass transit from Denver to Vail & the Eagle county airport or beyond the likelihood of using the Tennessee Pass line for passenger rail traffic or any type of rail traffic have long since been abandoned.

The CDOT & UP meeting memo dated 5-16-2011 includes the following “UP does not have any near term plans for the Tennessee Pass line”. Given today’s economic environment the possibility of this rail line ever operating again are extremely small. Any dollars invested in passenger rail traffic in the next 20 to 50 years will go to major urban areas such as the Pueblo to Ft. Collins/Greeley line. Any dollars invested in the mountains will go to passenger traffic along the I-70 corridor from Avon to the Eagle County Airport or to Glenwood Springs.

The condition of the track from Minturn to Leadville and beyond is something that has not been monitored. In fact several miles of track south of Leadville have already been removed.

The facts are:

This line is technically considered “out of service”.

This likelihood this line will ever operate again is extremely small, or non-existent.

There are several communities along this section of line that would benefit when this line is officially “abandoned”.

We are confident that now is the right time for UP to abandon this section of Railroad.

Sincerely,

Ramon V. Montoya



Mayor, Town of Red Cliff

970 754-5860 work / 970 827-5303 town office

970 754-5127 (fax) work / 970 827-5300 town

'It's a beautiful day in the mountains'

12 October 2011

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Colorado Department of Transportation

RE: Comments on the Proposed State Rail Plan

Dear Sir:

After reviewing the state of Colorado's proposal for rail transportation, I believe there is a need for greater passenger rail service. Some of the points that I feel are pertinent are as follows:

1. Preservation of the two existing Amtrak lines in Colorado. CDOT should make the commitment to partnering in the maintenance of the lines, especially in light of the fact that the Southwest Chief is in need of major improvements in southeastern Colorado. This is especially important in light of the fact that Amtrak has threatened to move the route of the Southwest Chief out of Colorado.
2. Front Range passenger service linking Trinidad to Fort Collins should be a high priority. This needs to be accomplished by double tracking the existing lines over Monument Hill and while the existing lines are in an operating state. Integrating passenger service with this freight line could be accomplished much easier with this much needed portion of track.
3. Preservation of right-of-ways should also be a high priority, especially the Towner line and the UP's Tennessee Pass line. Should these rails ever be removed they will be next to impossible to replace. There may be other ROW that should be inventoried and preserved.
4. Intercity commuter lines are a must for the future as fuel costs rise and as employees look outside of their communities for income.

Thank you and CDOT for your efforts to examine the state of rail service in Colorado. What you and department are doing will affect the next generation of Coloradans.

Respectfully,

Gary Carter
6 Deer Run Ct
Pueblo, CO 81001
719-406-6161



October 12, 2011

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 Arkansas
Denver, CO 80222

Re: State Rail Plan Comments

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The Colorado Rail Passenger Association (ColoRail) is pleased to provide general comments on the development of the State Rail Plan. The plan is an important first step toward providing the state with an economic and environmentally sound transportation system. Simply stated, such a system will provide more passenger trains which is a major, necessary and overdue shift in the deployment of state transportation resources for the Colorado Department of Transportation. ColoRail believes it is time to implement passenger rail and connecting transit services and we applaud the Legislature and CDOT for creating Transit and Rail Division to promote these changes.

The plan should emphasize the benefits and importance of passenger rail, particularly compared to other modes of transportation. Understanding of its importance will grow dramatically as we see increases in the state's population, the number of older citizens and energy prices. The current state transportation system relies almost entirely on automobiles that are expensive to buy, maintain, insure and fuel. Furthermore, a great deal of the money for those purchases is exported out of the state, at the expense of the local economy. It has been estimated that approximately 3.5 trillion dollars has been spent on building and maintaining the nation's highway system over the past forty years and almost ten times that amount has been spent on insurance. This staggering amount of money has not produced a sustainable system. In fact the highway system is deteriorating rapidly. As high as these numbers are, they do not take into account the billions of dollars that have been spent on motor fuel. Health effects of emissions and other factors. (Source: Amtrak presentation to the CDOT Transit and Rail Advisory Committee and Southwest Energy Efficiency Project SWEEP presentation to ColoRail, October 1, 2011)

The Denver metropolitan region is making great strides in developing alternative modes of transportation such as light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit. It is time for the state to make the same investments and extend the Denver system through the major transportation corridors linking the state's population centers and connecting other communities to these corridors with convenient transit services. The vision for this system should not stop at the state's borders. Linkages to Cheyenne, Albuquerque, Kansas City, Salt Lake City and beyond should be part of the long range thinking for passenger rail in the state.

Mr. Mehdi Baziar, October 12, 2011

It has been documented that metropolitan regions with strong passenger rail systems save financial resources over time. A study of 66 metropolitan regions worldwide including 11 in the United States found that the share of gross domestic product spent on transportation in those with strong rail systems was 20 percent less than in those dependent on automobiles. The same economic advantage accrued to citizens in those regions. Over time, investing these resources in the local economy rather than transportation provides these regions with a tremendous economic advantage. The same advantages should be provided to Colorado's communities. These analyses do not take into account the environmental benefits of reduced emissions and smaller, more sustainable land use patterns, nor do they include the benefits of local economic development and job creation related to passenger rail systems and terminals. (Source: Newman and Kenworthy, *Sustainability and Cities*)

The following general comments and ideas should be incorporated into the plan and its use in Colorado transportation planning:

- Passenger rail should be the first and primary mode of transportation considered as the state improves and expands its transportation system along the front range. In the I-25 north corridor, the passenger rail component should be the first stage of that plan's implementation. This will allow the state and the citizens along the corridor to realize the economic and environmental benefits from rail as soon as possible and provide an alternative for motorists that reduces their commuting costs and avoids the disruption of highway construction. Furthermore, the cost of the rail component in the corridor is estimated to be less than the cost of the highway component. The transportation planning process must carefully estimate comparative total costs and the local economic and environmental benefits of competing modes and the project plan must emphasize early realization of these same benefits. A model process has been formulated by the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project. The results of these analyses should be key criteria for all transportation projects in the state. A good model for a rail first approach is the I-95 corridor between West Palm Beach and Miami in Florida. The state of Florida built the passenger rail component first, before it began the highway reconstruction. The rail component was designed as a temporary, five year alternative, but it was so successful that it has now run for 22 consecutive years. (South Florida Regional Transportation Authority)
- Alternative modes for personal mobility should be a primary driver for transportation planning for the State of Colorado and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. This mobility and the attendant savings afford citizens, particularly those that are older or economically disadvantaged, much greater opportunity for gainful employment and a better quality of life. Dependence on automobiles creates a serious financial burden on the citizens least able to afford them or drive them.
- Reducing land use impacts from transportation modes should be a primary driver for transportation planning for the State and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. Passenger rail systems have a smaller "footprint" than highways and yet they can transport more people and expand capacity as necessary with minimal land use impacts. Furthermore, existing rail corridors generally serve existing communities and the development of passenger rail along these corridors stimulates economic development such as residential and commercial real estate development and both temporary and permanent jobs in those communities.

Mr. Mehdi Baziar, October 12, 2011

- Rights of way are difficult to acquire and the State Rail Plan should document those that exist and provide a plan for protecting and preserving them.
- Energy efficiency should be a key feature of transportation planning in the State and emphasized in the State Rail Plan as an advantage of passenger rail. In an ongoing study by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory it was found that Amtrak passenger trains are 30% more energy efficient than automobiles and 14% more efficient than airplanes per passenger mile. (source Amtrak and Oak Ridge National Laboratory)
- Passenger trains emit significantly less pollutants and Greenhouse Gases than automobiles. This should be a key criteria for mode selection in State transportation planning and should be emphasized in the State Rail Plan. (SWEEP presentation, October 1, 2011)
- The State Rail Plan and State transportation in general should emphasize and incorporate safety as a key consideration in mode selection. Passenger trains are ten times safer than automobiles. This is easy to understand – just think of the terrible statistics surrounding drunk drivers. Furthermore, alternative transportation choices such as passenger rail allow for sterner measures to deal with drunk drivers without endangering their livelihood. (American Public Transportation Association)
- The State Rail Plan should emphasize the importance of frequency, reliability and connectivity for passenger rail systems. The plan should envision a passenger rail system connecting major communities and wherever else it is feasible. Other communities should be linked to the passenger rail network by transit, regional and intercity bus services creating a system that serves all of Colorado’s citizens.
- The State Rail Plan should emphasize the economic development and job creation potential of passenger rail. This benefit extends beyond the immediate communities served by rail to other tourist attractions including tourist railroads, state and national parks and other landmarks. Amtrak and Colorado Rail Vacation packages should be developed with local and regional vendors. ColoRail is developing models for this kind of venue.
- The State Rail Plan should also examine other changes that could enhance passenger rail and tourism in the state. The State should actively support the retention of Amtrak’s Southwest Chief on its route through Colorado. Demand for this train is almost elastic during peak travel seasons yet Amtrak does not have the resources to add capacity. The State should consider adding “Colorado” cars to Amtrak’s consists. The possibility of a rail link between Denver and the Southwest Chief at La Junta or Trinidad may be possibility. Consideration of opportunities such as these should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan and State transportation planning in general.
- It is important that the State Rail Plan establish a process to continuously consider and evaluate innovative financing mechanisms such as value capture from adjacent real estate that benefits from the rail line, public private partnerships, and other

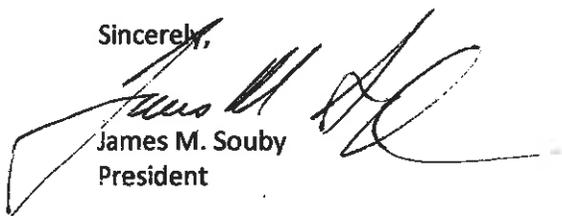
Mr. Mehdi Baziar, October 12, 2011

mechanisms. However these mechanisms must be carefully scrutinized, developed and executed in a way that protects the public interest inherent in public transportation systems.

The State Rail Plan provides the State of Colorado with a tremendous opportunity to change its passenger transportation system from an automobile dependent one that exports wealth and earnings to an intermodal one that imports wealth, creates jobs, and provides its citizens with economic and environmentally sound travel choices.

Please call on me if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



James M. Souby
President

cc: Mark Imhoff, CDOT

Front Range *ONTRACK*

October 12, 2011

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Project Manager, State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E. Arkansas Avenue
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr Baziar:

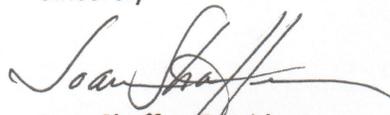
The Front Range on Track (FRONT) Board of Directors supports the development and completion of the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and appreciates the stakeholder participation opportunities. We remain dismayed, however, that there were no substantive public forums held in the metropolitan areas beyond Denver, particularly Fort Collins/Loveland, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. We believe this lack of forums was a significant lost opportunity for public education and input on rail activity in these communities. FRONT is committed to continuing to share news of the plan with our supporters and throughout the North Front Range.

We strongly encourage the Steering Committee and the Transit and Rail Division to place the proposed commuter rail plan included in the Colorado Department of Transportation North I-25 Environmental Impact Study's Preferred Alternative at the forefront of any rail commuter/passenger service implementation plans. FRONT is committed to work to complete this project by 2025 and looks forward to working with CDOT to implement this service within that time frame.

As an extension of the North I-25 plan, FRONT recommends that consideration and priority be given to extending commuter rail north to Cheyenne and south to Colorado Springs/Pueblo. Comments to us through our web site and Facebook page consistently express enthusiasm for full Front Range rail service.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important endeavor.

Sincerely



Joan Shaffer, President



October 13, 2011

Mehdi Baziar

Manager

Mobility Analysis Section

Colorado Department of Transportation

To Mr. Baziar:

Please accept this as a formal public comment and statement of inquiry from Conejos County Clean Water, Incorporated (CCCW) related to the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. CCCW is incorporated under the laws in the State of Colorado and makes this comment in reference to concerned citizens and members of this particular organization.

In June of 2010, concerned citizens incorporated into a Colorado non-profit organization called CCCW to promote awareness around health and environmental issues that affect residents in Conejos County. The catalyst for the incorporation was to build awareness surrounding the radioactive, hazardous, and toxic waste from the Los Alamos National Laboratory being transferred from truck to rail within 250 feet of the Rio San Antonio (River), which is a headwaters tributary of the Rio Grande (River). The truck to rail transfer proposal can be seen in the public record of the Surface Transportation Board, FD 35380. CCCW is comprised of ranchers, teachers, small business owners, and concerned citizens. CCCW has an eleven (11) board member steering committee, and 402 general members.

The San Luis valley (SLV) in south central Colorado is one of the largest sub-alpine Valleys in the world, encompassing over 8,100 square miles. Hemmed in on the west by the San Juan Mountains, and on the east by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the SLV ranges in elevation from 7,000 to over 14,000 feet, and contains the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. The Rio Grande River rises in the San Juan Mountains to the west of the SLV, flows south into New Mexico and Texas and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The SLV has many unique biological features, including areas identified as Natural Heritage areas, and is home to six endemic insect species.

The SLV is 122 miles long and 74 miles wide. This largely agrarian and ranching community is a relatively stable population. Many of the residents are eighth generation. The oldest parish in Colorado, Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, Our Lady of Guadalupe, lies at the southern end of Conejos County. Conejos County is part of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. About sixty percent (60%) of Conejos County's population is minority, and pride in the Hispanic heritage is evident in everything from the names of the rivers, mountains, and towns, to the local Spanish/English radio station. The median household income is less than half the average at \$24,744, and 38 percent of the children live in poverty (US Census 2000).

The SLV is known for its potatoes and alfalfa, and also grows barley, lettuce, wheat, peas, and spring grains. It has been a farm and ranching community for over 150 years, and many of the residents work in agriculture, following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents. Many of the farmers and ranchers still practice traditional methods. It is the highest irrigated mountain plateau in the world, with about 7000 high-capacity wells- over half of which are irrigations wells.

The SLV contains over 5 million acres, of which 3.1 million acres- about 59 percent—are publicly owned (Forest Service, BLM, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service or state). This creates an important relationship between the public and private sectors in dealing with air, and water quality issues in the SLV and Conejos County.

There are eighteen (18) incorporated towns in the SLV, many of which are located along the Rio Grande or its many tributaries. Six counties lie within this large geographical boundary. They are Alamosa, Rio Grande, Saguache, Mineral, Costilla, and Conejos. There are twenty one (21) villages and five incorporated towns in Conejos County. Conejos County is among the poorest counties in the country, and unemployment levels run above the state and national averages (Conejos County 10.5%; as of 2008- not including the chronically unemployed).

Conejos County is a populated area within the SLV impacted by the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. The SLV is impacted since there is one freight line the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad (SL&RG RR), and two passenger lines the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (C&TS RR) and the Rio Grande & Scenic Railroad (RG&S RR) all within the geographic boundary of Conejos County.

STATE DRAFT FREIGHT AND PASSENGER PLAN

CCCW recognizes the need for a freight and passenger plan and would like to thank the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for seeking public comment on the plan. CCCW does recognize this is a draft effort and feels many issues are ripe for addressing in the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan.

CCCW would like to recommend that CDOT clarifies the following in the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan:

- Clearly define what constitutes passenger or cargo. Is radioactive, hazardous and toxic waste, for example, proposed as a possible future cargo?
- Clearly address the Federal Railroad Administration's Assessment regarding the current public works and infrastructure of all affected Colorado Railroads. Are the existing rail line transportation systems presently safe?
- Will protocol in each of Alamosa, Rio Grande, Saguache, Mineral, Costilla, and Conejos counties be followed? Such a question may pose interesting and challenging circumstances for county planning commission members and county commissioners by way of *PERMITTED USES* as opposed to *PERMITTED BY RIGHT* issues.

PURPOSE AND NEED

CCCW would like to inquire if the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan will place emphasis on valuing local efforts, and promote a sustainable economy to benefit the local population.

CCCW would like to recommend that CDOT clarifies the following in the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan:

- Economic development has been mentioned but to what extent? Will the C&TS RR be helped financially with marketing and ridership increase?
- What is the long range plan, and how does it fit into each respective Colorado County Master Comprehensive Plan?
- Has an evaluation been set in place to suggest that regional business transportation models have NOT been compromised and that the local trucking industry will not be negatively impacted?
- Does transportation of passengers/cargo issues preclude the establishment of Railroad monopolies?
- Will the proposal integrate local and regional needs? For example, a commuter service between Antonito and Alamosa during the winter months would benefit the local and regional needs. One already exists in the summer months to bring passengers from the RG&S RR on the SL&RG standard gauge line to the C&TS RR narrow gauge line.

SOCIO-ECONOMICS

CCCW welcomes transportation development and is interested to learn more about the socio-economic benefits, as the rough draft proposes to do.

CCCW would like to recommend that CDOT clarifies the following in the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan:

- What is planned in the way of revenue sharing for each respective county, and how will this impact the current Payment in Lieu of Taxes to the counties?

INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing railroad infrastructure in the SLV has changed ownership many times. It is common knowledge that many of the SLV railroads operate on facilities that are over 100 years old. Several bridges on the SL&RG line are currently in use and were constructed of yellow pine and Creosote was added to give a semblance of moisture protection. Gaping cracks and structural fissures predominate some of these bridges.

CCCW would like to recommend that CDOT clarifies the following in the State Final Freight and Passenger Plan:

- Will the Final State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan will evaluate current different infrastructure transportation plans in the SLV and made a comparative study to indicate a need for such a concept.
- CCCW would like to request that any plan regarding freight/passengers pertaining to the current state of public works, infrastructure and terrain of passage of particular Colorado Railroads, some of which exist in “wetlands” be addressed.
- A myriad of infrastructure structural issues exist. How will this proposal address such deficiencies? Railroad ties are customarily replaced every so often- many because they obviously have to be replaced. Those ties that are due to fail but show no visual clues as to this occurrence- how will these be addressed?
- Who will assume liability if, for example, an injury or worse yet a death occurs due to infrastructure failures?

PUBLIC HEALTH

CCCW would like to let CDOT know that there is presently a negotiated settlement in place between the Department of Energy, CCCW and others. The settlement is attached for your review. CCCW would like to respectfully request that for any radioactive, hazardous and

toxic cargo proposed to be shipped via rail a thorough site specific environmental analysis be completed as well as a health impact assessment.

Additionally, where handicapped people live along a rail transportation route and no safety barriers exist, such as flashing lights, horizontal safety barriers, sonar devices, etc., what will be the procedure to address these?

CCCW would like to request that a representative from Conejos County be added as a cooperating agent for further study of the proposed State Freight and Passenger Railroad Plan. Thank you for your careful consideration of CCCW's comments and statement of inquiry. Please keep us informed of any upcoming public meetings in the SLV and/or Conejos County. We can be reached via email info@conejoscountycleanwater.org or via phone at 720-939-9948.

Respectfully remitted,

Mary Alice Trujillo, Chair

Attachment (1)

Cc:

Steve McCarroll

Charlotte Bobicki

Brenda Femlee

Erin Minks

Ed Vigil

Gail Schwartz

Conejos County Clean Water Inc.
P.O. Box 153
Antonito, CO 81120
www.conejoscountycleanwater.org

EXHIBIT A

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO**

Civil Action No. 10-cv-02663-JLK

CONEJOS COUNTY CLEAN WATER, INC.; SAN LUIS VALLEY ECOSYSTEM
COUNCIL; CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY,

Plaintiffs,

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY; NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION; THOMAS P. D'AGOSTINO, in his official capacity as Administrator of
the National Nuclear Security Administration; STEVEN CHU, in his official capacity as
Secretary of the Department of Energy;

Defendants.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The parties to this action, by and through their undersigned counsel of record, hereby agree to the following Settlement Agreement in order to resolve this action informally, solely as a compromise, and to avoid the need for further litigation before the Court:

1. The Department of Energy (“DOE”) and the National Nuclear Security Administration (“NNSA”) are not currently proposing to utilize the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad (“SL&RG”) truck to rail transfer point (“transfer point”) located near the town of Antonito in Conejos County, Colorado, for the shipment of any waste materials resulting from the environmental restoration and clean-up of certain areas of the Los Alamos National Laboratory pursuant to the March 1, 2005, Order on Consent (“Consent Order”) between DOE, Los Alamos National Security, LLC, the New Mexico Environment Department and the University of California, to the EnergySolutions disposal facility in Clive, Utah.

2. If, in the future, DOE or NNSA proposes to use the transfer point for the shipment of such wastes, DOE or NNSA agree to complete an environmental analysis

(excluding use of a Categorical Exclusion) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 to 4370(f), consistent with all applicable regulations prior to authorizing such shipments. Any such analysis will include public notice and opportunity to comment.

3. Defendants agree to pay to the Plaintiffs the sum of \$5,850 in full satisfaction of any and all claims for attorneys’ fees, costs, and other expenses related to this action.

4. Defendants’ payment, as identified in Paragraph 3 above, shall be accomplished by electronic fund transfer to the COLTAF account of Energy Minerals Law Center. Plaintiffs’ attorneys shall provide the appropriate account number and other information needed to facilitate payment to the undersigned counsel for Defendants.

5. Plaintiffs’ attorneys are receiving funds in trust for Plaintiffs, and Plaintiffs agree to this procedure. Plaintiffs and their attorneys agree to hold harmless Defendants in any litigation, further suit, or claim arising from the payment of the agreed-upon \$5,850 settlement amount pursuant to Paragraph 4.

6. Plaintiffs agree that the Court may enter the accompanying proposed order dismissing this case with prejudice.

7. The Parties agree that the Court may retain jurisdiction over this matter solely to enforce the terms of this Settlement Agreement. See *Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co.*, 511 U.S. 375 (1994). In the event of a disagreement between the Parties concerning any aspect of this Settlement Agreement and its implementation, the Parties shall make a good faith effort to confer and resolve the dispute out of court. If the Parties are unable to resolve the dispute, then either party may file a motion to enforce the terms of the Agreement. The Parties agree that contempt of court is not an available remedy for any violation of this Agreement, and the parties therefore knowingly waive any right that they might have to seek an order of contempt for any such violation.

8. The Parties agree that the Court’s retention of jurisdiction does not extend to any dispute over the adequacy of any NEPA analysis prepared consistent with Paragraph 2.

Any challenge to an analysis prepared consistent with Paragraph 2 must be brought through a new judicial action. In entering this agreement, neither party waives any argument it may have challenging or defending any such analysis.

9. The Parties agree that this agreement shall terminate upon issuance of a NEPA analysis consistent with Paragraph 2 or upon completion of all off-site transportation of wastes pursuant to the March 1, 2005, Consent Order.

10. The Parties agree that nothing in this agreement alters the rights or responsibilities of any party to the March 1, 2005, Consent Order.

11. This agreement is the result of compromise and settlement and does not represent an admission by any party to any fact, claim, or defense in any issue in this lawsuit. This agreement has no precedential value and shall not be cited in any other litigation except as necessary to enforce the terms of the agreement.

12. No provision of this stipulation shall be interpreted as or constitute a commitment or requirement that Defendants obligate or pay funds in violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1341, or any other applicable appropriations law.

13. Nothing in the terms of this agreement shall be construed to limit or deny the power of a federal official to promulgate or amend regulations.

14. The undersigned representatives of the Parties certify that they are fully authorized by the respective Parties whom they represent to enter into the terms and conditions of this agreement and to legally bind such Parties to it.

15. This agreement represents the entirety of the Parties' commitments with regard to settlement. The terms of this agreement shall become effective upon entry by the Court of the accompanying order of dismissal.

JOHN WALSH
United States Attorney
JAMIE MEDELSON
Assistant United States Attorney
1225 Seventeenth St., Suite 700

Seventeenth Street Plaza
Denver, CO 80202

IGNACIA S. MORENO
Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice

/s/Barclay Samford
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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Colorado Department of Transportation
Shumate Building
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

Subject: State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the development of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. We understand the plan is the first step toward providing the state with an economic and environmentally sound transportation system.

We feel the plan should emphasize the benefits and importance of passenger rail for the state's citizens to access their jobs, work, play, and education — particularly compared to other modes of transportation. This importance will grow dramatically as increases in the state's population, the number of older citizens, unemployment, and energy prices unfold. The current state transportation system relies almost entirely on private automobiles which are expensive to buy, maintain, insure and fuel. Furthermore, a great deal of the money for those purchases is exported out of the state, at the expense of the local economy. It has been estimated that approximately 3.5 trillion dollars has been spent on building and maintaining the nation's highway system over the past forty years and almost ten times that amount has been spent on insurance. This staggering amount of money has not produced a sustainable system; in fact the highway system is deteriorating rapidly. These numbers do not take into account the billions of dollars that have been spent on motor fuel. (Amtrak and the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, SWEEP)

While the Denver metropolitan region is making great strides in developing alternative modes of transportation such as light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and general bus service, it is time for the state to make the same investments and extend the Denver system through the major population and transportation corridors linking the state's population centers and connecting other communities to these corridors with convenient transit services. The vision for this system should not stop at the state's borders. Linkages to Cheyenne, Albuquerque, Kansas City, and Salt Lake City and beyond should be part of the long range thinking for passenger rail in the state as a major component of a larger national network.

It has been documented that metropolitan regions with strong passenger rail systems save financial resources over time. In a study of 66 metropolitan regions worldwide including 11 in the United States it was found that the share of gross domestic product spent on transportation in those with strong rail systems (16%) was twenty percent less than in those dependent on automobiles (20%). The same economic advantage accrued to citizens in those regions. Over time, investing these resources in the local economy rather than transportation provides these regions with a tremendous economic advantage. The same advantages should be provided to Colorado's communities. These analyses do not take into account the environmental benefits of reduced emissions and smaller, more sustainable land use patterns, not do they include the benefits of local economic development and job creation related to passenger rail systems and terminals. (Newman and Kenworthy)

The following general comments should be incorporated into the plan and used in Colorado transportation planning:

1. Passenger rail should be the first and primary mode of transportation considered as the state improves and expands its transportation system along the Front Range. In the I-25 north corridor, the passenger rail component should be the first stage of that plan's implementation; the I-25 south corridor to Pueblo should be the second stage of implementation. This will allow the state and the citizens along the corridors to realize the economic and environmental benefits from rail immediately and provide an alternative for motorists to avoid the disruption of highway construction. Furthermore, the cost of the rail component in the corridor is estimated to be less than the cost of the highway component. A good model for this approach is the I-95 corridor between West Palm Beach and Miami in Florida whereby the state of Florida built the passenger rail component before it began the highway reconstruction. The rail component was designed as a temporary, three year alternative. It was so successful that it has been running for the ensuing 17 consecutive years.
2. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should spell out the roadmap to offer intercity intermodal rail service for commuters that provides fast diesel-electric trainsets (capable of speeds to 110 mph) preferably running on dedicated, grade separated lines along freight carrier corridors between the Denver Union Station and Ft Collins and Pueblo with intermediate stops in cities' and towns' business districts.

The intermodal aspect would be integrated fare structures to offer van pools and / or shuttle buses to deliver workers to their destinations. Bicycles or other personal, portable conveyances would be carried free of charge equivalent to wheelchair accommodations or personal baggage. The trains would offer WiFi Internet access so the workers carrying their work computers can prepare for their work day if they choose.

Optimally, the trainsets will feature tilt technology to improve speeds on curves and the manufacturer will build them in a new plant in Colorado for our national market. Employers should be informed of available state and federal commuter tax benefits.

3. Alternative modes for personal mobility should be a primary driver for transportation planning the State of Colorado and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. This mobility and the attendant savings afford citizens, particularly those that are older or economically disadvantaged, much greater opportunity for gainful employment and a better quality of life. Dependence on automobiles creates a serious financial burden on the citizens least able to afford them or drive them.
4. Land use impacts from transportation modes should be a primary driver for transportation planning in the State and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. Passenger rail systems have a smaller "footprint" than highways yet can transport more people and expand capacity as necessary with minimal land use impacts. Furthermore, existing rail corridors generally serve existing communities and the development of passenger rail along these corridors stimulates economic development and job creation in the same communities rather than stimulating sprawl.
5. Energy efficiency should be a key feature of transportation planning in the State and emphasized in the State Rail Plan as an advantage of passenger rail. In a study by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) it was found that Amtrak passenger trains are 30% more energy efficient than automobiles and 14% more efficient than airplanes per passenger mile.
6. Passenger trains emit significantly less pollutants and Green House Gases than automobiles. This should be key criteria for mode selection in State transportation planning and should be emphasized in the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. (SWEEP study)
7. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and State transportation planning in general should emphasize and incorporate safety as a key consideration in mode selection. Passenger trains are ten times safer than automobiles. (American Public Transportation Association)

8. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should emphasize the importance of frequency, reliability and connectivity for passenger rail systems. The plan should envision a passenger rail system connecting major communities and wherever else it is feasible. Other communities should be linked to the passenger rail network by transit, regional and intercity bus services creating a system that serves all of Colorado's citizens.

9. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should emphasize the economic development and job creation potential of passenger rail. This benefit extends beyond the immediate communities served by rail to other tourist attractions including tourist railroads, state and national parks and other landmarks. Amtrak and Colorado Rail Vacation packages should be developed with local, regional, and industry specific vendors.

10. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should also examine other changes that can enhance passenger rail and tourism in the state. The State should actively support the retention of Amtrak's Southwest Chief on its route through Colorado. Demand for this train is almost elastic during peak travel seasons yet Amtrak does not have the resources to add capacity. The State should consider adding a "Colorado" car to Amtrak's consists. Furthermore, the addition of state subsidized Amtrak trains in Colorado should be examined to link the California Zephyr in Denver with the Southwest Chief in Trinidad. Consideration of opportunities such as these should be a central feature of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and State transportation planning in general.

The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan provides the State of Colorado with a tremendous opportunity to change its passenger transportation system from an automobile dependent one that exports wealth and earnings to an intermodal one that imports wealth, creates jobs, and provides the majority of its citizens with economic travel choices.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.

Ron Butlin
Executive Director
Downtown Partnership
111 S. Tejon Street, Ste. 309
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719.886.0088 (voice)
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www.downtown80903.com

October 14, 2011

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Colorado Department of Transportation
Shumate Building
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

Subject: State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The Green City Coalition of Pikes Peak, Transportation Working Group (TWG) is pleased to comment on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. The plan is the first step toward providing the state with an economic and environmentally sound transportation system.

The plan should emphasize the benefits and importance of passenger rail for the state's citizens and visitors to access their jobs, work, play, and education — particularly compared to other modes of transportation. This importance will grow dramatically as increases in the state's population, the number of older citizens, unemployment, vehicle miles traveled, and energy prices unfold. The current state transportation system relies almost entirely on private vehicles which are expensive to buy, maintain, insure and fuel. Furthermore, a great deal of the money for those purchases is exported out of the state, at the expense of the local economy. It has been estimated that approximately 3.5 trillion dollars has been spent on building and maintaining the nation's highway system over the past forty years and almost ten times that amount has been spent on insurance. This staggering amount of money has not produced a sustainable system; in fact the highway system is deteriorating rapidly while sales taxes on gasoline are declining. These numbers do not take into account the billions of dollars that have been spent on motor fuel. (Amtrak and the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, SWEEP)

While the Denver metropolitan region is making great strides in developing alternative modes of transportation such as light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and general bus service, it is time for the state to make the same investments and extend the Denver system through the major transportation corridors linking the state's population centers and connecting other communities to these corridors with convenient transit services. The vision for this system should not stop at the state's borders. Linkages to Cheyenne, Albuquerque, Kansas City, Salt Lake City and beyond should be part of the long range thinking for passenger rail in the state as a major component of a larger national network.

It has been documented that metropolitan regions with strong passenger rail systems save financial resources over time. In a study of 66 metropolitan regions worldwide, including 11 in the United States, it was found that the share of gross domestic product spent on transportation in those with strong rail systems (16%) was twenty percent less than in those dependent on automobiles (20%). The same economic advantage accrued to citizens in those regions. Over time, investing these resources in the local economy rather than transportation provides these regions with a tremendous economic advantage. The same advantages should be provided to Colorado's communities. These analyses do not take into account the environmental benefits of reduced emissions and smaller, more sustainable land use patterns, nor do they include the benefits of local economic development and job creation related to passenger rail systems and terminals. (Newman and Kenworthy)

We believe the following general comments should be incorporated into the plan and used in Colorado rail transportation planning:

1. Passenger rail should be the first and primary mode of transportation considered as the state improves and expands its transportation system along the Front Range. In the I-25 north corridor, the passenger rail component should be the first stage of that plan's implementation; the I-25 south corridor to Pueblo should be

the second stage of implementation. This will allow the state and the citizens along the corridors to realize the economic and environmental benefits from rail immediately and provide an alternative for motorists to avoid the disruption of highway construction. Furthermore, the cost of the rail component in the corridor is estimated to be less than the cost of the highway component. A good model for this approach is the I-95 corridor between West Palm Beach and Miami in Florida whereby the state of Florida built the passenger rail component before it began the highway reconstruction. The rail component was designed as a temporary, three year alternative. It was so successful that it has been running for the ensuing 17 consecutive years.

2. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should spell out the roadmap to offer intercity commuter intermodal rail service that provides fast diesel-electric trainsets (capable of speeds to 110 mph) preferably running on dedicated, grade separated lines along freight carrier corridors between the Denver Union Station and Ft Collins and Pueblo with intermediate stops in cities' and towns' business districts. Grade separation will provide the highest level of safe, fast travel by avoiding the risks of grade crossings, wildlife crossing tracks, and danger of collisions with freight derailments.

The intermodal aspect would be integrated fare structures to offer van pools and / or shuttle buses to deliver workers to their destinations. Bicycles or other personal, portable conveyances would be carried free of charge equivalent to wheelchair accommodations or personal baggage. The trains would offer WiFi Internet access so workers carrying their work computers can prepare for their work day if they choose just as they might during airline travel.

Optimally, the trainsets will feature tilt technology to improve speeds on curves and the manufacturer will build them in a new plant in Colorado for our national market – a successful model is offered by the Amtrak Cascade trains, and their support structure, in the state of Washington between Eugene and Vancouver, B.C. Employers should be encouraged to share available state and federal commuter tax benefits with their employees. The Cascade equipment is supported by the manufacturer's maintenance shop providing some jobs within Washington State.

3. Alternative modes for personal mobility should be a primary driver for transportation planning in the State of Colorado and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. This mobility and the attendant savings afford citizens, particularly those that are older or economically disadvantaged, much greater opportunity for gainful employment and a better quality of life. Dependence on automobiles creates a serious financial burden on the citizens least able to afford them or drive them.
4. Land use impacts from transportation modes should be a primary driver for transportation planning in the State and should be a central feature of the State Rail Plan. Passenger rail systems have a smaller "footprint" than highways yet can transport more people and expand capacity as necessary with minimal land use impacts. Furthermore, existing rail corridors generally serve existing communities and the development of passenger rail along these corridors stimulates economic development and job creation in the same communities rather than stimulating sprawl.
5. Energy efficiency should be a key feature of transportation planning in the State and emphasized in the State Rail Plan as an advantage of passenger rail. In a study by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) it was found that Amtrak passenger trains are 30% more energy efficient than automobiles and 14% more efficient than airplanes per passenger mile.
6. Passenger trains emit significantly lower levels of pollutants and Green House Gases than automobiles. This should be a key criterion for mode selection in State transportation planning and should be emphasized in the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. (SWEEP study)
7. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and State transportation planning in general should emphasize and incorporate safety as a key consideration in mode selection. Passenger trains are ten times safer than automobiles. (APTA, American Public Transportation Association)
8. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should emphasize the importance of frequency, reliability and connectivity for passenger rail systems. The plan should envision a passenger rail system connecting major

transportation corridors and communities wherever else it is feasible. Other communities should be linked to the passenger rail network by transit, regional and intercity bus services creating a system that serves all of Colorado's citizens.

9. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should emphasize the economic development and job creation potential of passenger rail. This benefit extends beyond the immediate communities served by rail to other tourist attractions including offline ski areas, tourist railroads, state and national parks and other landmarks. Amtrak and Colorado Rail Vacation packages should be developed with local, regional, and industry specific vendors. Commuter rail options open the labor markets beyond local communities.
10. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should also examine other changes that can enhance passenger rail and tourism in the state. The State should actively support the retention of Amtrak's Southwest Chief on its route through Colorado. Demand for this train is almost elastic during peak travel seasons yet Amtrak does not have the resources to add capacity. The State should consider adding a "Colorado" car to Amtrak's consists. Furthermore, the addition of state subsidized Amtrak trains in Colorado should be examined to link the California Zephyr in Denver with the Southwest Chief in Trinidad. Consideration of opportunities such as these should be a central feature of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and State transportation planning in general.

The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan provides the State of Colorado with a tremendous opportunity to change its passenger transportation system from an automobile-dependent one that exports wealth and earnings to an intermodal one that imports wealth, creates jobs, and provides the majority of its citizens with economic travel choices.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.

Peace,

Ray Krueger, PMP®

Facilitator

Green Cities Coalition

Transportation Working Group

See us on

facebook

 719 387-7887 (w)

 505 795-9935 (c)

<http://www.GreenCitiesCoalition.net/>



Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
City and County of Denver Comments

October 14, 2011

1. The City and County of Denver recognizes the importance of rail transportation for freight and looks forward to keeping Denver rail-served industries profitable and growing. In addition, freight rail transport will likely experience substantial growth as fuel prices increase.
2. Denver represents a unique and complex rail network of dense urban development crisscrossed by a significant number of major rail corridors -- both freight and passenger rail -- as well as rail spurs, existing grade separations, and at-grade crossings. See general data summary below.
3. The future Regional Transportation District's FasTracks corridors provide increased mobility benefits but also present more challenges, including a number of new at-grade crossings as well as additional delays and safety issues, by adding passenger rail to existing at-grade freight rail crossings.
4. If not specifically owned by freight railroads or the Regional Transportation District, Denver incurs major on-going infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation costs and must identify funding for new construction of future rail infrastructure. These significant funding needs for Denver should be taken into account as part of the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.
5. Maximizing Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) funding and seeking dedicated state funding for highway-railroad grade separations should be emphasized in future funding scenarios because of the age and deficiencies of current overpasses and underpasses. These deficiencies include structural and functional concerns such as safety, condition, clearance, capacity, ADA compliance, pedestrian and bicycle access, etc. Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the existing structures is quite costly, and new grade separations cost up to \$60 M each.
6. The alignments of any high-speed rail service or other intercity rail corridors should directly access Denver Union Station and Downtown Denver rather than bypassing the Central Business District.
7. CDOT should continue to explore relocation of major through freight rail traffic to the east of Denver in order to provide rail corridor capacity for passenger rail. In addition, the reduced freight rail traffic will minimize negative impacts on surrounding residential and commercial development by freight rail such as noise, potential dangers of hazardous cargo, congestion, unsafe crossings, and accidents.

Summary of General Rail Data for Denver

- Number of miles of mainline freight rail not including rail spurs – (29)
- Number of at-grade crossings – (170)
- Number of rail switching yards (including trailer-on-flat-car “piggy-back” facilities) – (10)
- Signals with RR crossings – (15)
- Number of miles of current RTD Light Rail Transit passenger rail – (17)
- Number of additional miles of future passenger rail (RTD FasTracks Light Rail and Commuter Rail) – (32)
- Number of current rail-highway grade separation structures (50) – (30 with traffic volumes > 10,000 adt)
- Number of new grade separations needed (total cost @ 20 M - 60 M each) – (at least 4)
- Reported hazardous spills to the National Response Center (NRC) during the last 10 years – (65)



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Kiowa County
Farm Service
Agency**

**910 Wansted St
PO Box 188
Eads, Colorado 81036**

Telephone: (719) 438.5851 ext 2

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

FAX: (719) 438.5410

**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

October 18, 2011

Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Services

To Whom It May Concern;

Farm Service
Agency

Re: VS Railway & State of Colorado railroad issue

Kiowa County FSA
PO Box 188
Eads, CO 81036
719.438.5851 ext 2
719.438.5410
(FAX)

This letter is being written as a concern to the local, Congressional, and Senate leaders of SE Colorado. Area specific is Kiowa County Colorado.

County Committee
Randy Carney,
Chairperson
Jeff Salisbury, Vice-
Chairperson
William F Wilcox,
Regular Member
Phyllis Nelson,
Minority Advisor

This letter is being sent by the Kiowa County Farm Service Agency County Committee. The Committee is an elected group of area farmers and ranchers. Each member represents their area of the county. The County Committee system has been in place since the beginning of FSA and their predecessors since the 1930's to assist the American Farmer in their time of need. Through the years, the Farm Service Agency has been there for the farmers and with the diligent work of the employees and the County Committee, has sustained the American farmer through drought, fire, and multiple weather perils.

Anyone who is familiar with SE Colorado, knows the plights of our area, from the loss of water in the Great Plain Reservoirs to the drought stricken area. To even imagine that the rail line that has existed in this county since the 1900's could be sold for salvage is another example of just how disconnected our leaders are if they allow this to happen.

ECONOMIC SUFFERING

The economic suffering of this area is becoming more and more apparent. With the lack of jobs, the lack of resources, these are difficult areas for businesses to even consider looking at our area for commerce. In the Eads area at the present time, there is one restaurant and one business in town to purchase fuel. Eads is just four years ago had three restaurants and two different businesses to purchase fuel. This county has suffered with crop losses since the beginning of the drought in 2002. For every decent year of yielding crops we will have two years of unyielding crops. The ranchers also suffer in years of drought as they have no native grass to pasture and also have to reduce herds.

The loss of the Towner Line has drastically damaged the economy of Kiowa County as well as neighboring counties of Crowley and Pueblo. Kiowa County has lost \$6,361,800.00 average tax revenue in twelve years since the railroad has been inactive.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

Railroads have major advantages in energy efficiency over other modes of freight transportation. Railroad are at least three times more fuel efficient than trucks. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that for every ton-mile, a typical truck emits three times more nitrogen oxides and particulates than a locomotive. Anything that can alleviate highway congestion on the U.S. highways, we believe would be a benefit. As you are aware the nation's

infrastructure is in desperate need of repair and highway funding is becoming harder and harder to fund. Having functioning railroads would be a benefit to this issue.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

A move away from summer-fallow rotations with one crop every two years to a three year rotation of two crops every three years and more continuous cropping is something that has been in practice in Kiowa County for the last 10 years. The diversity of our crops is not only wheat, but also corn, grain sorghum, proso millet and sunflowers. A fundamental of Economic Development is producing value added products. These are products modified and enhanced to be a product with a higher market value than the original product. The production of Hard White Wheat is a good example of a potential value added product for SE Colorado. Kiowa County has proved we are one of the top producing counties for Hard White Wheat; however without a way to market the commodity to the west coast it's virtually impossible for the producers to develop the market in this area.

Right now in there is a potential for oil activity in Kiowa County. There are presently a minimum of seven lease companies that are leasing mineral acres in Kiowa County for future oil and gas production. The companies are paying anywhere from \$25.00 to \$150.00 an acre. The companies are leasing the acres for a maximum of five years with a five additional year's option. This is and could be an economic boom for this area and having the infrastructure that is already in place such as the railroad could be a huge benefit for this county.

As you read all the letters of support for the retention of the rail line, please keep in mind that if V & S Railway is allowed to salvage the existing line, the impact on this area could be that of one that the area may not survive. The citizens of this area have the feeling that we are being 'phased out' with the loss of the resources we have already suffered. We ask that you think of the future and not the present when you make your decisions for the future of the area we call 'home'.

We thank you for your time and for your service.

Randy Carney
Chairperson

Jeff Salisbury
Vice-Chairperson

OFFICE OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
970-328-8605
FAX: 970-328-8629
Email: eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us
www.eaglecounty.us



JON STAVNEY
PETER F. RUNYON
SARA J. FISHER

October 20, 2011

Mark Imhoff
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222
303.757-9007

Subject: State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Input

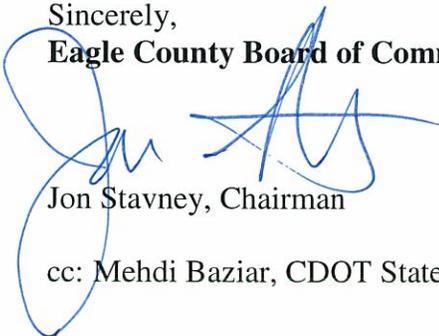
Dear Director Imhoff:

Thank you for your time and interest in the Tennessee Pass Rail Line proposal by Rio Grande Pacific yesterday. As you know, commuter rail on the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way has been a vision for our community transportation needs since the 1990s. With CDOT's support and funding, several studies have evaluated the feasibility of rail and advance guideway system for our valley.

We would like the State Rail Plan to recognize the possibility of future development on the currently non-operational UPRR ROW for other transportation uses (commuter rail/pedestrian and bicycle trail/etc.).

Please do not hesitate to contact us or Eva Wilson, County Engineer, at 970-328-3560, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Eagle County Board of Commissioners



Jon Stavney, Chairman

cc: Mehdi Baziar, CDOT State Rail Plan Project Manager

**2035 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
PLAN UPDATE
MOUNTAIN METROPOLITAN TRANSIT**

Prepared for:

Mountain Metropolitan Transit
City of Colorado Springs
1015 Transit Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80901

Prepared by:

Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
6300 South Syracuse Way, Suite 600
Centennial, CO 80111
303/721-1440

In association with:

TransitPlus

FHU Reference No. 10-082-01
September 2011

Mountain Metropolitan 2035 Public Transportation Prioritized Projects List

Project #	Description	Total Project Cost in YOE (in millions)	Total Weighted Score	Cumulative \$ Total in YOE (in millions)
1	Maintenance of Existing Operations/Administration	608.9	300	608.9
2	Vehicle Replacement (FR, Express, Vanpool, ADA)	58.0	270	666.9
3	Variable Message Sign expansion, Smartcard, IT, ITS, Real Time Bus, Etc	10.0	265	676.9
4	Sidewalks and bus stops	2.8	258	679.7
5	Non rev/maintenance vehicles	0.8	240	680.5
6	JARC/New Freedom Projects	14.9	231	695.4
7	Plans and Studies	16.7	229	712.1
8	Fixed-Route Operations Expansion	71.3	227	783.4
9	Bus transfer station reconstruction - Citadel Mall area	10.0	220	793.4
10	Fixed-guideway - Line #1 (Downtown Streetcar)	71.5	218	864.8
11	Fixed-guideway - Line #2 (Academy Blvd BRT). queue jumps, vehicles	12.6	212	877.5
12	Transfer station upgrade: CHMall area	1.0	212	878.5
13	Park-N-Ride: Woodland Park Improvements	3.3	209	881.8
14	Fixed-guideway - line #3 (W. Colorado Ave)	105.1	204	986.9
15	Fixed-guideway - line #4 (Citadel to Downtown), 7 track miles/equip	119.0	204	1,105.9
16	Fixed-guideway - line #5 (Nevada streetcar extension)	119.0	204	1,224.9
17	Park-N-Ride: Expansion: Tejon/I-25	1.0	204	1,225.9
18	Park-N-Ride: Expansion: Monument/I-25	1.0	204	1,226.9
19	Transfer station improvements: Ft. Carson Gate 4/PPCC	3.1	202	1,230.1
20	Transfer station: Banning Lewis (golden triangle)	3.3	201	1,233.4
21	Fixed-guideway-Line #6 (Academy Blvd BRT) Extension	8.0	198	1,241.4

Appendix

Mountain Metropolitan 2035 Public Transportation Prioritized Projects List

Project #	Description	Total Project Cost in YOE (in millions)	Total Weighted Score	Cumulative \$ Total in YOE (in millions)
22	Park-N-Ride: Black Forest Construction	1.8	191	1,243.2
23	Park-N-Ride: US 24 (31st Street/Manitou Springs)	3.3	191	1,246.5
24	Park-N-Ride: New Northgate/I-25	3.3	191	1,249.8
25	Park-N-Ride: New 31st St/Manitou	3.3	191	1,253.2
26	Park-N-Ride: New Cascade/Green Mtn Falls	3.3	191	1,256.5
27	Park-N-Ride: New Falcon Park and Ride	3.3	191	1,259.8
28	Downtown Rail Station (Intermodal/bus/rail/intercity)	20.0	188	1,279.8
29	HSP - Vehicles - Replacement	14.4	187	1,294.2
30	Express route buses - Expansion	7.1	175	1,301.4
31	Express Route Operations Expansion	20.0	175	1,321.3
32	Intermodal Park-N-Ride/Rail reconstruction: Woodmen/I-25/RR	5.0	171	1,326.3
33	Intermodal Park-N-Ride/Rail: Ft. Carson Gate #20 area/Mesa Ridge Pkwy/RR	3.0	171	1,329.3
34	Downtown Rail Station - Area Pedestrian Improvements	1.0	170	1,330.3
35	Downtown Rail Station - RR Pedestrian Bridge	5.0	170	1,335.3
36	Vanpool – Expansion	2.2	170	1,337.5
37	ADA vehicles – Expansion	3.8	170	1,341.3
38	Metro Rides Operations Expansion	10.0	169	1,351.3
39	Facility Equipment replacement	1.0	167	1,352.3
40	Fixed-route vehicles – Expansion	22.2	166	1,374.4
41	Carpool/school-pools/bike month programs/promotions	2.5	162	1,376.9
42	Other Employer Activity Center TDM programs	2.5	157	1,379.4

Appendix

Mountain Metropolitan 2035 Public Transportation Prioritized Projects List

Project #	Description	Total Project Cost in YOE (in millions)	Total Weighted Score	Cumulative \$ Total in YOE (in millions)
43	Employer Benefit / DOD pass program outreach	2.5	147	1,381.9
44	HSP - Coordinated Dispatch/Call Center	0.3	147	1,382.3
45	HSP - FR Transit Coordination Plan Updates	0.4	147	1,382.7
46	Maintou Shuttle	2.5	145	1,385.2
47	3 transit vehicles, 5 year life	0.4	142	1,385.5
48	Metro Mobility Operations Expansion	10.0	133	1,395.5
49	Stops/stations/sidewalk - Enhancement Funds	0.3	132	1,395.8
50	Non rev/maintenance vehicles - Expansion (1/yr, start 2016)	0.6	129	1,396.3
51	Pedestrian Bridge over RR at PNR	3.0	104	1,399.3
52	Transit Facilities	2.0	102	1,401.3
53	HSP - Vehicles - Expansion (10 vehicles, 5 year life)	2.4	99	1,403.7
54	Rail Station - Intermodal/PNR (Mesa Ridge Pkwy/RR)	5.0	94	1,408.7
55	Construction Site Planning: MMT facilities expansion	10.0	79	1,418.7

56 Monument Rail Station \$3M Not Ranked.

UP the 33-mile branch line connecting Commerce City to the Boulder area. It is active only from Commerce City to just north of 120th Avenue.

The BNSF and UP have joint operations and track sharing agreements south of downtown Denver. The joint line is known as the Consolidated Mainline. It is operated as a paired track; one track used for northbound traffic and the other track used for southbound traffic.

The DRIR has a switching and terminal spur line north of I-25 and 58th Avenue running roughly parallel to I-270 connecting the UP and BNSF facilities. The GWR operates branch lines connecting North Front Range communities such as Fort Collins and Loveland to Longmont. GWR has an interchange point with BNSF at Longmont (switching only).

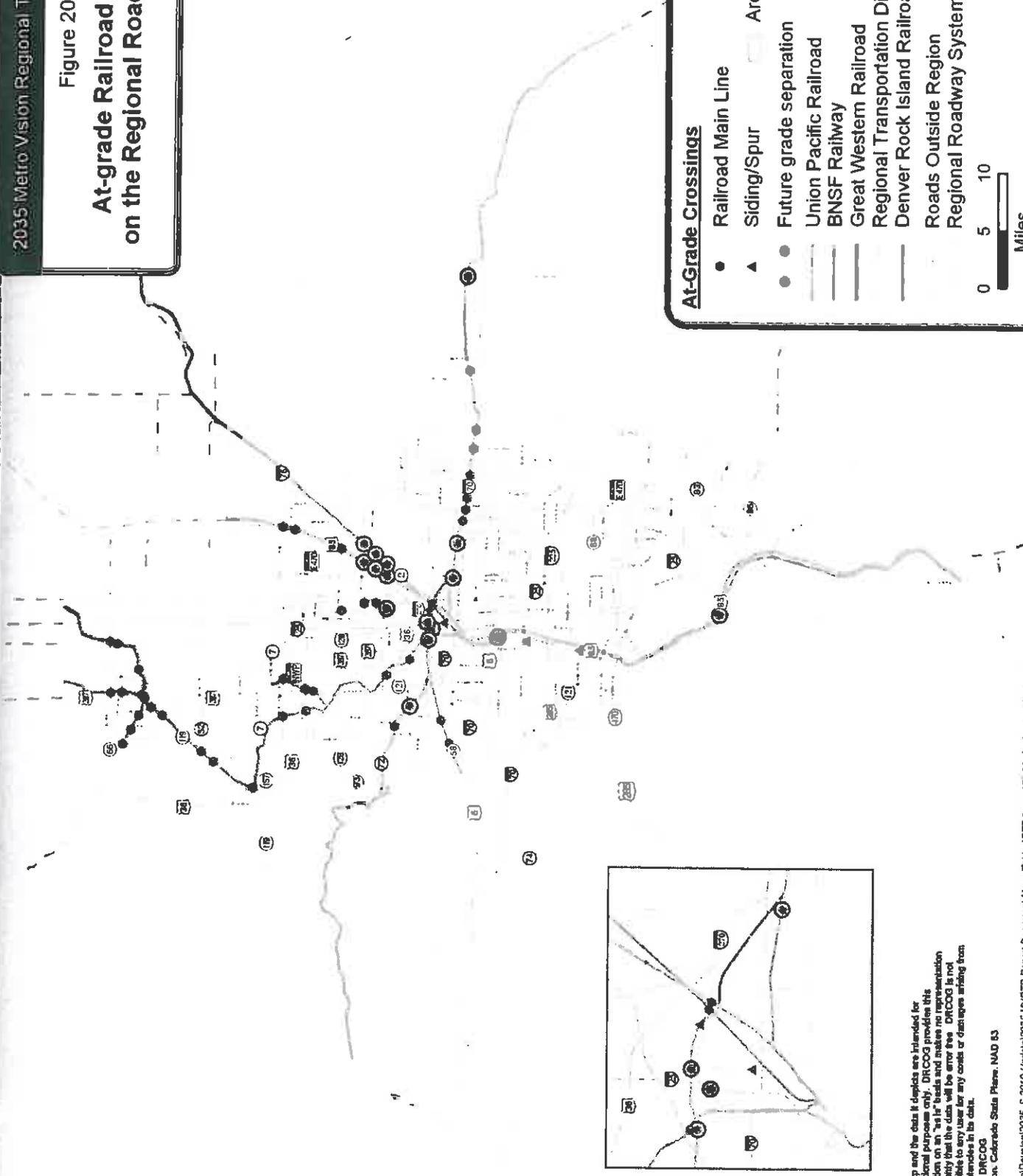
At-Grade Arterial Railroad Crossings

Over 500 at-grade intersections exist between the rail system and the roadway system in the Denver metropolitan region. Many of these at-grade crossings are found north of the I-70 corridor in predominately industrial and warehouse areas. At-grade crossings can pose safety concerns as well as problems of delay to auto and truck traffic and emergency services. The 58 rail-on-roadway crossings on the regional highway network are shown in Figure 20.

The number of trains that cross a road per day will increase on those lines that may serve commuter rail in the future. Corridor studies will determine the need for constructing additional grade-separations at such locations.

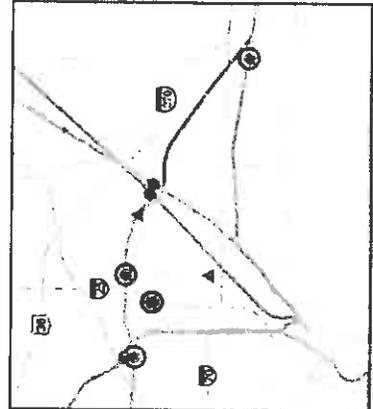
Figure 20

At-grade Railroad Crossings on the Regional Roadway System



At-Grade Crossings

- Railroad Main Line
- ▲ Siding/Spur
- Future grade separation
- ▬ Union Pacific Railroad
- ▬ BNSF Railway
- ▬ Great Western Railroad
- ▬ Regional Transportation District (RTD)
- ▬ Denver Rock Island Railroad
- ▬ Roads Outside Region
- ▬ Regional Roadway System



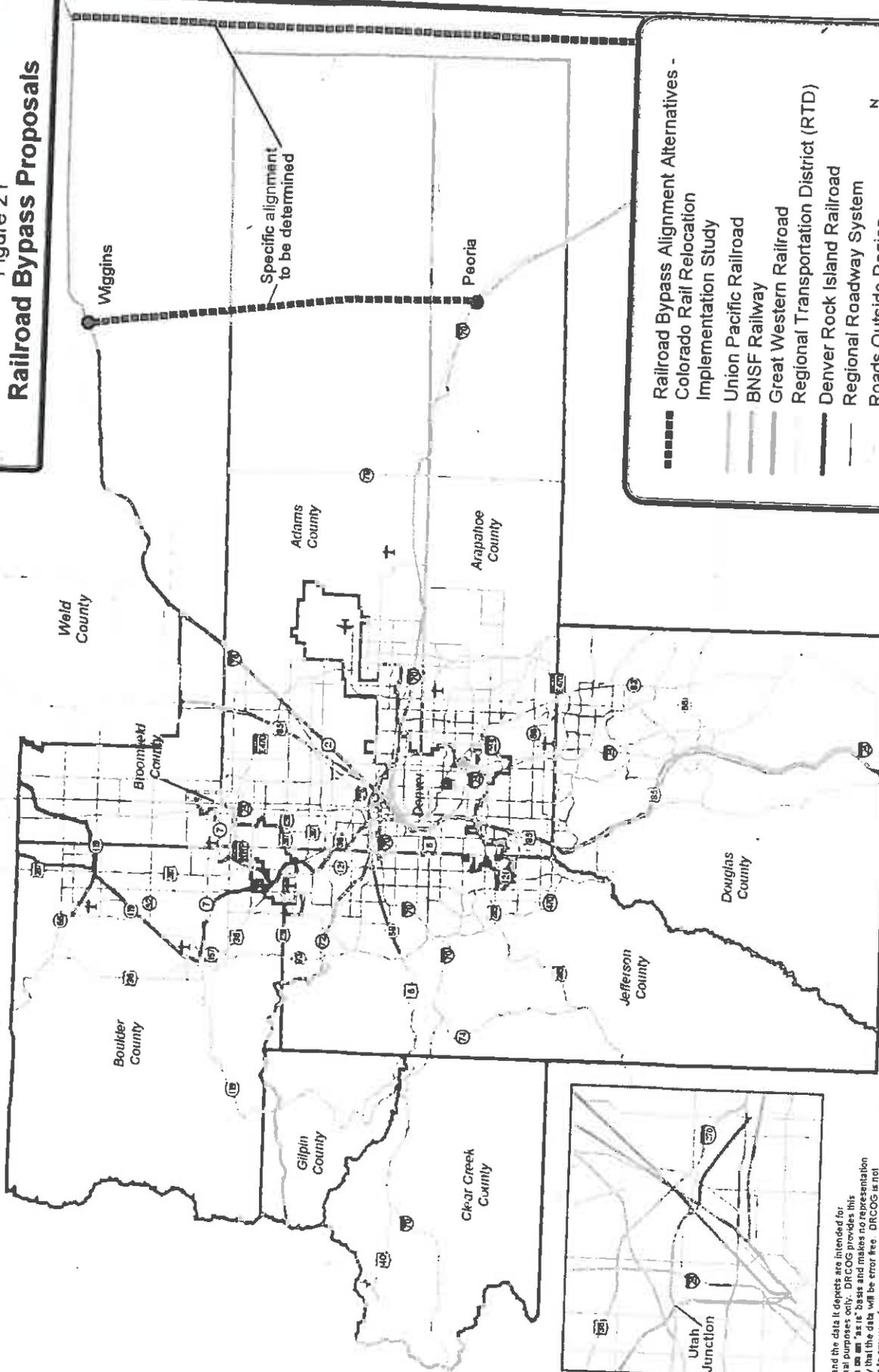
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Source: DRCOG
 Projection: Colorado State Plane, NAD 83
 Date: 8/10

The following improvements are envisioned for the freight railroad system:

- **Eastern railroad bypass.** CDOT concluded the Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study (aka R2C2 Study) in 2009. The two alternative alignments (see Figure 21) were determined to have a positive benefit-to-cost ratio. Either alignment could result in a diversion of a substantial amount of freight rail traffic that currently uses the Consolidate Mainline through the Denver region.
- **Railroad grade-separation bridges/underpasses on the regional roadway system** at the following example locations:
 - BNSF at 88th Avenue
 - BNSF at 96th Avenue
 - BNSF at 104th Avenue
 - BNSF at SH-67 and UP at SH-67 (Sedalia)
 - BNSF/UP at Santa Fe Drive/Kalamath Street
 - RTD at 88th Avenue
 - UP at 72nd Avenue
 - UP at 88th Avenue
 - UP at 96th Avenue
 - UP at 104th Avenue
 - UP at Broadway (SH-53)
 - UP at Pecos Street (under construction)
 - UP at Quebec Street frontage road ramps
 - UP at SH-79
 - UP at Washington Street
 - UP/RTD at Peoria Street
- **Railroad grade-separations on local streets off the regional roadway system** will be considered at critical locations.

Figure 21
Railroad Bypass Proposals



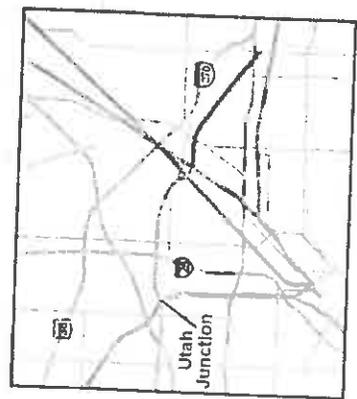
Railroad Bypass Alignment Alternatives -

- Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study
- Union Pacific Railroad
- BNSF Railway
- Great Western Railroad
- Regional Transportation District (RTD)
- Denver Rock Island Railroad
- Regional Roadway System
- Roads Outside Region
- Area Outside Region

0 5 10 Miles

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DRCOG
Denver Regional Council of Governments



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Source: DRCOG
Projection: Colorado State Plane, NAD 83
PJ 08/10

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RESOLUTION NO. R-11-2011

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE
SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER SERVICE THROUGH LA JUNTA**

WHEREAS, the *Southwest Chief*, one of Amtrak's premier passenger trains, serves southeastern Colorado, western Kansas and northern New Mexico as it plies between Chicago and Los Angeles on the host railroad line of Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF); and

WHEREAS, eastbound and westbound trains stop at La Junta daily and have served over 13,000 Colorado passengers in 2010, a figure that has been growing every year; and

WHEREAS, the *Chief* and its famous predecessors (such as the Santa Fe Railroad's fabled *Super Chief*) have served this route since the late 1880's; and

WHEREAS, the train has consistently held the best on-time record for Amtrak's long distance trains and the train is ranked among the best Amtrak earners; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has added an additional coach to the train in 2010 due to increased demand; and

WHEREAS, the train is a key economic contributor to southeastern Colorado and to the City of La Junta; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak employs nine citizens of La Junta to service its southeastern passenger operations and contributes major capital to station improvements locally; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak provides a gateway to tourists from the west coast and Midwest, to include Boy Scouts heading to Philmont Ranch near Raton, New Mexico; and most importantly, Amtrak provides a transportation link to the citizens of Southeastern Colorado that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as our citizens age and rising energy prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

WHEREAS, the route of the *Southwest Chief* through Colorado is threatened inasmuch as an alternative route is under consideration that would re-route the train south from Newton, Kansas, through the Texas Panhandle to New Mexico, entirely bypassing Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the ownership of the track in northern New Mexico is under dispute between that state and Burlington Northern Santa Fe further complicating the issue, Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight traffic on this route has declined reducing maintenance and forcing Amtrak to run the *Chief* at lower speeds; and

WHEREAS, its overall trip time has increased from 41 hours to 55 hours since 1991; and

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe wants Amtrak to pay the costs of improvement and the maintenance costs for the route if the train is to resume its normal speed; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak estimates this could amount to \$200 million over ten years including \$94 million at the front-end to bring the line back up to standards across the three states; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has indicated that it would like to undertake this improvement because the route is scenic and well travelled but current fiscal circumstances may impact its ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, there are other developments, (i.e. the Elk River coal mine) that will generate three Burlington Northern Santa Fe coal trains per week in the next several years. This would change the maintenance equation from Trinidad to Las Animas and perhaps through Raton Pass.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The City Council recommends that Action 22 strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

2. The City Council calls upon the Governor of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

3. The City Council calls upon the members of the legislature of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

4. The City Council calls upon all members of the Congressional Delegation for the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

5. The City Council calls upon all local governments within the County of Otero to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

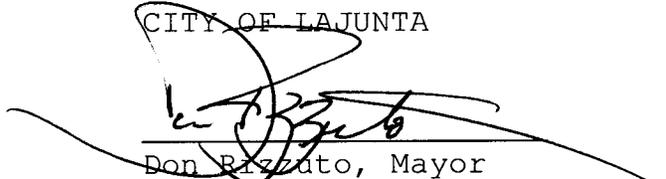
6. The City Council calls upon the Board of Commissioners of Otero County to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

7. The City Council calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

8. The City Council recommends that all community and civic leaders in southeastern Colorado connect with each other and their colleagues in western Kansas and northern New Mexico so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the *Southwest Chief*.

Adopted this 6th day of September, 2011.

CITY OF LAJUNTA



Don Rizzuto, Mayor

ATTEST:



Janice L. Schooley
City Clerk

Final Draft Review—Written/Email Comments and Formal Letters

Ira Schreiber (1/30/12) via Email

A few errors I spotted. P72 Leadville Scenic is STANDARD GAUGE. It was narrow gauge up until 1943. P74 Highway 7 in a Colorado State Highway

Dave Beckhouse (2/1/12) via Email

Page 3-43 move this table to the Amtrak section instead of in the middle of the RTD section. Page 4-3 your public involvement is in the future? Same issue with the other table in this section. Page 5-5 Do you want to say anything about trends in fuel efficiency and pollution profiles of freight rail? I think they're trending even cleaner as the fleet gradually transitions to locomotives that meet the latest requirements. I suppose the same could be said for trucks but I'm not sure if it's as pronounced

Jason White (2/1/12) via Email

My comments are more emotional than scholarly. Everyone is living with new financial, social and environmental "norms". We all need to start acting like it. I am disappointed to see that the I-70 Advanced Guideway System (AGS) Study does not have higher priority at the state level. I-70 is the only statewide, east-west connector interstate and the politics keep getting in the way of a truly innovative fix that would provide safety for all travelers, greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and boost regional economic development from Denver to Eagle. Additionally, I believe that Bus Rapid Transit, or a similar transit project, could offer an intermodal alternative to the personal car in the near term. Yes, buses are not always the most convenient option for travelers, but so many skiers make the same two-way ski commute to the same resorts every weekend. These are very predictable travel patterns. Most countries in the world rely on calculated train travel to get them to very remote places. It is a reality that convenience drives travel patterns in the West, but our instant gratification needs to be tempered with user fees or taxes that challenge personal responsibility/accountability and provide needed funding for new programs. I would like to see high level decision makers step up and truly embrace "alternative" transportation and stop falling back on dinosaur engineering fixes (road/tunnel widening) that always fail in the long term. There are a lot of brilliant planners, engineers, consultants and public-private partnerships out there that could set forth pioneering innovation if politics would step aside and let the ideas shine. These are layered and entrenched topics I mention without legitimate solutions. I realize that and I thank you for the chance to use the commons to make my voice heard. I appreciate CDOT's evolving awareness of these heady topics and I am optimistic that partnerships and communication with local communities will overcome stalemates.

Pamela Fischhaber (2/7/12) via Email

Here are my comments regarding the draft state freight and passenger rail plan. Some are repeats and a couple are new. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Page 3-44 – Figure 3-21 - The segment on this figure from the 30th and Downing station to the 40/40 Station is shown as existing light rail (light purple). This should be shown as future light rail (dark blue). Page 3-46 – Table 3-8 – 1) I think that the Leadville Scenic Railroad is a standard gauge railroad, not a narrow gauge railroad. Please check with LSR regarding this. 2) The Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad is not included on the list. They need to be added. You can get information from their website at <http://cripplecreekrailroad.com>. 3) The Manitou and Pikes Peak Railway is not included on the list. They need to be added. You can get information from their website at <http://www.cograilway.com>. Page 5-7 – Figure 5-1 – The legend in this figure is incomplete. The last two pie pieces (the pink 2% and the sea foam green 1%) do not have corresponding information in the legend. The transportation planning regions for these two pie slices need to be added to the figure legend. Page 5-27 – The third paragraph states "Today in the State of Colorado, the PUC has regulatory authority over all crossings of railroad tracks, to the extent not preempted by federal law, including at-grade and grade-separated crossings." There is no federal preemption of state crossing jurisdiction. Please remove "to the extent not preempted by federal law" from this sentence. Page 6-9 through 6-11 – Table 6-3 – For the Section 130 projects, I would suggest not showing the proposed year. The last few years of Section 130 projects as shown in the ISP's have not occurred in the year originally stated, and I would hate to see CDOT get in trouble with the Federal agencies by binding itself to projects that may or may not be approved, and may or may not occur in the year originally planned. Page Appendix B – 21 – Under the bullet point regarding "Schedule and conduct periodic coordination meetings among CDOT staff, Class 1 railroads, FHWA and FRA." The PUC is missing from this list. PUC has always been included as part of these coordination meetings. Page Appendix B – 22 – Under the section regarding Solicitation of Candidate Projects, the third sentence states that "..., CDOT has begun to emphasize the use of accident prediction modeling as a primary factor in project selection." This is not true. Since 2005, CDOT has been using the FRA GradeDec.net model, which uses accident prediction as one of the main components of the modeling effort. Page Appendix

B-22 – Under the section regarding Ranking, Selection and Prioritization of Projects, I will comment again that you should talk with Dahir Egal at FHWA regarding use of the WBAPS. There are issues with the use of the WBAPS model that use of the FRA GradeDec.net model is able to overcome. I would suggest that CDOT get approval from FHWA of the change in models, or generically discuss the procedure used by CDOT without naming a specific model because FHWA may not approve of the use of the WBAPS model. It would be better to have a generic discussion of the methodology rather than tie CDOT to a currently unapproved methodology that may not be approved by FHWA in the future. CDOT, PB, and FHU have done a nice job on this document.

Denver Regional Council of Governments (2/7/12) Formal Letter

See A.6.1

Becky Thompson (2/7/12) via Email

The CARR board has looked over the draft of the State Rail Plan and would like to submit the following changes: We would ask that each time the Eastern Colorado Mobility Study or R2C2 be referenced in any CDOT document, including the State Rail Plan, the following footnote be added on the same page: The effects to citizens and businesses in Eastern Colorado were not taken in to consideration during this study, and a full Environmental Impact Study would be warranted. I have copied the following excerpt from page 5-17 of the plan and added in the changes we would like to see: Issues: Greenfield Alignments. Offsetting these opportunities is the need for a new railroad right-of-way. This can result in very high property acquisition costs in developed areas. As a result, Greenfield alignments usually do not serve downtown areas directly. Creating a new linear corridor also could create a physical barrier to future development with the need for added bridges to cross the corridor. A new corridor will could divide farm and ranch lands or residential neighborhoods. Construction of a brand new corridor would result in construction impacts, including numerous potential environmental impacts to wetlands, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites, protected species, etc. I have copied the following excerpt from page 5-18 of the plan and added in the changes we would like to see: CDOT has clarified its position on a future rail relocation effort. CDOT will not take the lead on a railroad relocation effort but would participate in such an effort if initiated by another party. CDOT will continue to coordinate with the railroads and other rail stakeholders on transportation priorities and will participate in any subsequent discussions related to the need for further study of a north/south rail bypass of the Front Range. The concept of future rail relocation of through freight traffic at some location in eastern Colorado is included in the Plan's list of projects in the project category of Rail Facilities/Relocations, along with the potential relocation of the intermodal facilities of the BNSF and UP out of the downtown Denver area, and also potential tunneling improvements of the UP's Moffat Tunnel mountain corridor. The prioritization evaluations ranked these projects in this category as "medium," while the concept of eastern Colorado rail relocation received a "low" ranking. As a result of CDOT's position not to take the lead on the rail relocation effort and with the project receiving an overall "low" priority ranking, the project should be considered inactive at this time. CDOT will not initiate discussion or take action on a rail relocation project. If such discussions are brought before CDOT, they will first notify and include in any discussion, counties that could be possibly affected-and CDOT will work to ensure that the proper Environmental Impact Studies are performed. However, should such a project be included in subsequent updates to this Plan, the counties that would be e a public input process would be initiated to determine the best course of action moving forward. A study should be conducted to determine the impacts and benefits of rail relocation on eastern Colorado communities A new corridor will could divide farm and ranch businesses or residential neighborhoods. Construction of a brand new corridor would result in construction impacts, including numerous potential environmental impacts to wetlands, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites, protected species, etc. This study will would explore the specific positive and negative impacts from any rail relocation including as well as examine what possible job creation or other and other positive economic development opportunities that might occur from potential rail relocation. Mitigation of local community concerns and issues, such as cattle crossings, emergency/farm equipment crossings, and requirements for agreements with land owners for "other utilities" being included within rail rights-of-way, will should be a high priority in appropriate environmental clearance documents that will would be completed prior to implementation of any future rail relocation project. CDOT will work in partnership with stakeholders in Eastern Colorado if the concept of a future project becomes active again in the future.

Lincoln County BOCC (2/8/12) Formal Letter

See A.6.2

Stephanie Thomas (2/8/12) via Email

Does CDOT really believe that less than 2 weeks notice to comment on a document that is 233 pages long is adequate? I think that is a bit unreasonable and would like to formally ask for at least a 30 day comment period.

David Montoya (2/8/12) via Email

My name is David Montoya, and I am a train enthusiast from Longmont, Colorado. I really appreciate the thoroughness of this report, and I am happy to see something being done to support the rail service in our state. Regarding passenger rail, I feel that restoring regional passenger rail between Denver and Longmont should be done on the existing BNSF right of way between Denver and Fort Collins via Boulder, simply because it would be less expensive to start up than constructing new trackage between Longmont and Thornton. I also dislike RTD's plans to double-track that route when their cost estimates keep rising and we still don't have train service yet. The last revenue passenger train to traverse this route was in 1967, an overnight service between Denver, CO and Billings, MT that existed mainly to carry mail. However, it would come into Denver during the morning rush hour, providing people in Longmont, Boulder, and Broomfield the opportunity to commute into Denver and arrive downtown by 8:30 AM. Then one could catch the outbound train at 5:30 PM to head home. Despite the low frequency of this train, I really wish we had something as simple as that: A local passenger train with comfortable seats that ran on time and provided nice views of the mountains and maybe light snacks. Rather than a high-frequency commuter train that would be a major headache for the BNSF, why not run a lower frequency train that the railroad has actually been known to handle in the past. If this kind of service can't keep up with demand, then maybe at that point a higher frequency service would be necessary.

City of Golden (2/9/12) Formal Letter

See A.6.3

Dave Pitts (2/9/12) via Email

I've been reading the Draft plan and I have some observations/concerns. I own and operate a Private Pullman car and provide charters to tourists and others. We operate on the end of Amtrak trains and I used to operate out of Denver Union Station (DUS). Since the removal of tracks, due to the reconstruction, I've based the car in Indianapolis. Since RTD only sees the fees for parking and access to DUS the amount of money brought to Denver, in particular, and Colorado in general is underestimated. We've brought in multiple-car charters to Denver for a variety of clients. Most visit the local sites, take in Rocky Mountain National Park, visit Pikes Peak, Garden of the Gods, etc. These provide much more to the Colorado economy than just the parking fee. I've also participated in a group, a family reunion tour, that laid over in Denver so that the Father could take his family to see the Olympic Venue that he paid for in Colorado Springs. How much did he spend in Colorado?? I've also participated in several Conventions that have brought Private Cars to Colorado. The largest was the Democratic Convention in 2008 when over 30 cars were parked in DUS. My car was there as we operated a Bed & Breakfast operation for several Journalists who came to report on the convention, one was from the Australian Broadcasting. There are several other operators who bring cars to Colorado for similar trips as I've mentioned. This coming summer my car will be part of a three car set that will dropping and picking up passengers through Colorado for at least six trips "through the Rockies". While I understand that Private Rail Cars are not really the purview of CDOT. We do provide an upscale service for those who wish to travel to and from Colorado. We can also provide Amtrak approved cars for other purposes as you mentioned in the Draft. Denver to Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction service as an example. I noted the following: The Leadville tourist line is Standard Gauge not Narrow.

David Hoffman (2/9/12) via Email

In your presentation on passenger rail traffic in Colorado, I did not see any reference to private rail car travel and use in Colorado. As a private car owner who travels behind Amtrak trains, I would think that the revenue opportunities for private rail travel to and from Colorado would be significant to include it in the study. Denver had a private rail track for layover at the old station, but it was removed with the renovation of the station for urban light rail use. Some provision should be made to accommodate private rail car parking while stopping over in Denver. The city of Denver and the area is missing out on tourist and business revenue by ignoring the potential use of travel by private rail car.

City of Aurora (2/10/12) via Email

Aurora has the following two comments: 1. The UP/Airport Blvd. grade separation in Aurora should be included in Page 6-12, Railroad Overpass/Underpass Projects list. This grade separation was identified in the Aurora Comprehensive Plan, Travel Framework Map. 2. LRT was not discussed in the plan. Reasons or discussions should be provided in the plan regarding why LRT system should or should be part of the plan. Thanks and please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information on this matter.

John Nuwer (2/10/12) via Email

The following are my comments on the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan: 1. The Steering Committee and Stakeholder Groups are heavily biased toward the I-70 corridor and not representative of the I-25 corridor. The existing Steering Committee and Stakeholder Groups should be disbanded and new, more truly representative, unbiased groups organized for any future plans. 2. The true economic opportunity for passenger rail is the I-25, not the I-70, corridor.

3. Demographically, outside of Denver, the most significant population growth is along the Front Range (including Colorado Springs and Pueblo). This growth dwarfs that of the Northwest and Intermountain regions. 4. Existing freight should be moved to a Greenfield Alignment and should not be a "low" priority. It should be considered in any future plan. Lack of capacity will force changes regardless. 5. There does not appear to be anything in the report, other than the obvious bias by the Steering Committee and Stakeholder Group, that would justify the AGS as a High/Medium Priority. The enormous, unjustified cost would guarantee the demise of a viable, justifiable HSR from Fort Collins to Pueblo and beyond. 6. Funding for AGS study should be terminated and the available funds used for a North-South HSR plan. 7. A North-South HSR plan, not an AGS plan, would properly position Colorado for future federal funding for freight and passenger-related infrastructure improvements. 8. Why is funding for a Front Range regional commuter rail system discussed in terms of MPO funding while the AGS is not?

Mark Linnebur (2/11/12) via Email

This plan is very extensive. I believe that revitalizing many of the short line rails that could expand markets to other communities would be very beneficial to the Colorado economy. If the UP or BNSF were encouraged to promote exploder or deploder trains off of these lines to come together as a shuttle train, it would greatly benefit many of the smaller grain elevators that are not longer utilized. Many of the commuter projects, I think, should be looked at closely. Currently, fast track along the I-25 and 225 corridors seem to be very underutilized. Is it making money? I believe any project has to be shown to be making money over the long run.

Lisa Czelatdko, Colorado Springs City Councilwoman (2/12/12) via Email

I would love to see anything that could connect our city to other cities within the state. We desperately need more transportation options. Thank you

Wayne Williams (2/15/12) via Email

I'm wondering why the Baptist Road intersection was not included in unincorporated El Paso County.

Beverly Babb (2/20/12) via Email

Right now a large contingent of folks here in SE Colorado are focused on saving/maintaining the Southwest Chief on its current route through southeastern Colorado and northern New Mexico. For more than a hundred years a primary transportation route has existed through this area and over Raton Pass down into New Mexico, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and onward to Los Angeles. Forts, water, grazing, and wildlife, provided early travelers with support along this corridor. Today, heritage tourism, scenery, wildlife, and adventure, beckon rail travelers. Every year more tourists enjoy the rhythm of train travel. Ease of booking, no x-ray/body searches, easy on and off, large comfortable seating, great food, beautiful scenery, interesting folks from around the country, and reasonable price make train travel enjoyable. Shortly, I am going on a 30 day package from coast to coast for \$643 - with 12 stops along the way. I couldn't fly to the east coast and back for that, besides having to book several weeks in advance, drive three hours to Denver, park my car at \$9 a day, pay \$25.00 to send my one suitcase into possible oblivion, stand in line to be searched, walk a mile to get to the plane, sit smashed in a small seat with two other folks similarly arranged, get peanuts and a small glass of pop, and, if seated by the window - get to watch the white fluffy clouds go by. I want to go by train!!! AMTRAK is the wave of the future, not something we should be down sizing, or taking away from the current rail options. The Southwest Chief highlights the heritage of our country and the beauty and wildlife of the southwest so well that the National Park Service has a magnificent Trails and Rails program on it during summer months. If the Chief is moved to another area it will no longer be feasible for the Park service to continue that marvelous education program, which adds so much to a traveler's experience. All of the above is what I see from a personal viewpoint. Economically, I understand the disaster to the numerous communities along the route if the Chief is moved to a different location. I believe many others have addressed this concern. In the long run what we need is further connection from La Junta to Pueblo/Denver as there was many years ago. Whether that is AMTRAK or a smaller carrier is optional, but it would bring more travelers. Ideally a train from Cheyenne to Trinidad would make money and join up all the players. Looking forward to that day. Thank you for your assistance in carrying this message.

Jan Peterson (2/21/12) via Email

I believe that a modern passenger rail system (light commuter rail) should be installed along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains. This natural barrier is a magnet for urban development, with most major cities in multiple states being situated right at the base of these mountains. That results in a very linear development pattern, precisely what a linear rail system can most efficiently serve! Combined with feeder systems (rail, bus, shuttle, etc.) collecting & delivering passengers east & west from the N-S main line, we could have an efficient people-moving system from the Mexican border to the Canadian border, serving the mountain states' population centers. This should begin with trains serving the most developed areas, such as Ft. Collins (or possibly, Cheyenne, WY) to Denver (and DIA), Denver to Castle Rock, and Castle Rock to Colorado

Springs. An incremental build-out over an extended period of time would provide the most efficient way of realizing the total system.

Dave Ruble (2/21/12) via Email

Attached are my comments on the draft State Rail Plan.
See A.6.4

Rick Klein (2/22/12) via Email

The City of La Junta and the surrounding communities have passed resolutions in support of keeping the Amtrak's Southwest Chief on the same route. We have resolutions from City of La Junta, Otero County, Action 22, City of Lamar, City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, Arkansas River Power Authority, and also from communities in Kansas and we are starting to work them in New Mexico. We feel that it is a high priority to keep passenger rail in Southeast Colorado. Please find and enter in separately the resolutions attached showing everyone's support of HIGH priority to keep passenger rail here.
See A.6.5 to A.6.10

Evan Stair (2/22/12) via Email

Preserving the Southwest Chief route is critical in reaching Denver from Kansas City. We hope to one day make a "right turn" at La Junta and head up the Front Range of the Rockies. New passenger rail stops in intermediate locations like Pueblo and Colorado Springs en route are urgently needed even today based upon the busy Interstate-25 corridor. Connecting Denver with Albuquerque is another worthwhile goal. All of this depends upon the efforts ongoing today to save the Southwest Chief from a reroute or discontinuance.

Irene Fortune (2/24/12) via Email

Thank you very much for lengthening the comment period on the Draft State Rail Plan. I read it. I learned a lot, especially about freight rail and road crossing realities. I have two comments; this one is short. On page 1-2, second bullet point, please add 'commuter' to the phrase: "...including proposed high-speed and commuter rail corridors..." My other comment is less short. Considering the time and expense invested into the Plan, I would like to see as broadly useful a Final Plan as possible. As I look ahead to years, very likely, of educating people about passenger rail and advocating for its implementation, I think the document would be strengthened by writing the Vision on page 1-2 in context of challenges that Colorado is facing. Also, placing desired timing into Section 8, would help readers get the sense that CDOT is aware of the need to apply rail as a solution to Colorado's impending challenges. At the risk of being presumptuous, allow me to suggest the following paragraphs for the Vision portion of Section 1: "By 2030, population on Colorado's Front Range is projected to grow to 6 million residents along a relatively narrow, 170 mile-long strip of land between Pueblo and Colorado Springs. In addition to residents traveling to work, school, appointments, visiting family and friends, the Front Range experiences heavy tourism volumes from skiers and vacationers throughout the year. Freight volumes will increase to serve this growth as well as move goods to other growing regions. "Well-planned and well-timed rail infrastructure for people and freight could significantly reduce the impending problems of longer travel time, deteriorating air quality and rising fuel prices and risk of crashes. Rail will help the region to attract successful, innovative economic development by competing with other regions that are already designing rail infrastructure improvements. Passenger rail infrastructure would facilitate additional tourism given that DIA is working toward direct flights to Japan, followed by other Asian countries, and train-based tourism enables higher visitation to the region." To elaborate on my point about desired timing, in my opinion, Section 8, "Short-range investment program" needs desired timing. I realize CDOT cannot commit to timing but how about something like this under Passenger Rail on page 8-2? 1. Support for completion of the Commuter Rail portions of the RTD FasTracks program. If operational by 2025 these rail lines would significantly alleviate the travel time, air quality, fuel cost and business and tourism competitiveness challenges already growing inside Denver metro. 2. Support for further development of commuter rail service from the Denver metropolitan area to Fort Collins. Design should proceed with this rail system in order to operate seamlessly with Denver Metro RTD shortly after FasTracks becomes operational north of Denver so the travel time and other challenges listed above are not merely pushed northward while Denver metro solves its own problems. I acknowledge Section 5 contains ample detail on Colorado's 'challenges' and portrays rail as a valid solution. A section on tourism travel growth would be an excellent addition however, considering the economic contribution that industry makes to Colorado. I value placing context into the Vision section because I would like to refer to this document as I encounter people who view passenger rail as an artifact of the 1950's and complain that people ride rail only for fun at taxpayer expense! Skeptical readers will get to the first couple pages of certain sections, but are unlikely to read Section 5 entirely, which is why I ask for a very short summary of Section 5 as context at the beginning of the Vision section and for some timing early in Section 8. Thank you again for the chance to comment. This document represents significant effort and is, as is written in Section 8, "a beginning to rail planning." And a quite comprehensive beginning at that.

Deborah Cameron (2/24/12) via Email

Thanks for the opportunity to review the Draft Rail Plan. I've looked at the document and it was extremely helpful in providing background on the rail system in CO. Being new to CO it will be a great resource to me. Being involved in the recruitment of new businesses to Colorado, I am particularly interested in learning about rail served industrial parks and sites that exist in the State so if there is a good resource for that info, it would be very helpful to our efforts. I have also reached out to the class 1 rail contacts for that info. I do know of a couple of class 1 rail lines that are doing industrial site certification programs for rail sites – if you know of any activity in Colorado related to this, I would be extremely interested.

Dave Ruble (2/25/12) via Email

I one additional comment. Since some TPRs may want to incorporate elements of the State Rail Plan into their regional transportation plan, it would be nice if the final State Rail Plan's projects could include a breakdown by TPR. Also, I am attaching how high speed rail might look if it were located in the median of a typical rural interstate highway. See A.6.11

Jonathan Hutchison (2/27/12) via Email

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Rail Plan, and my comments are below. Some address actual content, while others are stylistic/nits: Page 2-2 – Amtrak's creation wasn't to "to keep trains running across Penn Central and other bankrupt carriers until the service could be ended or sold". Amtrak was created to eliminate the "passenger burden" from the private railroads, lest the nation become devoid of intercity passenger service resulting from the private carriers discontinuing all intercity trains. Not all of the railroads that joined Amtrak were bankrupt. Page 3-2 - I think the categorization of the railroads should be consistent with the STB's classification—Class I, II, or III, as opposed to local, regional, etc. Often, switching railroads are Class I's, and regionals are Class II's. Finally, the revenue definition for "Class I" is not exclusive to freight, as Amtrak is a Class I carrier—it's revenues, not commodities. Page 32. There's no mention of BNSF hosting Amtrak, but UPRR's hosting of Amtrak is mentioned on the UPRR summary on page 34. Page 3-16 is Kyle a regional or shortline? Is it a matter of Kyle being a regional by length, but a short line by revenue? (http://www.aslrra.org/about_aslrra/FAQs/) Page 3-39 – I think you should also mention the Amtrak routes that used to serve CO—the Desert Wind and Pioneer, and explain how reductions in federal operating support caused them to be discontinued. Page 3-42 – DUS is not going to serve "Heavy Rail;" Subways/elevated rail transit isn't part of the plan—DUS will service intercity, light, and commuter rail, buses, bikes, etc, but not heavy rail. Page 3-42 – The ability for intercity rail (not light rail) to serve the Consolidated Main Line results from preserving an alignment (land now; tracks later) linking the DUS station throat tracks with the CML, not via a platform as stated. Nor is it (would it be) "through service;" that suggests trains to/from the CML would operate through DUS, which isn't the case; DUS would still be a stub-end station for all intercity trains including future ones to/from the CML. Page 5-16 – "All of the new capacity is available for passenger trains, potentially reducing the need for double tracks in some segments since there are no freight operating conflicts." By extrapolation, this sounds like you are saying that a greenfield HSR route would be single-track, since all of the capacity on the route would be for passenger trains, as opposed to needing to double track a conventional route to accommodate both intercity and freight trains. As you know, the reality is that all HSR alignments are at least double tracked—perhaps not necessarily adjacent to each other, but there are not routine opposing moves on a HSR mainline. I suggest rewording this. Page 5-16 "The potential also exists to use lighter weight rolling stock if the passenger trains do not operate on shared track with freight" The real issue is grade crossings. Yes, freight train weight plays into it, but following the lead of other countries, freights can be operated with higher performing passenger trains if certain things are in place—collision avoidance technology and grade separations, among other characteristics. Page 5-20 "This is because the route through Wyoming operates over a double mainline track at 79 miles-per-hour while the Moffat Corridor over the Continental Divide in Central Colorado operates at much lower average speeds." I understand what you're saying, but I think the wording is awkward, as "routes" don't "operate"—trains operate over routes. I'd suggest, "UPRR's route through Wyoming is a multiple track mainline, which can accommodate higher speeds, as opposed to the Moffat Tunnel route, which is largely single-track and whose topography results in lower average speeds." I'd avoid mentioning specific speeds, as depending on where one is the two routes, Amtrak's top track speed is comparable, it's just there are many fewer miles of 70-79mph Amtrak running on the former DRGW. Page 6-2 – the definition of commuter rail is more complex than just total route miles. The actual characteristics differentiating commuter from intercity rail per US Code are: "Commuter service" means short-haul rail passenger service operated in metropolitan and suburban areas, whether within or across the geographical boundaries of a State, usually characterized by reduced fare, multiple-ride, and commutation tickets, and by morning and evening peak period operations." Page 7-2 – Under PRIIA, I'd clarify the legislation authorizes +13B dollars for intercity rail capital and operating support, but actual appropriations since PRIIA's passage have been less than that. Finally, somewhere in the

document, I'd mention the need for Colorado's Amtrak stations to become ADA compliant and in a state of good repair. I'm not saying it's the state's sole responsibility to fund these achievements, but to the extent this document is an inventory of the state's rail assets/issues, the condition of stations seems worth mentioning.
Clear Creek County Board of Commissioners (2/27/12) Formal Letter A.6.12
Weld County Public Works, (2/28/12) Formal Letter A.6.13
Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region CDOT (2/28/12) Formal Letter A.6.14
Gary Carter (2/28/12) Formal Letter A.6.15
City of Colorado Springs Transit Services Division (2/29/12) Formal Letter A.6.16
Eagle County Board of Commissioners (2/29/12) Formal Letter See A.6.17
Joshua Sheade (2/29/12) I am a rail advocate, a 3rd year environmental law student at Vermont Law School, and a voter within the state of Colorado. While I agree with your ambitions, the dream of an interwoven state rail system is a pipe dream. The rail system is not planned in connection with regional MPO's, like the better organized surface transportation funding. Second, the funds are not currently available in the private sector to refurbish old tracks or build new ones. The money would need to come from federal dollars considering the rail lines cross state lines. Last, the rail system is privately owned with the quasi-government agency Amtrak holding a secondary stake in rail strategy. Thus, if you want to build an intra-state passenger rail system funding will have to come from the cargo companies that own the rails. While I am pessimistic about the ability to convince CO DOT and Burlington-Santa Fe to develop a passenger rail plan, I believe it is a necessary move towards a more sustainable future. A more efficient mode of transportation allows new programs of walkability, farm to plate initiatives, and urban growth boundaries to come into existence and thrive. Yet, more than just Colorado needs to be willing to accept federal rail funding for the administration to approve a regional rail system in the Rocky Mountain region. Otherwise, Colorado's second best option is to accept a similar fate as California and become indebted to the Chinese. Good luck.
North Front Range MPOs (2/29/12) Formal Letter See A.6.18
Diane Curlette (2/28/12) via Email; Dillon Doyle (2/29/12) via Email; Charles Tidd (2/29/12) via Email; Dana Kelly (2/29/12) via Email; Tom Jackson (2/29/12) via Email; Anna Langegger (2/29/12) via Email; Kristyn MacPhail (2/29/12) via Email; Bennett Boeschstein (2/29/12) via Email; Marlon Poole (2/29/12) via Email; Gin Phillips (2/29/12) via Email; Michael Rees (2/29/12) via Email; Carson Coates (2/29/12) via Email; Renee Estelle (2/29/12) via Email; Laura Wright (2/29/12) via Email; Melissa Reyes-Fox (2/29/12) via Email; Nancy Baros (2/29/12) via Email; Petrika Peters (2/29/12) via Email; Deirdre Daly (2/29/12) via Email; Leslie Carter (2/29/12) via Email; Kevin Bradley, (2/29/12) via Email; Josh Kuhn (2/29/12) via Email; Glenn Renner (2/29/12) via Email; Laura Beer (2/29/12) via Email; Moneka Worah (2/29/12) via Email; Lisa Smith (2/29/12) via Email; Stephanie Farkash (2/29/12) via Email; Lynn Wilsey (2/29/12) via Email; Mark Meeks (2/29/12) via Email; John Kirk (2/29/12) via Email; Ronald Harden (2/29/12) via Email; Shannon Johnson (2/29/12) via Email; Kim Hedberg, (2/29/12) via Email; Amy Thoe (2/29/12) via Email; Sarah Engle (2/29/12) via Email; Charles Shifflett (2/29/12) via Email; Julie Wills (2/29/12) via Email; P Buchanan 2/29/12) via Email; Georgia Moen (2/29/12) via Email; Anne Mudgett (2/29/12) via Email; Candice Tellio (2/29/12) via Email; Joe McDonald (2/29/12) via Email ;Lora Roode, (2/29/12) via Email; Ken Truhan (2/29/12) via Email; Rita Peterson (2/29/12) via Email; Paul DeCrette (2/29/12) via Email; John Sovell (2/29/12) via Email; Jon Kirkpatrick (2/29/12) via Email; Tim Johnson, (2/29/12) via Email; Anna Zawisza (2/29/12) via Email; Ruth Brown (2/29/12) via Email; Cynthia Henley (2/29/12) via Email; Lisa Reaves (2/29/12) via Email; Carey Bare (2/29/12) via Email; Tom Bruchmann (2/29/12) via Email; Wendy Emrich (2/29/12) via Email; Kristofer Terry (2/29/12) via Email; Michelle Tanner (2/29/12) via Email; Barbara Monroe (2/29/12) via Email; Susan Peirce (2/29/12) via Email; Kelly Lyon (2/29/12) via Email; Gin Fonte (2/29/12) via Email; Jennifer D. Lindquist (2/29/12) via Email; William Bloch (2/29/12) via Email; Beverly Mabry (2/29/12) via Email; William Owens (2/29/12) via Email; Jeff Forrest (2/29/12) via Email; Johanna Dokson (2/29/12) via Email; Bill Jenkins (2/29/12) via Email; Debbie James (2/29/12) via Email; Kellie Gorman, (2/29/12) via Email; David Read (2/29/12) via Email; Edward McIlvain (2/29/12) via Email; Michael Racette (2/29/12) via Email; Merrill A. Carter (2/29/12) via Email; Stefan Kazmierski (2/29/12) via Email; Jesse

Ward (2/29/12) via Email; Rebecca Richman (2/29/12) via Email; Carole Chowen (2/29/12) via Email; Chad Reischl (2/29/12) via Email; Rama Newton (2/29/12) via Email; Benjamin Gardner (2/29/12) via Email; Bjoern Mannsfeld (3/1/12) via Email; Martha WD Bushnell (3/1/12) via Email; Gregory Speer (3/1/12) via Email; Laura Bouche Hauser (3/1/12) via Email; Christine Citron, (3/2/12) via Email; Kathy Silvernail (3/2/12) via Email; TJ Johnson (3/2/12) via Email; Michele Melio (3/3/12); Brian Clark, (3/4/12); John Satter (3/4/12); Megan Roemer (3/4/12); Kelly Gorman (3/6/12)

I live in Colorado and I'm concerned about Coloradans only having the option to drive between regions of our great state, especially as our population continues to grow and traffic only gets worse. We need real options. We need to have choices in how we travel from Grand Junction to Denver, Fort Collins to Pueblo, Colorado Springs to Durango, and Denver to Vail. In other words, we need transit services that connect the major regions of Colorado with fast, convenient and affordable service. In order to get there, we need you to lead the way and start identifying statewide transit needs and planning for statewide transit systems in a comprehensive and integrated fashion. We need an overall vision for the state where transit services are needed, how they will connect to each other, how they will contribute to a workable statewide transit system, and how that system will get built. I am very disappointed that your State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan does not do this. Please amend the plan to include a greater focus on transit and let the public know how they can make their voices heard in this process. Please also lay out for us citizens in this document how and when the rest of this transit planning effort in Colorado will occur and how we can get involved.

Pete Rickershauser (3/1/12) Formal Letters

Good evening! Attached are pages (some of which you have seen before) with additional suggested changes for accuracy and completeness for Section 6 of the state rail plan draft. This email and attachment wraps up my submissions for your consideration. Please advise if any questions. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

See A.6.19

Pete Rickershauser (3/1/12) via Email

Good evening! Attached are pages (some of which you have seen before) with additional suggested changes for accuracy and completeness for Section 5 of the state rail plan draft. Please advise if any questions.

See A.6.20

Pete Rickerhauser (3/1/12) via Email

Good evening! Attached are pages (some of which you have seen before) with additional suggested changes for accuracy and completeness for Sections 1 and 3 of the state rail plan draft. Please advise if any questions.

See A.6.21

Pete Rickershauser (3/1/12) via Email

Good evening! Per our discussion last Friday and my subsequent follow-up with both BNSF and UP representatives, I suggest the inserts on the attached be used at the identified locations in lieu of the present wording in my draft of the rail plan, as follows: Page 3-6 - Sentence to be inserted at the end of the first paragraph on BNSF; this then makes the BNSF entry read similar to the following UP entry. Pages 3-32 - 3-33 - This is a rewrite of the entire first three paragraphs of the "Agriculture and Rail" section which has been discussed with BNSF and UP; I believe it provides more complete information and greater accuracy. Pages 3-41 - 3-42 - This is a rewrite of the entire third paragraph concerning the Southwest Chief, which includes current (drafted this week) information from BNSF. Page 5-20 - A sentence to be added for accuracy at the end of the paragraph at the top of the page which carries over from page 5-19, to be inserted following the sentence which ends ". . . to adapt the corridor for double stacks impractical." In addition, I recommend the entire sentence "As an example, Amtrak's Zephyr, when detoured through Wyoming due to maintenance issues on the Moffat Corridor, arrives in Salt Lake City four hours ahead so schedule." be removed, as this is not germane to a discussion of intermodal traffic, and the speed point is made in the preceding sentence. Page 6-18 - A sentence to be added at the end of the first (and only) paragraph on this page, for clarity. For your consideration. Any questions, please advise.

See A.6.22

Pete Rickershauser (3/1/12) via Email

Good evening! Relative to the rail plan, wanted to call the following to your attention: P. 3-45 and 3-46 - There is an additional "scenic railroad" in Colorado, depending on how strictly you want to adhere to the definition of both "scenic" and "railroad" - the Fort Collins Municipal Railway, run by volunteers on the streets of Fort Collins. Should you choose to include it, info is available on the web; it is "Standard" gauge. P. 5-1 and/or p. 5-25 may be good locations to mention the Transportation Technology Institute at Pueblo; p. 5-25 may be a good spot to mention the safety testing and training done at TTCI as well as the training done by the freight railroads for numerous fire departments and first responders. P. 6-2 - As we discussed Friday, you probably need to include some reference to the timing of the study cited - 2007, using data from 2005

and 2006; hardly current or reflecting current conditions of the freight rail industry, but indicative of predicted growth patterns. Heard yesterday from BNSF that there is a major project starting up this summer on Mason Street in Fort Collins. BNSF's Front Range Sub currently runs down the center of this one-way street. The project will have BNSF's track rebuilt to permit higher-speed operations, and the track will be placed in a center median not accessible to street/highway traffic. Crossing protection at cross streets will be improved. Mason Street will be converted from one-way to bi-directional, with the freight railroad remaining in the middle. Suspect Bill Snowden may be able to provide details. Believe this worth mentioning in the rail plan. More to come. Questions, please advise.

Pete Rickershauser (3/1/12) via Email

Good evening! Per our conversation this past Friday, I have drawn on industry sources and added some additional terms, titles and phrases along with accepted definitions for placement in the Rail Plan glossary for your consideration. Any questions, please advise.

See A.6.23

Carlos Ferran (3/1/12) via Email

The draft looks good. I suggest however double tracking between Palmer Lake and Crews (Security, CO) as rail traffic is very heavy through that stretch of railroad, and backups are not good for neither the railroads or the state. It wastes time, money, and fuel. Also, If there is a proposed passenger plan, make the passenger route from Denver-Colorado Springs-Pueblo a priority, because these cities are the most populated in the state. If we look at FREX, ridership has been increasing, and costs to the passenger are lower than other transportation hubs in the west. If a bus service can do this, a train can do it better.

Christine M. Bern (3/1/12) via Email

I would love to see a passenger/commuter train north to south border to border. CalTrain between San Jose and San Francisco is a joy. Priority wise, I would hope for practical first (commuter train) and luxury second (ski train). Thanks.

Beth Gilgalad (3/1/12) via Email

I believe there is interest in having commuter rail from northern Colorado cities, like Fort Collins. Infrastructure built now would make it possible for commuter rail to Denver. I-25 is already congested and the answer is NOT to add more lanes of traffic. From my perspective public or mass transit needs to be at least the same cost as driving and the same or faster time-wise.

Hugh C. Fowler (3/1/12) via Email

Please add the following ideas to the Rail Plan: 1. The route for the high-speed rail service must be from DIA to Eagle County Airport, not from C470. The reason should have been made clear by the I-70 EIS. 2. CDOT must cooperate with the Colorado Dept of Education in developing educational materials for children, the next generation of voters who, if not introduced to all the dimensions of RAILROADS in schools, will lack the basic information necessary to support their lawmakers in exploiting the advantages of RAIL TRANSPORTATION. Thank you.

Albert G. Melcher (3/1/12) Formal Letter

See A.6.24

Jon Esty (3/1/12) via Email

I have a few comments after reviewing the draft plan for freight/passenger rail. 1.) The Rail Plan should require that all transportation planning include a complete evaluation of freight/passenger rail as a viable alternative particularly along or near major transportation corridors in the state. 2.) The Rail Plan should include specific proposals to connect Colorado's major population and job centers (mainly along the Front Range) to promote the continued healthy growth of those communities and the fact that a balanced transportation system is required to achieve this goal. Specific plans which would initiate Denver to Ft. Collins or Denver to Colorado Springs passenger rail service should be formulated and be "shovel ready" in the event that federal, state, local, and/or private funding is available for such projects. 3.) The Rail Plan should provide active support for existing Amtrak intercity services (Cal Zephyr and SW Chief) as well as new services to Kansas City/St. Louis, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Cheyenne/Casper/Portland/Seattle, and Las Vegas/Las Angeles. Support for existing and future passenger rail stations located in rural areas of the state should be enthusiastically state. C-DOT should work with other states to make sure long distance intercity train service continues and is expanded. 4.) The Rail Plan should emphasize that C-DOT will cooperate and coordinate passenger rail services with local transit agencies and that rail stations should permit interchange with the local bus system, shuttles, and taxis (intermodal facilities). 5.) The State Rail plan should formulate a network of intercity bus transportation which would connect intercity trains with other communities not directly served by rail. For example, bus service should connect Telluride, Ridgway (Ouray) Montrose, and Delta with the Cal. Zephyr in Grand Junction. Many thanks for your kind attention to these proposals.

Judy Barksdale (3/2/12) via Email

I have not had time to read the entire draft as I only came upon the document this morning. However, I would encourage the transportation department to consider developing plans for a Front Range passenger service. This service would be of use to several thousands of residents to access the Denver metro area and connect to the new Airport light rail service as well as provide commuters with an option to driving. It would impact more people than a rail service that would only be used 4-5 months to haul skiers to the mountains. I have traveled extensively in Europe and there are rail services available to nearly every town. For example: there is a single car service that operates from Strasbourg, France to Offenburg, Germany. It runs frequently, carries 50-80 people and is efficient, fast, clean and comfortable. These train cars are already available, they could run on existing tracks and would be a big boon to the Front Range in reducing pollution and congestion on I25, not to mention showcase Colorado to the rest of the nation as a model of the future.

Brent Gienger (3/2/12) via Email

I first would like to commend you on a INCREDIBLE proposal! Your hard work really stands out in this very well written plan draft and I want you to know there are many people who are here to support you and do appreciate all you have done. This document is easy to understand, thorough, colorful and most importantly, the first step to bettering our society through a more efficient and safer rail transportation systems. That said, you owe yourself a huge pat on the back! After being Honorably discharged, serving 10 years in the military I was fortunate enough to get a job with E-470 and I am proud to be a Colorado resident. This military service really opened my eyes as I was able to visit 22 countries; some having quite elaborate transportation systems: namely Europe and the U.A.E.. I am writing you with some additional ideas for the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. When E-470 became an entirely LPT (License Plate Toll) or all electronic road, the toll plazas were emptied. You may or may not know that nobody works out of these buildings and E-470 has tried to get companies to lease them. All these efforts have been unsuccessful as today these buildings remain unoccupied. I have learned of the idea to establish a passenger rail line from DIA to Colorado Springs. Currently I could think of no better use for these existing buildings than for commuter stops for a new rail system. There are five buildings currently unoccupied on E-470, three are south of DIA. These buildings were created with no tax dollars and would only require minimal cosmetic interior and exterior upgrades. I want to stress the fact that private businesses would really have an opportunity with these buildings and their respective locations greatly reducing the need for tax dollars. (Or say maybe using the tax or a portion of it generated from the private companies at these locations to go towards railway improvements and future passenger rail projects.) At these locations investment opportunities could come in the form of coffee shops, news stands, and restaurants; similar to an airport setting. This will generate jobs, and increase property value all while reducing the Denver metro areas overall pollution (Less cars on the road). Furthermore the land to and from each of them is still wide open and suitable for both rail and new road construction. E-470 is the perfect paring for a commuter rail line as the majority of our road is zoned in such a way that most of the land is still unoccupied and open fields. I want to leave you one last idea. The Southlands Mall area in South East Aurora has really been an area of significant growth of which the residents are educated and forward thinking. The opportunity exists for investors to have an RTD style park and ride, similar to the one at Parker/I-225. However, this park and ride would go directly to DIA. Here again the land is zoned in such a way that open space still exists for the building of a rail way, ideally a High Speed Rail Corridor with maybe the Southlands Mall being the midpoint stop between DIA and Colorado Springs. Mr. Bazair, thank you again for your time and all the work you have done thus far!

Bob Bowser (3/2/12) via Email

I support rail passenger service from Ft Collins to Pueblo and from Denver to Vail. I'd also like to see the freight running through downtown Ft Collins moved east.

Malcolm McMichael (3/2/12) via Email

I am sorry that I am unable at this late date to review the rail plan in detail. So, please allow me to emphasize in the general sense the importance of more/better passenger rail. Specifically: 1. Pursuing fuel-efficient and congestion-reducing regional/local passenger rail systems, along with coordinated transit-oriented development as a means to reduce our carbon footprint and energy dependence; reduce the impact of sprawl; and encourage sustainable economic growth for the future that is not auto-dependent. 2. Preserving and enhancing the heritage-preservation and tourism-boosting virtues of our historical scenic railroads, along with preservation of right of way and necessary infrastructure. These are truly a unique aspect that makes Colorado a special to live and to visit. 3. Enhancing the operations and sustainability of Amtrak service. Long-distance passenger rail is an important component of our future energy & transportation policy infrastructure - as is also the case with regional/local rail, and for the same reasons. Amtrak provides an important service to rural communities and an alternative to air or auto travel for everyone, and to lower-income travelers, families, and seniors in particular. Passenger rail travel should be affordable, dependable, and convenient, and it is a national scandal that it is not. All the

above are viable and beneficial uses of public funds and public leadership that will, if done well, yield economic and social benefits far in excess of the initial financial investment.

Bob Flynn (3/2/12) via Email

Here's my comment regarding The Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan: One of the major focus should be to move the BNSF Freight trains out of the center of northern front range cities of Longmont, Loveland, and Ft. Collins. They provide no deliveries or service to these cities and are dangerous, extremely noisy, and with their 1 mile or more loads, they create considerable auto congestion.

Janice M. Finch (3/2/12) via Email

Thank you and the new CDOT Division of Transit and Rail for the leadership and all the hard work with this initial rail planning effort for the State. Please note that unless there is some extreme need to finalize this document immediately and get it approved by the Transportation Commission and submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in the next month or two, we would encourage CDOT to take the time to respond to all comments submitted from around the State, and revise the document accordingly, even though it may be extending the projected time frame for the Plan. Although the planning process has lasted over a year, participating agencies and the general public are just now seeing the actual document content. This initial draft has significant shortcomings as outlined below. Another review cycle of a revised second draft for the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), the Rail Plan Steering Committee, and the broad-based Rail Plan Stakeholder Group before the Plan is finalized may be necessary and desirable. Below are comments from the City and County of Denver on the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan: 1. In general, the document provides a readable inventory and history of rail in Colorado that addresses the 12 requirements of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (2008), provides the current status of the state rail system, and identifies a large number of future improvement projects. 2. The Plan, however, needs to better link where we are today and where we want to be in the future. It should outline a specific process and active program that Colorado will undertake to reach the desired future system. If the State eventually wants expanded local/regional passenger rail systems, scenic railroads, as well as intercity passenger rail, including an interconnected system of High Speed Rail, the document should directly state that and provide maps. If the pass-through freight rail traffic and coal trains need to be relocated to a bypass out on the Eastern Plains to provide the future opportunity for passenger rail along the Front Range and through Denver, that should be emphasized. A rails-to-trails program, as well as other uses for abandoned rail corridors, should be included. Only with this clarity of vision will the State be able to compete in the future with other large metropolitan areas and states for the limited funding from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and through federal discretionary programs such as TIGER, as well as engage the public, elected officials, and private sector businesses and railroads in achieving the vision. 3. Related to this, the readability and impact of the document for the general public and for policymakers would be enhanced with the inclusion of a focused Executive Summary which describes the planning process, the needs, the conclusions, the actual "Plan," and the time line for action items and next steps. Another option is to move all of most of the Chapter 8 Plan Summary -- which is only 7 pages -- to the beginning, or some combination of both of these. 4. The challenge of funding shortfalls should be highlighted. An example of why an upfront Executive Summary is needed is this critical statement on page 6-8 in Chapter 6, which outlines the "Rail System Improvement Program," an extensive list of projects totaling hundreds of millions of dollars: "Funding is not currently available for any of the projects proposed in this chapter other than the Section 130 grade crossing improvement projects shown in Table 6-3." Historically, the level of Colorado's allocation of federal Section 130 funding has been extremely low, and this should be emphasized in the summary and contrasted with the overall needs. In order to capture the magnitude of the need, all of the Chapter 6 potential projects in the tables should contain rough-order-of-magnitude costs in the Cost Estimate column rather than "TBD." The total costs should be summarized by category as with highways and bridges -- maintenance and operational, safety, major reconstruction/rehabilitation, and new facilities/new capacity. As stated below, the investment needs should be designated as public vs. private sector. The RTD FasTracks funding gap -- and other passenger rail needs -- should be included as well. Of course, this can and should be caveated that this represents the overall magnitude of the need for achieving the vision, and that specific projects will need to be further planned, scoped, analyzed, costed, and prioritized. 5. To assist the general reader not familiar with the terms used throughout the document, the Glossary should be brought to the front of the document, with the Acronym list. It is buried back between Chapter 8 and the Appendices. The definition of "Commuter Rail" needs more detail on applicability, range, and alternative propulsion technologies. "In-street railway" systems should be defined, including "modern streetcar" and "vintage trolley" systems. 6. Because the document concentrates so much on the freight rail system, it is not clear what is within the public agency/public funding purview and what is primarily the responsibility of the private, for-profit railroads. This should especially be made clear in the summary of needs, and project funding lists. 7. Since this is a passenger as well

as a freight rail plan, the Chapter 2 History should include much more detail on the history of passenger rail -- the decline in the 40s through 80s, and the resurgence. The time line should not end at 1996, but should be brought forward to this year. Some of the information on passenger rail history should be brought forward from Chapter 3, including Amtrak, RTD, and scenic railroads. The opening of the each of the light rail lines, the passage of the FasTracks program in 2004, etc., should be highlighted. The document often sounds apologetic about what Colorado has not done with regard to passenger rail. In Chapter 2 and throughout, the future Denver Union Station and Denver International Airport station should be emphasized as much as (or more than) the private, intermodal freight facilities, since they will be significant public passenger intermodal hubs for regional and statewide travel. The potential for in-street rail systems such as modern streetcar should be analyzed in Chapter 3, especially since diverse communities such as Colorado Springs, Greeley, and Denver have been exploring such systems for local access and economic development purposes. Although interesting, much of the extremely detailed freight rail description in Chapter 3 should be put in an Appendix. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Nancy York (3/2/12) via Email

As I just learned yesterday of this plan and that comments due are today, my comments will be more general rather than too specific. My compliments on the detailed information presented in the draft plan especially regarding Freight Rail. Most interesting. First my premises in making my comments: I believe rail is the future. 1. Costs of investments will never be cheaper than today. The soonest investments can be made the more cost effective. 2. Rights of way are more available now than later. 3. Oil is a finite resource and the time to plan for the eventuality of its increased scarcity is now for both freight and passenger rail and universal connectivity. 4. Rail supports economic growth and environmental sustainability. 5. Rail is the most efficient for moving numbers of people and things over distances. 6. Rail can be an enormous economic driver and determinate of wiser land use planning. 7. Population growth and the aging of our population demands transportation independent of individual cars. * Vehicular emissions are a significant health and environmental detriment. * The future needs an alternative given the finiteness of oil. * We can't build our way out of congestion with roads. 8. Personally I love riding the train or comfortable buses as I can work, read, write, chat, make new friends, and view the landscape. I support: * Passenger rail along the Front Range connecting Wyoming and New Mexico and providing efficient and pleasant transportation between Colorado communities as soon as possible. * Strengthening rail east and west connections for both freight and passenger. * Upgrading rail lines to ensure safety especially within the unique Greeley-Windsor-Fort Collins; Miliken-Windsor-Loveland- Johnstown- Longmont region. A wonderful opportunity exists in this region to manage growth, enhance the economy, sustainability, and quality of life. * Specifically, improving the BNSF/UP rail crossing at West Oak Street and Mason Street in Fort Collins regardless whether it is track rehab, surface crossing or Tie & Surfacing. This is an extremely jarring crossing whether on bicycle or automobile. Thank you for considering my input, and best wishes in prioritizing projects and implementing CDOT's vision "to provide the best multi-modal transportation system for Colorado that most effectively and safely moves people, goods and information."

Ray Krueger (3/2/12) via Email

Please verify the dates in Table 4.2 and 4.3. I believe the years are incorrect.

Colorado Rail Passenger Association (3/2/12) Formal Letter

A.6.25

Diane Mitsch Bush (3/2/12) Formal Letter

A.6.26

Stephanie Thomas (3/2/12) via Email

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. As you know, rather than provide specific technical comments, the Colorado Environmental Coalition has chosen to provide its members with a convenient and easy way to email you the general comment that they, and we, remain dismayed about the lack of focus in this plan on transit and passenger rail and feel there is a great as-yet-unmet need in Colorado for statewide, interregional transit planning to meet current and future needs. I understand you have received a great number of comments from our members on this topic. We do feel this is really a Freight Rail Plan for Colorado and remain disappointed in that focus. We also feel it would be more accurate to name this plan the State Freight Rail Plan if CDOT is not willing to amend the plan to balance out the focus; however we understand that this is not something CDOT is willing to do. We understand from CDOT that CDOT will add to this Plan more language referencing a forthcoming Statewide Transit Plan to respond to our comments. We appreciate this and think it is a necessary step to record in this plan CDOT's plan and process on this issue for interested citizens' information. We also understand that CDOT will be starting the following studies soon: (1) Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS), (2) Advanced Guideway System Study (AGS), (3) Intercity & Regional Bus Study (ICRB), (4) Statewide Transit Plan, and (5) Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (2040), and that CDOT's plan for producing the integrated

statewide transit planning required by the legislation that created DTR is to integrate all of these studies into that integrated statewide transit plan in the 2040 STP. We intend to follow this process closely and we look forward to continuing to work with you on these studies and this statewide transit vision.

CoPIRG (3/2/12) Formal Letter

A.6.27

Janis Lindsey Huggins (3/2/12) via Email

I just heard that this is the last day to comment on this. Since I will not be able to read the proposals by tonight, I just want to register that I am definitely for high speed rail that would connect the west slope towns with Denver - for the environment, safety and for ease of access to the metropolitan area for so many of us! I have heard that it would be only from the Eagle/Vail area (probably because of Glenwood Canyon) = however, I know it would be a huge plus if it connected Grand Junction somehow as well. Of course, ease of dispersal once you get to Denver is important. I'm all for being able to get around this state on high speed rail. My husband and I used that mode of transportation while in Spain last year and were very impressed.

Joe L. Arbona (3/2/12) via Email

I hope you're doing well. Although Grant Janke already provided you our most pressing comments on the Colorado State Rail Plan, here are a few additional ones that I picked up: 1. On page 5-17, where it says: "At the request of Class 1 railroads, CDOT and the railroads have been studying railroad relocation since 2003." The statement suggests that UP was involved in initiating the relocation effort, which is not the case. If BNSF requested it, then please clarify. I would remove "At the request of Class 1 railroads." Also in the same sentence, the statement "some expenditure of public funds" should say a "public private partnership that will require public funds to cover the majority of the implementation." I think the word some gives a misleading impression. 2. On page 5-28, the plan refers to Operation Lifesaver, Inc. as OLS, it should be OLI. 3. On page 6-20, the statement "the railroads have not necessarily agreed to host any new service" is a little unclear. From UP's standpoint, please remove the word "necessarily" to avoid confusion. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Brian Majeski (3/2/12) via Email

I am eager to see the addition of high-speed and other passenger rail systems throughout the Front Range and the 70 corridor. Rail is the future one way or the other, so there is no better time than now. I will be keeping an eye on the progress of this study and the growth of this important asset to regional transportation and to the environment. Build it and they will come.

Joan Shaffer (3/2/12) via Email

Front Range on Track (FRONT) thanks the Colorado Department of Transportation and the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Steering Committee and Stakeholders for their dedicated work in producing the draft plan for public comment. As an advocacy organization in support of the re-establishment of commuter/passenger rail service throughout the Rocky Mountain Front Range FRONT has enjoyed the opportunity to participate as a stakeholder in the plan process. This plan is a necessary first step in recognizing on the economic and transportation value of the rail industry and the potential for public/private investment in serving valid public transportation needs. The FRONT board has carefully reviewed the draft plan and has engaged in discussions with organizations supporting passenger rail service throughout Colorado. We have reviewed the comments of the Colorado Rail Passenger Association and fully support the recommendations as submitted. We particularly want to emphasize the need for creative thinking and aggressive action in determining the true economic value of passenger rail service to local economies through tourism, community core redevelopment and appropriately planned, wise infrastructure investment. Such information would serve to fully inform the public of the advantages of rail transportation service. We believe this plan lays the groundwork for much needed in-depth planning, and encourage the incorporation of current rail service best practices to shorten the planning process and cost requirements. FRONT very much appreciates the complexities of the issues before you, and we stand ready to assist the Colorado Department of Transportation in ensuring that an effective network of passenger rail service is deployed along the Colorado Front Range. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Roger Hoffman (3/2/12) via Email

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. I haven't had much time to scrutinize the entire document, but my quick-read indicates that it's a fairly thorough update, especially of the history and status of various rail-related plans and documents. A few things seem rather notable. One of these is that there seems to be a consistent and growing thread of public interest in passenger or commuter rail service. Various recent studies, including the recently-concluded North I-25 EIS, further illustrate this interest. In fact, "we" in Northern Colorado have been talking about commuter rail for literally decades, going back well before the North Front Range Transit Alternatives Feasibility Study

(2000) in which I also was a focus group participant. Yet aside from the recently concluded High Speed Rail feasibility study (which was initiated and driven rather independently of CDOT), there has been too little in the way of action to bring about or help implement any of the desired improvements. Even the aforementioned N-125- EIS, while including in its preferred alternatives package the development of commuter rail using the existing BNSF lines between Fort Collins and Longmont, fails to identify a funding source, and sets a very distant target date for completion; while highway-expansion projects are given higher priority and presumed funding. Of course, the lack of official support (and funding) for commuter rail extends well beyond CDOT's control, as the MPOs have much to say about the prioritization of transportation improvement projects. The MPOs also must maintain a status quo (of highway capacity maintenance), and it is understandable that they also are unwilling to compromise those goals in a fiscally constrained scenario. Some of this points to a vacuum of leadership and lack of proper governance structure(s) needed to help initiate, coordinate, and or enable if not direct, passenger rail projects. As to the 3 options identified previously for a statewide governance model, an autonomous entity does seem to reduce the likelihood of perpetuating the "poor stepsister" status of transit as compared with highway projects, which has been an obvious obstacle to progress on the transit front. Fortunately, there are indeed private efforts underway that may help fill the gaps. I note that the group, Front Range On Track has previously sent in official comments on this the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. Their interests and efforts mirror those of myself and other colleagues over many years. In fact, my partner, Transportation Engineer Dave Ruble, Jr., and I have also initiated the non-profit Northern Colorado Commuter Rail to promote and hopefully secure support for a soon-to-be released proposal/plan that identifies with more detail the what and how (including potential funding mechanisms) of a commuter rail system that would link the North Front Range communities with each other and the Metro area. This will soon be ready for release, and we will be happy to share it with you if interested. Btw, Dave is also leading an effort to establish commuter rail in the Vail Valley, as Director of the GreenPort project.

Carlos Ferran (3/2/12) via Email

The draft looks good. I suggest however double tracking between Palmer Lake and Crews (Security, CO) as rail traffic is very heavy through that stretch of railroad, and backups are not good for neither the railroads or the state. It wastes time, money, and fuel. Also, If there is a proposed passenger plan, make the passenger route from Denver-Colorado Springs-Pueblo a priority, because these cities are the most populated in the state. If we look at FREX, ridership has been increasing, and costs to the passenger are lower than other transportation hubs in the west. If a bus service can do this, a train can do it better.

Peter Cooper (3/3/12) Formal Letter

See A.6.28

Colorado State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan
DRCOG Review Comments (February 7, 2012)

General Comments

- The Plan would more strongly reflect metro Denver issues and future priorities by citing DRCOG's 2035 MetroVision and 2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan.
- The word "needed" is over-used in the Plan. What level of analysis was used to verify "needs" that are portrayed throughout the document?
- The Plan's depiction of freight rail appears to sometimes carry too strong of a "pro-rail" tone. While the content is generally on-target, the tone could be more objective. As one example, the air quality/GHG discussion on Page 5-6 could be more objective in noting that rail also generates pollution and emissions.
- It should be specified in the introduction that the Plan's scope is limited to heavy rail (freight rail and commuter rail) and not light rail, streetcars, or other passenger rail technologies.

Specific Comments

1. Page 3-42: The text discusses the FasTracks program and implies that the entire system is shown in Figure 3-21, but the map shows only the rail components and not the BRT. The text should be clarified accordingly.
2. Page 3-42 (Discussion of FasTracks): FasTracks includes new LRT (West Corridor), not just LRT extensions.
3. Page 3-42: EMU technology will be used for the entire length of the East Corridor, North Metro, and Gold lines, not just the initial segments. Conversely, most of the NW Rail Corridor will use DMU, with only the initial (P3-funded) segment using EMU.
4. Page 3-44: Figure 3-21 is missing several FasTracks stations on several corridors. Suggest using RTD's most current FasTracks map directly.
5. Page 3-45 (Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility): The Eagle P3 project also includes the initial segment of the NW Rail Corridor (to South Westminster Station).
6. Page 3-45 (Discussion of FasTracks commuter rail corridors): It is incorrect that NW & North Metro are "unfunded." Without additional sales tax funding, implementation would be substantially delayed.
7. Pages 5-2, 5-3: Passenger rail investment can generate significant employment and economic growth around station areas.
8. Page 5-7: The Denver metro area also includes part of Weld County. The metro population will be over 4 million by 2035.
9. Page 5-8: Please cite the specific source (not just "DOLA") for employment statistics.
10. Pages 6-8: The text should note that FasTracks projects are funded in addition to the Section 130 projects shown in Table 6-3. Is every Section 130 project shown in Table 6-3 funded? If not, the text on the bottom of Page 6-8 should be adjusted.
11. Page 6-20 (Table 6-11), Page 6-23 (Table 6-13): What is the specific source of stakeholder-based (non-other study) project cost estimates shown in Table 6-11 for Projects #3 and #4, and Table 6-13 for Projects #5-#7? Were they developed by CDOT's Rail Plan consultant?

12. Page 6-24 (Table 6-14): The text and table should include FasTracks rail station projects, or note that these projects are in addition to FasTracks projects.

Minor Comments

1. Page 3-33 (Figure 3-10): Shuttle loader facilities are not shown.
2. Pages 4-3, 4-4 (Tables 4-2, 4-3): Dates listed should be 2011 (not 2012).
3. Pages 6-12, 6-13 (Table 6-4): Projects #7 and #14 appear to be the same as #20 and #21, respectively. These should be clarified or not double-listed.
4. Page 6-18 (Table 6-8): These projects should be better defined and/or illustrated via map.
5. Page 6-23 (Table 6-13): Though we understand how these projects were *identified*, how were they *prioritized*? Are they consistent with RMRA priorities?
6. Page 7-9: Why is Arizona profiled? Many locations, including the Denver region, use sales tax to fund passenger rail projects.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LINCOLN COUNTY
REQUESTED CHANGES TO DRAFT COLORADO STATE FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL PLAN

1. Each time the Eastern Colorado Mobility Study or R2C2 is referenced in any CDOT document, including the State Rail Plan, insert the following footnote on the same page:

"The effects to citizens and businesses in Eastern Colorado were not taken into consideration during this study and a full Environmental Impact Study would be warranted."

2. The following excerpt is from page 5-17 of the draft plan, with one requested change to add the word will and delete could:

Issues: Greenfield Alignments

Offsetting these opportunities is the need for a new railroad right-of-way. This can result in very high property acquisition costs in developed areas. As a result, Greenfield alignments usually do not serve downtown areas directly. Creating a new linear corridor also could create a physical barrier to future development with the need for added bridges to cross the corridor. A new corridor **will** ~~could~~ divide farm and ranch lands or residential neighborhoods. Construction of a brand new corridor would result in construction impacts, including numerous potential environmental impacts to wetlands, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites, protected species, etc.

3. The following excerpts are from page 5-18 of the draft plan, with the requested additions highlighted in yellow and other wording deleted:

CDOT has clarified its position on a future rail relocation effort. CDOT will not take the lead on a railroad relocation effort but would participate in such an effort if initiated by another party. CDOT will continue to coordinate with the railroads and other rail stakeholders on transportation priorities and will participate in any subsequent discussions related to the need for further study of a north/south rail bypass of the Front Range.

The concept of future rail relocation of through freight traffic at some location in eastern Colorado is included in the Plan's list of projects in the project category of Rail Facilities/Relocations, along with the potential relocation of the intermodal facilities of the BNSF and UP out of the downtown Denver area, and also potential tunneling improvements of the UP's Moffat Tunnel mountain corridor. The prioritization evaluations ranked these projects in this category as "medium," while the concept of eastern Colorado rail relocation received a "low" ranking.

As a result of CDOT's position not to take the lead on the rail relocation effort and with the project receiving an overall "low" priority ranking, the project should be considered inactive at this time. **CDOT will not initiate discussions or take action on a rail relocation**

project. If such discussions are brought before CDOT, they will first notify and include in any discussions the counties that could possibly be affected. CDOT will work to ensure that the proper Environmental Impact Studies are performed. ~~However, should such a project be included in subsequent updates to this Plan, a public input process would be initiated to determine the best course of action moving forward. A study should be conducted to determine the impacts and benefits of rail relocation on eastern Colorado communities.~~ A new corridor will divide farm and ranch businesses or residential neighborhoods. Construction of a brand new corridor would result in construction impacts, including numerous potential environmental impacts to wetlands, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites, protected species, etc.

This study ~~will~~ ~~would~~ explore the specific ~~positive and negative~~ impacts from any rail relocation ~~including~~ ~~as well as examine what~~ ~~possible~~ job creation ~~or other~~ ~~and other positive~~ economic development opportunities ~~that~~ might occur from potential rail relocation. Mitigation of local community concerns and issues, such as cattle crossings, emergency/farm equipment crossings, and requirements for agreements with land owners for "other utilities" being included within rail rights-of-way, ~~will~~ ~~should~~ be a high priority in appropriate environmental clearance documents that ~~will~~ ~~would~~ be completed prior to implementation of any future rail relocation project. CDOT will work in partnership with stakeholders in Eastern Colorado if the concept of a future project becomes active again in the future.



City of
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February 8, 2012

Mehdi Baziar
CDOT Rail Division

Re: Draft State Rail Plan Comments

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The City of Golden appreciates the opportunity to review and comment upon the draft State of Colorado Rail Plan document, as made available on the CDOT web site. The comprehensive approach contained in the draft document will be a positive step toward short and long term transportation improvements for this critical mode. As the effort to plan and implement rail improvements and enhancements continues, please consider the following comments:

- The City of Golden especially supports Goal #5 within Section 1 of the document pertaining to support for communities and enhanced economic vitality throughout the state. We call specific attention to the general and passenger objectives that recommend the true integration of passenger rail service into local communities to support more efficient land use patterns and interconnectivity among modal choices. These objectives should be very prominent in planning and implementing future station locations and modal connectivity in local communities.
- The City of Golden, along with Jefferson County and the City of Lakewood were active in the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority High Speed Rail Feasibility Study effort and in so doing became very familiar with issues related to various I-70 rail alternatives and how they may connect to communities, the highway network, and other transit modes, including the West Corridor light rail line. Golden staff encourages you to consider the recommendations for alignment and metro station placement in that study for the central part of Jefferson County. It is likely that the most efficient station placement for an I-70 alignment would not connect to an existing West Corridor station, but rather would occur directly at the intersection of the two lines somewhere near I-70 and US 6.
- As we move forward, the City of Golden is very interested in actively participating in the I-70 Mountain Corridor AGS Study, and the Colorado Interregional Connectivity Study. Given that all of the prior studies have anticipated either an eastern end of line in central

Jefferson County, or a west metro regional station (as in the RMRA study) in the area of Golden near the US 6/ I-70/ C-470 area, how such potential passenger service connects to nearby and adjacent areas and the West Corridor light rail line will be of paramount importance to our local communities, and the fulfillment of the aforementioned Goal #5 of the plan.

The City of Golden looks forward to actively participating with the CDOT Rail division on these specific issues. If you have any questions about these comments or other aspects of this issue, feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Glueck", written in a cursive style.

Steve Glueck,
Director of Planning and Development
sglueck@cityofgolden.net

Page	Description
1-1	There is a typo in the 5 th paragraph. “in” should be “In”
3-1	There should be an explanation in the 5 th paragraph as to why there are 2,800 miles of track but only 2,684 miles in operation. It is probably the fact that Tennessee Pass is “out of service”.
3-1	Is the operating revenue of \$378.8 million just for Colorado or the entire company?
3-26	There is a typo in the 1 st paragraph. “in” should be “In”
3-29	In the 2 nd paragraph, “Install” should be “install”.
	Consideration should be given to having an Amtrak station in Yuma so that residents of eastern Colorado have better access. The distance between Fort Morgan and the station in Nebraska is so large that this station makes a lot of sense. The time delay would not be significant.
	With the problem with Amtrak having to maintain the line between LaJunta and Trinidad, what about shifting the service to go through Pueblo? This would give residents of Pueblo and along the Arkansas River better access to Amtrak.
5-2	In the 2 nd paragraph there is a font problem in the last sentence.
	In the 3 rd paragraph, there is a typo. “in” should be “In”
	In the 3 rd paragraph, it states the 2,734 jobs in Colorado generate \$276 million. This translates into about \$100,000 per job. I believe that it is wages and benefits.
5-6	In the 1 st paragraph, I don’t believe that CDOT projects population. This is done by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.
Figure 5-6	The color scheme in this figure should match the color scheme in Figure 5-5.
5-15	In the 2 nd paragraph, there is a typo. “in” should be “In”
	In the 3 rd paragraph, it states that nearly all passenger rail service operates on existing freight railroad tracks. I don’t agree with this. It may be true for long distance service. All the service in NYC, Washington DC, Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco operates on their own lines. You need to prove this statement.
5-16	Under “Issues – Shared Corridors”, there should be an acknowledgement that these issues may be diminished if the volume of the freight traffic on the line is low.
	Off-line stations is another way to solve the problem of interfering with freight operation.

5-26 It would be nice to know where in Colorado there is PTC and what the cost is per mile to install PTC.

It would nice to know what are the possibilities of getting pedestrian crossings of an active Class 1 rail line. The Town of Bennett would like to get a couple of pedestrian crossings of the UP rail line.

HSR service along the BNSF line in Larimer and Boulder counties does not make a lot of sense. This service should be moved to the median of I-25 with lower operating speed. There is no way that the residents of the cities along this line will permit HSR on the BNSF.

Table 6-5 Why is the salvage value of Tennessee Pass so high. The last value I heard was less than \$20 million. Why is the Towner Line ranked higher than the Tennessee Pass rail line?

Table 6-12 Under # 7, does this assume just rehabbing the line or installing a second set of tracks.

There should be some mention that if all of the passenger lines are built in Table 6-12, it would open up the possibility of service between Steamboat Springs Vail and Aspen as something like the “American Orient Express.”

Consideration should be given to Amtrak service between La Junta or Pueblo and Glenwood Springs which would provide Amtrak riders to easily transfer between the California Zephyr and Southwest Chief. The schedules of these two Amtrak lines are such that this service is possible.

Indemnification should be address more forcefully in the Plan. Until this is resolved, the railroads are going to be reluctant to allow passenger rail service on their lines.

All cities with a population above 25,000 persons that has rail service should be an intermodal connection identified.

Rail service (speeds of over 90 mph) should be established in the median of I-70 from Denver to Burlington, I-76 from Denver to Julesburg, I-25 from Denver to Fort Collins and Cheyenne, and from Denver to Pueblo. E-470’s median should be used rather than trying to penetrate Denver at DUS.

RESOLUTION NO. R-11-2011

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE
SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER SERVICE THROUGH LA JUNTA**

WHEREAS, the *Southwest Chief*, one of Amtrak's premier passenger trains, serves southeastern Colorado, western Kansas and northern New Mexico as it plies between Chicago and Los Angeles on the host railroad line of Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF); and

WHEREAS, eastbound and westbound trains stop at La Junta daily and have served over 13,000 Colorado passengers in 2010, a figure that has been growing every year; and

WHEREAS, the *Chief* and its famous predecessors (such as the Santa Fe Railroad's fabled *Super Chief*) have served this route since the late 1880's; and

WHEREAS, the train has consistently held the best on-time record for Amtrak's long distance trains and the train is ranked among the best Amtrak earners; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has added an additional coach to the train in 2010 due to increased demand; and

WHEREAS, the train is a key economic contributor to southeastern Colorado and to the City of La Junta; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak employs nine citizens of La Junta to service its southeastern passenger operations and contributes major capital to station improvements locally; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak provides a gateway to tourists from the west coast and Midwest, to include Boy Scouts heading to Philmont Ranch near Raton, New Mexico; and most importantly, Amtrak provides a transportation link to the citizens of Southeastern Colorado that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as our citizens age and rising energy prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

WHEREAS, the route of the *Southwest Chief* through Colorado is threatened inasmuch as an alternative route is under consideration that would re-route the train south from Newton, Kansas, through the Texas Panhandle to New Mexico, entirely bypassing Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the ownership of the track in northern New Mexico is under dispute between that state and Burlington Northern Santa Fe further complicating the issue, Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight traffic on this route has declined reducing maintenance and forcing Amtrak to run the *Chief* at lower speeds; and

WHEREAS, its overall trip time has increased from 41 hours to 55 hours since 1991; and

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe wants Amtrak to pay the costs of improvement and the maintenance costs for the route if the train is to resume its normal speed; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak estimates this could amount to \$200 million over ten years including \$94 million at the front-end to bring the line back up to standards across the three states; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has indicated that it would like to undertake this improvement because the route is scenic and well travelled but current fiscal circumstances may impact its ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, there are other developments, (i.e. the Elk River coal mine) that will generate three Burlington Northern Santa Fe coal trains per week in the next several years. This would change the maintenance equation from Trinidad to Las Animas and perhaps through Raton Pass.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The City Council recommends that Action 22 strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

2. The City Council calls upon the Governor of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

3. The City Council calls upon the members of the legislature of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

4. The City Council calls upon all members of the Congressional Delegation for the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

5. The City Council calls upon all local governments within the County of Otero to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

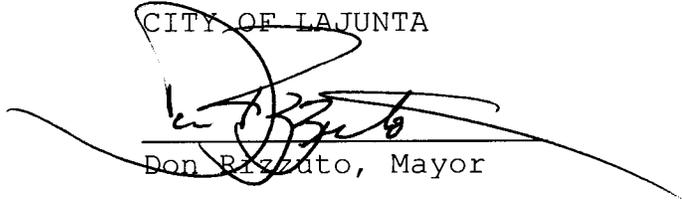
6. The City Council calls upon the Board of Commissioners of Otero County to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

7. The City Council calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.

8. The City Council recommends that all community and civic leaders in southeastern Colorado connect with each other and their colleagues in western Kansas and northern New Mexico so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the *Southwest Chief*.

Adopted this 6th day of September, 2011.

CITY OF LAJUNTA



Don Rizzuto, Mayor

ATTEST:



Janice L. Schooley
City Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. 12-01-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAMAR COLORADO ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN AMTRAK'S SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE THROUGH THE CITIES OF HOLLY, LAMAR, LAS ANIMAS, LA JUNTA AND TRINIDAD, COLORADO

WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief, one of Amtrak's premier passenger rail services, serves southeastern Colorado, western Kansas, and northern New Mexico as it travels between Chicago and Los Angeles on a host railroad line of BNSF Railway; and

WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief and its famous predecessors (such as the Santa Fe Railroad's fabled Super Chief) have served this route since the late 1880s; and

WHEREAS, the train is a key economic contributor to southeastern Colorado and to the member municipalities of the Arkansas River Power Authority, including the cities of Trinidad, La Junta, Las Animas, Lamar, Holly and Springfield, providing a transportation link that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as our citizens age and rising prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

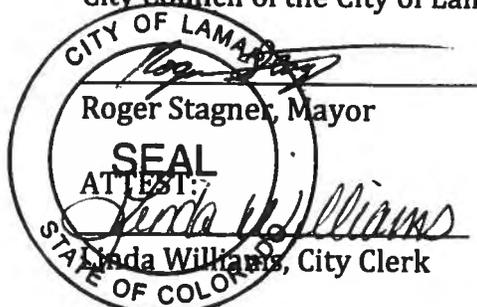
WHEREAS, the route of the *Southwest Chief* through Colorado is threatened inasmuch as an alternative route is under consideration that would re-route the train south from Newton, Kansas, through the Texas Panhandle to New Mexico, entirely bypassing Colorado.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAMAR, COLORADO:

- 1) The City Council calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route through Colorado.
- 2) The City Council recommends that all community and civic leaders in southeastern Colorado connect with each other and their colleagues in western Kansas and northern New Mexico so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the Southwest Chief.

INTRODUCED, PASSED, AND ADOPTED this 23rd day of January, 2012.

City Council of the City of Lamar, Colorado



WHEREAS, the ownership of the track in northern New Mexico is under dispute between that state and Burlington Northern Santa Fe further complicating the issue; and

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight traffic on this route has declined reducing maintenance and forcing Amtrak to run the *Chief* at lower speeds; and

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe wants Amtrak to pay the costs of improvement and the maintenance costs for the route if the train is to resume its normal speed; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak estimates this could amount to \$200 million over ten years including \$94 million at the front-end to bring the line back up to standards across the three states; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has indicated that it would like to undertake this improvement because the route is scenic and well travelled, but current fiscal circumstances may impact its ability to do so; and

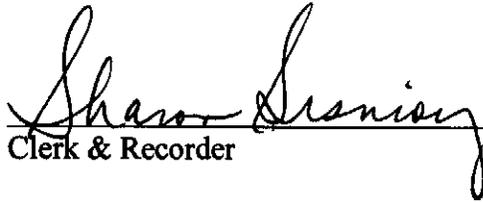
WHEREAS, there are local improvements underway (such as the new Elk River coal mine) that will generate three Burlington Northern Santa Fe coal trains per week in the next several years. This would change the maintenance equation from Trinidad to Las Animas and perhaps through Raton Pass;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Otero, Colorado, that:

1. The Board of Commissioners calls upon Governor Hickenlooper to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
2. The Board of Commissioners calls upon the members of the legislature of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
3. The Board of Commissioners calls upon all members of the Congressional Delegation for the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
4. The Board of Commissioners calls upon all local governments within the County of Otero to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
5. The Board of Commissioners calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
6. The Board of Commissioners recommends that all community and civic leaders in southeastern Colorado connect with each other and their colleagues in western Kansas and northern New Mexico so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the *Southwest Chief*.

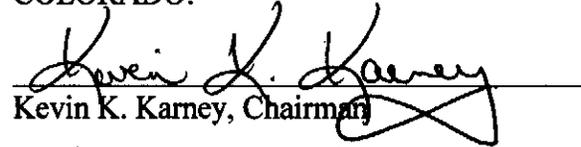
Adopted this 16th day of January, 2012.

ATTEST:

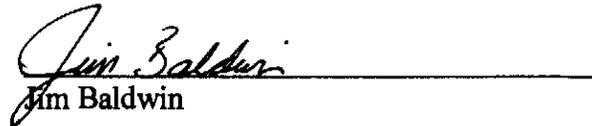

Clerk & Recorder



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTERO COUNTY, STATE OF
COLORADO:


Kevin K. Karney, Chairman


Keith Goodwin


Jim Baldwin

Resolution No. 2012-004

RESOLUTION 2012-06

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN
THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER SERVICE BETWEEN
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO AND NEWTON, KANSAS**

WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief, one of Amtrak's premier passenger trains, serves southeastern Colorado, western Kansas and northern New Mexico as it plies between Chicago and Los Angeles on the host railroad line of Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF); and

WHEREAS, eastbound and westbound trains stop at Raton daily and have served over 18,000 passengers in 2010; and

WHEREAS, the Chief and its famous predecessors (such as the Santa Fe Railroad's fabled "Super Chief") have served this route since the late 1880's; and

WHEREAS, the train has consistently held the best on-time record for Amtrak's long distance trains and the train is ranked among the best Amtrak earners; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has added an additional coach to the train in 2010 due to increased demand; and

WHEREAS, the train is a key economic contributor to Northeastern New Mexico and to the City of Raton; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak provides a gateway to tourists from the west coast and Midwest, to include Boy Scouts heading to Philmont Ranch near Raton, New Mexico; and most importantly, Amtrak provides a transportation link to the citizens of Northeastern New Mexico that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as our citizens age and rising energy prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

WHEREAS, the route of the Southwest Chief through Northeastern New Mexico Colorado, and Kansas is threatened; and

WHEREAS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe wants Amtrak to pay the costs of improvement and the maintenance costs for the route; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak estimates this could amount to \$200 million over ten years including \$94 million at the front-end to bring the line back up to standards across the three states; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has indicated that it would like to undertake this improvement because the route is scenic and well travelled but current fiscal circumstances may impact its ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, there are other developments, (i.e. the Elk River Coal Mine) that will generate three Burlington Northern Santa Fe coal trains per week in the next several years.

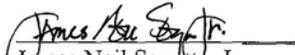
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF RATON THAT,

1. The Raton City Commission endorses continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route.
2. The Raton City Commission calls upon the Governor of the State of New Mexico to support continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route.

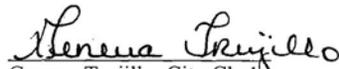
3. The Raton City Commission calls upon the members of the legislature of the State of New Mexico to support continuation of Amtrak Southwest Chief route.
4. The Raton City Commission calls upon all members of the Congressional Delegation for the State of New Mexico to support continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route.
5. The Raton City Commission calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route.
6. The Raton City Commission recommends that all community and civic leaders along the route to connect with each other and their colleagues so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the Southwest Chief.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 14th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2012.

CITY OF RATON


James Neil Segota, Jr.

ATTEST:


Geneva Trujillo, City Clerk

CITY OF TRINIDAD, COLORADO

RESOLUTION NO. 1375

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN
AMTRAK'S *SOUTHWEST CHIEF* PASSENGER RAIL
SERVICE THROUGH THE CITY OF TRINIDAD, COLORADO**

WHEREAS, the *Southwest Chief*, one of Amtrak's premier passenger rail services, serves southeastern Colorado, western Kansas, and northern New Mexico as it travels between Chicago and Los Angeles on a host railroad line of BNSF Railway; and

WHEREAS, eastbound and westbound *Southwest Chief* trains stop in the City of Trinidad daily and serve approximately 13,000 Colorado passengers each year; and

WHEREAS, the *Southwest Chief* and its famous predecessors (such as the Santa Fe Railroad's fabled *Super Chief*) have served this route since the late 1880s; and

WHEREAS, the train is a key economic contributor to southeastern Colorado and to the City of Trinidad, providing a transportation link that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as our citizens age and rising energy prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

WHEREAS, the route of the *Southwest Chief* through Colorado is threatened inasmuch as an alternative route is under consideration that would re-route the train south from Newton, Kansas, through the Texas Panhandle to New Mexico, entirely bypassing Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the ownership of the track in northern New Mexico is under dispute between that state and BNSF Railway; consequently, BNSF Railway freight traffic on this route has declined, reducing maintenance and forcing Amtrak to run the *Southwest Chief* at lower speeds; and

WHEREAS, the *Southwest Chief's* overall trip time has increased from 41 hours in 1991 to approximately 55 hours today; and

WHEREAS, BNSF wants Amtrak to pay the costs of improvement and the maintenance costs for the route if the train is to resume its normal speed; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak estimates this could amount to \$200 million over ten (10) years, including \$94 million at the front-end to bring the line back up to standards across Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico; and

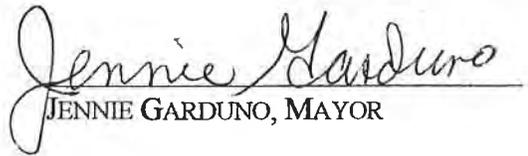
WHEREAS, Amtrak has indicated that it would like to undertake this improvement because the route is scenic and well-traveled, but current fiscal circumstances may impact its ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, there are local developments (e.g., the New Elk Coal Mine) that hold promise of increasing BNSF Railway freight traffic over the next several years, thereby changing the maintenance equation from Trinidad to Las Animas and perhaps through Raton Pass.

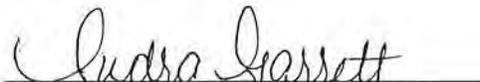
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TRINIDAD, COLORADO:

1. The City Council recommends that Action 22 strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
2. The City Council calls upon the Governor of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
3. The City Council calls upon the members of the legislature of the State of Colorado to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
4. The City Council calls upon all local governments within the County of Las Animas to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
5. The City Council call upon the Board of Commissioners of Las Animas County to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route through Colorado.
6. The City Council calls upon representatives of Amtrak to strongly endorse continuation of the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* route through Colorado.
7. The City Council recommends that all community and civic leaders in southeastern Colorado connect with each other and their colleagues in western Kansas and northern New Mexico so that the three states can coordinate their efforts to protect the route of the Southwest Chief.

ADOPTED this 15th day of November, 2011.


JENNIE GARDUNO, MAYOR

ATTEST:


AUDRA GARRETT, CITY CLERK

RESOLUTION NO. _____-2012

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF PASSENGER SERVICE THROUGH GARDEN CITY, KANSAS

WHEREAS, Amtrak's Southwest Chief serves southwest Kansas on its route between Chicago and Los Angeles on the host railroad line of Burlington Northern Santa Fe; and

WHEREAS, eastbound and westbound trains stop at Garden City daily and served more than 44,000 Kansas passengers in 2010, including 7,075 Garden City passengers; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak provides a transportation link to the residents of southwest Kansas that is of growing importance and will likely become critical as rising energy prices curtail the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

WHEREAS, railway freight traffic has declined, thereby reducing monies customarily set aside for rail maintenance and consequently forcing travel at lower speeds; and

WHEREAS, it has been estimated that the rail traversed by the Southwest Chief is in immediate need of more than \$100 million in rail repairs in three states, including Kansas, in order to resume normal speeds; and

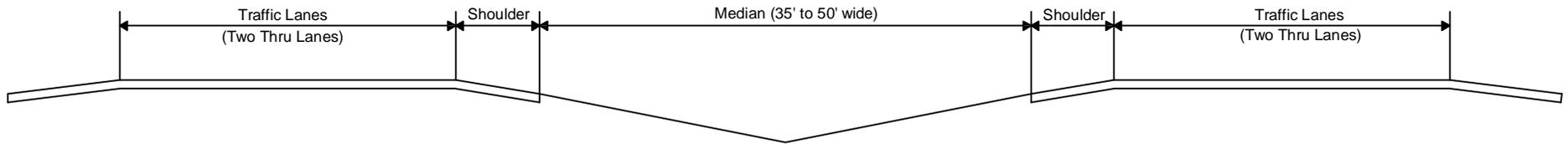
WHEREAS, it has been further projected that rail repairs over the course of the entire rail will total \$300 million over the next ten years; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak is unable to make said repairs given current fiscal conditions; and

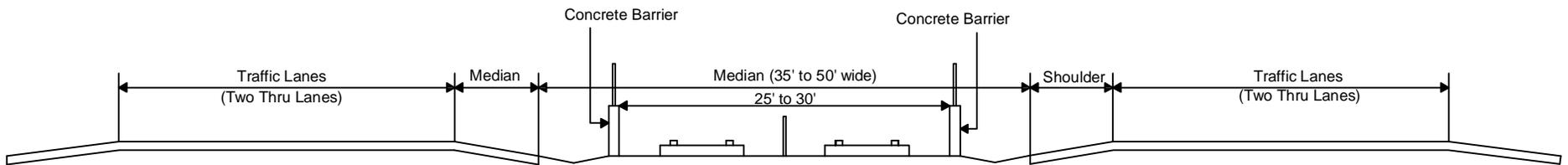
WHEREAS, the route of the Southwest Chief through Garden City is threatened by an alternative route under consideration that would re-route the train south from Newton, Kansas through the Texas Panhandle to New Mexico, bypassing Garden City

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the City of Garden City, Kansas that the City of Garden City calls upon the governor of the State of Kansas, members of the legislature of the State of Kansas, and the congressional delegation of the State of Kansas to strongly endorse continuation of Amtrak's current Southwest Chief route through southwest Kansas.

ADOPTED by the Governing Body of the City of Garden City, Kansas this 21st day of February 2012.



Typical Interstate Cross-Section



Typical Interstate Cross-Section With High Speed Rail in Median



Clear Creek County

POST OFFICE BOX 2000
GEORGETOWN, COLORADO 80444

TELEPHONE: (303) 569-3251 • (303) 679-2300

February 27, 2012

Mehdi Baziar
4201 E Arkansas Ave
Shumate Building
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Baziar:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft of the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. The plan quite clearly states, in both its introduction and conclusion, that the intent of the study was to create a framework of "current characteristics and list of current improvement needs for future planning". Our knowledge of the freight railroad operations is limited, but the plan certainly appears to be comprehensive in the description of this system and its current maintenance and improvement concerns. In the area of passenger rail, the present initiatives to expand commuter, passenger and high speed intercity rail are also well delineated. It is interesting to note the disclaimer "the railroads have not necessarily agreed to host any new service on their existing routes or rights-of-way."

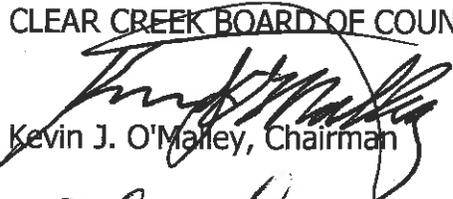
The major unanswered question for passenger rail, which is not directly addressed in the recommendations, is: "Where do we go from here?" It would be a very positive step to follow the suggestion that the State Rail Plan be incorporated in the Statewide Transportation Plan (STP). If CDOT is to become a multi modal transportation agency such inclusion would seem to be an imperative. The further recommendation that each MPO and TPR be asked to reconsider the definition of "corridor" in their areas in light of this plan should be followed. However, the recommendation that plan be updated every four years for inclusion in the STP does not seem sufficient for the development of future planning for passenger rail.

The plan states again and again, (pages 115,157, 159) that public support for the increased development for passenger rail is "high level" and "very strong." That sentiment coupled with the telling Figure 5-8 on page 94, which compares growth of VMT against lane miles to graphically display the congestion problem, suggests that high level planning, including forming a vision for statewide passenger rail, be undertaken sooner rather than later. The Inter Connectivity Study and the AGS Feasibility Study will provide tools for that effort but are not, in and of themselves, a passenger rail plan. It is time to take the next step.

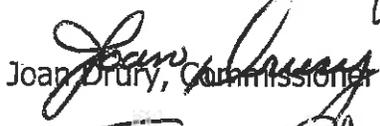
Clear Creek supports this draft Freight and Passenger plan as a baseline. In the words of the plan, we hope it is "not the culmination, meant to be the beginning". We look forward to participating in the future development of the high speed transit our corridor so desperately needs.

Sincerely,

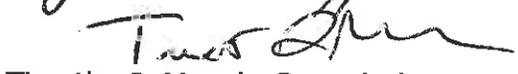
CLEAR CREEK BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Kevin J. O'Malley, Chairman



Joan Drury, Commissioner



Timothy J. Mauck, Commissioner



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
1111 H STREET, P.O. BOX 758
GREELEY, COLORADO 80632
WEBSITE: WWW.CO.WELD.CO.US
PHONE: (970) 356-4000, EXT. 3739
FAX: (970) 304-6497

February 28, 2012

Colorado Department of Transportation
Mehdi Baziar, Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Shumate Building
4201 E Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

RE: Draft State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mehdi,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan. It was good to see the Plan recognizes Weld County's more than 100 railroad crossings. As a result, it was also not surprising to see Weld County has the most highway/rail crossing incidents statewide.

Railroad crossings have been a constant issue in Weld County both on and off-system. Last year, Weld County worked with CDOT to develop a railroad crossing inventory parallel to Highway 85. I am submitting the results of this inventory for inclusion into Table 6-3, Railroad/Public Safety Projects. If you have any questions about incorporating these projects into the list, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Weld County appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Relford
Transportation Planner

cc: Pat Persichino, Public Works Director
Barbara Kirkmeyer, Commissioner

US 85 Rail Assessment

Intersecting County Road	DOT Crossing ID	Railroad Mile Marker	CDOT Mile Marker	Existing US-85 Access Control	Proposed US-85 Access Control	Storage Distance	US-85 Traffic Count	County Road Traffic Count	% Truck Traffic	Preliminary Warrant #9 Analysis
WCR 22	804-329J	29.97	246.33	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	222.50	15,800	1209	32	Yes
WCR 26	804-334F	31.98	248.20	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	61.00	17,800	160	30	Yes
WCR 28	804-336U	32.98	249.60	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	67.00	17,800	228	0	No
WCR 38	804-347G	38.37	254.60	F/M	F/M - Realignment (Long Term Priority)	42.50	14,800	128	30	Yes
WCR 29	804-346A	39.02	255.27	F/M	East RI/RO & West To be Closed (Long term Priority)	28.00	14,800	147	24	Yes
WCR 40	804-345T	39.7	255.91	F/M	F/M - Realignment (Long Term Priority)	209.50	14,800	190	20	Yes
WCR 42	804-348N	41.03	257.26	F/M	F/M - Signal & Realignment (High Priority)	37.50	15,200	418	5	Yes
WCR 33	804-351W	42.08	258.37	F/M	To be Closed (Medium Priority)	189.50	15,200	289	14	Yes
WCR 35	804-354S	40.32	259.92	F/M	To be Closed & Realignment (Long Term Priority)	35.50	14,900	445	20	Yes
WCR 37 (LaSalle)	804-355Y	40.33	261.30	F/M	To be Closed (Long term Priority)	31.00	14,900	139	0	No
WCR 52	804-358U	47.2	263.44	F/M	F/M - Realignment (Medium Priority)	90.00	19,300	473	12	Yes
O St. (64)	804-845R	53.73	270.42	3/4 M	Overpass (Medium Priority)	181.00	11,500	638	22	Yes

WCR 66	804-846X	54.77	271.48	F/M	F/M - Signal & Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	33.00	11,500	278	9	Yes
WCR 70	804-848L	56.8	273.50	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	62.00	12,000	87	0	No
WCR 72	804-852B	57.81	274.50	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	61.50	12,000	87	0	No
5th St. (Eaton)	804-855W	59.35	276.07	F/M	F/M	56.00	9,500	551	4	Yes
WCR 76 *	804-856D	59.9	276.35	F/M	F/M - Signal (Long Term Priority)	38.50	6,400	144	12	No
WCR 37 (Eaton)	804-857K	60.22	276.86	F/M	To be Closed & Realignment (Long Term Priority)	38.50	6,400	411	7	Yes
WCR 78	804-859Y	60.96	277.74	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	62.00	6,400	101	11	No
WCR 80	804-860T	61.99	278.74	F/M	F/M - Auxiliary Lanes (Medium Priority)	58.50	6,400	174	5	No
WCR 84	804-878D	64.09	280.83	N/A	N/A	45.50	4,000	118	11	No
WCR 86	804-881L	65.12	281.87	N/A	N/A	38.50	4,000	270	11	Yes
WCR 88	804-868X	66.15	282.91	N/A	N/A	263.50	4,000	264	17	Yes
WCR 90	804-874B	67.15	283.89	N/A	N/A	46.50	4,200	747	31	Yes
WCR 94	804-872M	69.21	285.83	N/A	N/A	55.50	3,000	27	19	No
WCR 98	804-870Y	71.19	287.84	N/A	N/A	55.50	3,000	83	10	No
WCR 100	804-867R	72.26	289.00	N/A	N/A	139.50	2,800	240	25	Yes

Notes:

1. All intersections included in this analysis are maintained by Weld County. Except for WCR 76 which is maintained by Eaton.
2. Crashes involving trains are based off of data from 2006-2010.
3. Storage Distances greater than 150 feet allow sufficient spacing for trucks at intersections.
4. A new signal warrant (#9) was established in the 2009 version of the MUTCD for railroad crossings.
5. A W10-1 is a Railroad Crossing warning sign.



Revised 5/4/2010

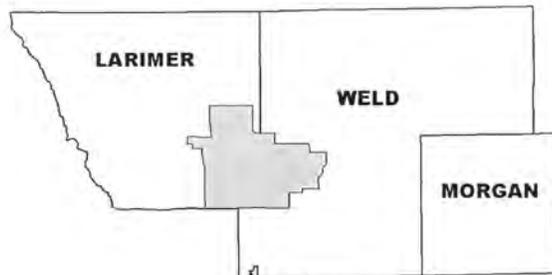
Railroad Crossing Protection	Surface Type	Pavement Markings (Y/N)	W10-1 (Y/N) Distance (in feet)	Crash Involving Train	Recommendations & Potential Solutions
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	742		RR Upgrade Under Construction
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	N	714		3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	N	762		3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	742	1	Intersection realignment, 3/4 movement, no left turn out, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	482.5	1	Close West Access & RI/RO East Access
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 721.5	1	RR Upgrade Proposed
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 813	1	RR Upgrade Pending
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	Y 764		Close Location & Realign WCR 33 to connect to WCR 44
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 802(S) 735(N)		Close Location, Realignment for WCR 46
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	Y	Y 849(S) 891(N)	1	Close Location, Realignment to WCR 48
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 675		Intersection Realignment, 3/4 movement, no left turn out, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
Lights & Gates	Asphalt	Y	N		Construct Overpass

Lights & Gates	Asphalt	Y	N		Signal, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	Y 750.00		3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	Y 875.00	1	3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 139.5		3/4 movement, no left turn out, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks, potential closure
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	N		Realignment of parallel frontage road, lane improvements, signal
Lights & Gates	Asphalt	Y	Y 725.0		Close Location, Realignment for Parallel Frontage Road
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	N		3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	N	N	1	3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	Y	Y 756.00		3/4 movement, no left turn out, turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	Y 823.0		Signal, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Asphalt	Y	N		No Solution
Lights Only	Asphalt	Y	Y 731.0		Signal, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	Y 830.0		No Solution
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	N		No Solution
X-Bucks, Stop Signs	Gravel	N	Y 438.0		Turn lanes, crossing signal, signs no parking on tracks

	Truck Percentage greater than 25%
	US 85 ACP shows Closure & meets MUTCD Warrant #9
	Preliminary Analysis shows Warrant #9 of MUTCD is met
	Preliminary Analysis shows Warrant #9 of MUTCD is NOT met
	Storage Distance exceeds 150 feet

**UPPER FRONT RANGE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION**

P.O. BOX 758, GREELEY, COLORADO 80632



February 28, 2012

Colorado Department of Transportation
Mehdi Baziar, Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Shumate Building
4201 E Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

RE: Draft State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mehdi,

The Regional Planning Council (RPC) of the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region (UFR TPR), which includes portions of Larimer and Weld Counties and all of Morgan County, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.

Railroad crossings have been a constant issue throughout the Upper Front Range Planning Region both on and off-system. This matter became such an important safety issue last year the UFR contracted with Felsburg, Holt, and Ullevig to inventory critical road and rail crossings in each county, due to the condition of many at-grade rail crossings throughout the region being significantly deteriorated, impeding the safe and convenient flow of vehicular traffic.

In addition, the UFR reached out to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, state legislators, and our congressional delegation of the need for both immediate remedial action and planning for long term upgrades on high priority rail crossings throughout the region.

As a result, CDOT has been a good partner in seeing many of these critical safety issues resolved in Region 4. Furthermore, this draft plan provides the opportunity to recognize additional safety issues whether they are on or off-system because rail lines bisect many counties, cities, and towns throughout the state, which are dependent on functional, well-maintained at-grade rail crossings for transportation and emergency services.

Therefore, the RPC respectfully requests inclusion of the UFR Railroad Inventory into Table 6-3, Railroad/Public Safety Projects. If you have any questions about incorporating these projects into the list, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The Upper Front Range RPC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

Sincerely,

Upper Front Range Regional Planning Commission

Barbara Kirkmeyer
Chair

LARIMER COUNTY
COMMISSIONER TOM DONNELLY
MARK PETERSON, P.E., ENGINEERING
(970)498-7103

WELD COUNTY
COMMISSIONER BARBARA KIRKMEYER
ELIZABETH RELFORD, PUBLIC WORKS
(970)856-1100

MORGAN COUNTY
COMMISSIONER BRIAN MCCRACKEN
RICHARD EARLY, ASPHALT & BRIDGE DIRECTOR
(970)843-3600

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Crossings

Intersecting County Road	Surface Type	Surface Condition	Grade Crossing material	Number of tracks	Direction of Photos	Notes
LCR 92 east of LCR 5	Gravel	fair	timber	1	west	Top of rail is 6" below the top of timber
LCR 82 eo LCR 5	Asphalt	fair	timber	1	west	Small gaps between asphalt and timber
LCR 5 no LCR 82 (Power plant spur)	Gravel	fair	gravel	1	north	
LCR 70 wo LCR 7	Asphalt	good	concrete	1	east	2 broken concrete panels with asphalt patches, 1 timber panel instead of concrete
LCR 68 wo LCR 7	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	fair	timber	1	west	Gap between asphalt and timber ties filled with crushed rock
LCR 64	Asphalt	fair	timber	1	west	
LCR 60	Asphalt	fair	timber	1	east	Small gap between asphalt and timber (timber tie against rail)

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Crossings

Intersecting County Road	Surface Type	Surface Condition	Grade Crossing material	Number of tracks	Direction of Photos	Notes
MCR 14 between Roads Q and R	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	fair-poor	timber	2	north	Gaps & potholes between asphalt and timber, and the timber is in poor condition
MCR 15 between Roads Q and R	Gravel north side, Asphalt south side	poor	timber	2	south	Large gaps between timber and asphalt approaches with no fill material
MCR 17 between Roads Q and R	Asphalt	fair	timber	1	south	
MCR 17.7 between Roads Q and R	Asphalt	fair	concrete	1	north	
MCR 21 no Road R	Asphalt	fair	concrete	1	north	Two broken concrete panels
MCR 26 between Road R and Hwy 34	Asphalt	fair	concrete	1	north	
MCR 29 between Road S and Hwy 34	Asphalt	fair	concrete	1	north	
MCR 31 wo Hwy 6	Gravel w/ crushed rock approaches	fair	timber	1	east	
MCR 33 wo Hwy 6	Asphalt	poor	concrete	1	west	Large gaps between concrete and asphalt filled w/ rock, failing asphalt north side
MCR 33.5 no Hwy 6	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	poor	concrete	1	north	Large gaps (> 3 feet) between asphalt and concrete filled with rock
MCR U eo Hwy 6	Asphalt	fair	concrete	1	east	Gap between asphalt and concrete ties filled with crushed rock
MCR V eo Hwy 6	Gravel w/ crushed rock approaches	poor	concrete	1	east	Rock 6" below top of concrete crossing
MCR X.5 wo Hwy 6	Gravel w/ crushed rock approaches	fair	concrete	2	west	
Hospital Road (Brush)	Asphalt	fair	timber, concrete, asphalt	3	south	
West Street (Ft. Morgan)	Asphalt	fair-poor	rubber	3	south	Asphalt between tracks heaving and rutted, some crossing panels are very worn

Union Pacific Railroad Crossings

Intersecting County Road	Surface Type	Surface Condition	Grade Crossing material	Number of tracks	Direction of Photos	Notes
WCR 126 (Stevenson Ave.)	Asphalt	Fair	timber (2), concrete (1)	3	west	
WCR 118/WCR 23	Gravel	Fair	timber	1	east	Timber tie sticking up 6" (photo P615047.jpg)
WCR 110	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	1	east	Gap between asphalt and timber ties filled with crushed rock
WCR 108	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	1	east	Gap between asphalt and timber ties filled with crushed rock
WCR 104	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	1	east	Gap between asphalt and timber ties filled with crushed rock
WCR 100	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber, concrete	2	east	
4th Street (Nunn)	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Poor	timber	4	east	Failing asphalt potholes, timber crossing ties in poor condition
WCR 98	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Good	timber	1	west	
WCR 94	Gravel w/ asphalt approach (west side only)	Fair	Gravel w/ timber	1	west	
WCR 92	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	2	west	Gap on west side filled w/ crushed rock, gap on east - no fill
WCR 90	Asphalt	Fair-Good	concrete	1	west	
Main Street (Pierce)	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	east	
WCR 88	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	east	
WCR 86	Asphalt	Fair-Good	concrete	1	west	
WCR 84	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	concrete	1	west	
Jackie Ann	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	2	east	
3rd Street (Ault)	Asphalt	Good	timber	2	east	
WCR 80	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	west	
WCR 78	Gravel w/ asphalt approach (west side only)	Fair	timber	1	west	
WCR 37	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	west	
WCR 76	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	west	
5th Street (Eaton)	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	west	
2nd Street (Eaton)	Asphalt	Fair	timber, concrete, asphalt	3	east	
Factory Road (Eaton)	Asphalt	Fair	timber, concrete, asphalt	3	west	
1st Street (Eaton)	Asphalt	Poor	timber	2	east	Potholes approaching tracks, broken timber ties
Collins Ave eo US 85 (Eaton)	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	2	west	
Collins Ave eo 1st crossing (Eaton)	Asphalt	Poor	asphalt	2	east	Asphalt ruts approaching tracks
WCR 72	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Fair	timber	1	west	Gap between asphalt and timber ties filled with crushed rock
WCR 44	Asphalt	Fair	concrete	1	west	
WCR 55/WCR 54 1/2	Gravel	Fair	timber	1	south	Pothole on south side of track
3rd Street so Trumbell (Kersey)	Gravel w/ asphalt approaches	Poor	asphalt	5	south	
1st Street so Trumbell (Kersey)	Asphalt	Fair	asphalt	1	south	Broken asphalt adjacent to tracks
WCR 51 no WCR 54 1/2	Gravel	Fair	gravel	1	north	
WCR 49 so WCR 54	Asphalt	Poor	asphalt	1	north	Broken asphalt and ruts adjacent to tracks
WCR 47 so WCR 54	Asphalt	Fair-Good	asphalt	1	south	
WCR 45 no WCR 52	gravel	Fair	gravel	1	north	Potholes approaching and between tracks

29 February 2012

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Colorado Department of Transportation

Further comments on the Proposed State Rail Plan

Dear Sir:

I would like to thank you for your efforts on producing the “Draft Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan”. This certainly appears to be a very comprehensive and complete document. I would like to make some additional comments regarding the plan.

1. Preserving the Towner Line and the Tennessee Pass Line should be receive a “High” priority rating rather than the medium rating in the document.
2. The same can be said for the preservation of existing passenger service. In the plan, the route of Amtrak’s Southwest Chief has been assigned a priority rating of “medium”. This priority of this line should be raised to “high” as BNSF has already notified Amtrak that this line needs immediate attention or the route faces being moved out of Colorado. It is imperative that this line remain in Colorado as tourist opportunities develop.
3. Connectivity still remains as a common theme to passenger rail travel. This would include connecting the two Amtrak routes by a rail connection through Pueblo and Colorado Springs.
4. RTD’s FasTracks needs to be built out and completed as soon as possible. This would include connecting Ft. Collins and Greeley with this rail system.
5. It is important to view Colorado’s passenger rail system as a part of a much greater system. The vision of connecting El Paso, TX to Billings, MT, must include the section of the Front Range Rail. This would certainly allow opportunity for commercial and tourist enterprises along this entire route.
6. Ways to alleviate liability issues with host railroads needs to be expanded and identified.

Thank you for your attention to these comments. Again, thank you for producing this great document.

Respectfully,
Gary Carter
6 Deer Run Court
Pueblo, CO 81001



February 29, 2012

Mark Imhoff, Division Director
Colorado Department of Transportation
Division of Transit and Rail
4201 East Arkansas Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80222

Re: Draft Colorado Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Imhoff:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan dated January 30, 2012. Please know that the City of Colorado Springs wholeheartedly supports efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's rail system. I believe that a strong, vital freight and passenger rail system is key to the economic vitality of the state and its metropolitan areas.

As a member of the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority, the City of Colorado Springs supported efforts to develop a vision for passenger rail connecting Front Range communities. The City of Colorado Springs is very interested in upcoming studies that will set the course for the alignment, technology and station locations for passenger rail along Colorado's Front Range. We look forward to actively participating in the development of the Interregional Connectivity Study that is just getting underway.

As a substantive comment regarding section eight of the Rail Plan, I recommend the prioritization for implementing passenger rail projects in the future be based on a systematic approach that evaluates technical and financial feasibility as well as economic benefit to the state, its regions, and its communities. I believe such an approach will demonstrate the value of developing passenger rail service between Colorado Springs and Denver and cities along the Front Range.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on this draft of the Rail Plan and look forward to working with you and your division in the future on this extremely important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Neumann", is written over a blue ink scribble.

Laura Neumann
Chief of Staff/Chief Administrative Officer

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PETER F. RUNYON
SARA J. FISHER
JON STAVNEY

February 29, 2012

Mark Imhoff
Director of Transit and Rail Division
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

Subject: Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan Comment

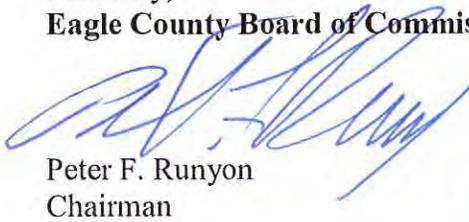
Dear Director Imhoff:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. Commuter Rail and Trails on existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way have been a vision for our community since the 1990s.

Your draft plan included our 20 October 2011 comment letter in Appendix A and references "Rails & Trails" visioning studies in Appendix B. We prefer our comment be included in the body of the plan. Recognizing interim utility on the currently non-operational UPRR ROW for other transportation uses (commuter rail/pedestrian and bicycle trail/etc.) in *Chapter 5: Rail Issues and Opportunities* will better highlight the opportunity and support community needs.

Please do not hesitate to contact us or Eva Wilson, County Engineer, at 328-3560, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Eagle County Board of Commissioners


Peter F. Runyon
Chairman


Jon Stavney
Commissioner


Sara J. Fisher
Commissioner

cc: Mehdi Baziar, CDOT State Rail Plan Project Manager



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 Suzette Mallette
 Regional Transportation Planning
 Crystal Hedberg
 Finance, Admin & Operations

February 29, 2012

Mehdi Baziar
 Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
 Colorado Department of Transportation

Mehdi,
 The North Front Range MPO is submitting the following comments on the draft State Rail Plan.

1. The Town of LaSalle has two long standing projects that we ask be incorporated into the Project tables. In Table 6-4, Rail Overpass/Underpass Projects please add:

Number	Project Description	Project Source	Property Owner	Estimated Project Cost	Overall Priority Evaluation	Notes
40	LaSalle 1 st Avenue Overpass	LaSalle Transportation Plan, 2010	UP	\$6.5m	NA	

In Table 6-3, Railroad/Public Safety Projects please add:

Number	Project Description	Project Source	Property Owner	Estimated Project Cost	Overall Priority Evaluation	Notes
35	Relocate rail switch yard	Town of LaSalle, LaSalle Crossing Study, November 1989	UP	TBD	NA	

The projects have been identified as needed since 1989 by the Town of LaSalle. LaSalle is home to a switch yard for UPRR that ties up road crossings for extended periods of time. The rail lines essentially separate the community and impede emergency response from a large portion of town.

This creates unsafe conditions for children crossing on their way to and from school. There have been instances where children crawled under the trains to cross. The backups from the train movements also often cause lines of traffic to overflow onto US 85 two to three times a week.

We ask that you incorporate these two projects into the appropriate tables.

2. We have similar problems with rail crossings and backed-up trains throughout the North Front Range and Upper Front Range and would appreciate a systematic look at our communities' concerns, which have been evident for many years.

3. Overall we found the draft Colorado State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan to be a very useful document – well worth the investment. In reading through the plan, I'm impressed with the immensity of the upcoming task that we as MPOs, and CDOT, must address – the true integration of freight and passenger rail into our multi-modal regional and state transportation planning.

Naturally our communities have concerns about freight trains, and there have been examples of problems being successfully addressed with the railroads – others, not so well. We anticipate our member governments will be making additional comments on this important document on their own.

With regard to passenger rail service, the North I-25 EIS and preferred alternative firmly illustrate that highway improvements must be coordinated with improvements for a regional bus system to support the “spine” of a major passenger rail service proposed along the BNSF route from Fort Collins to Denver and DIA. This is a major undertaking that will require the State's coordination of the efforts of the North Front Range MPO, the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the affected CDOT Regions.

This is a new responsibility for CDOT that we'll be very interested to see carried out, possibly through what I would term a “pilot project” based on the North I-25 EIS. The North Front Range MPO stands ready to assist in whatever way we can in beginning the implementation of the draft Rail Plan.

Please establish regular updates and communications with the North Front Range MPO Planning Council as they will be called upon as policy-makers to support any future work that may be undertaken in this region. We have a good working relationship with CDOT Region 4 and look forward to working with them in an expanded multi-modal capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Rail Plan.



Cliff Davidson
Executive Director

cc: Tom Donnelly, Larimer County Commissioner – Chair, NFRMPO
Mayor Lyle Achziger, City of Evans – Vice-Chair, NFRMPO
Mayor Pro-tem Julie Cozad, Town of Milliken – Past Chair, NFRMPO

Chapter 6 Rail System Needs Assessment

The railroad network in Colorado is in good condition. The Class I railroads regularly invest in track and other infrastructure improvements throughout the state to maintain the quality of their lines. They also have been investing in capacity improvements, such as increased siding lengths in recent years. All Class I rail lines in the state are capable of carrying the standard 286,000 pound freight rail cars.

Nearly

Short line railroads throughout the state continue to require additional capital investments to bring their infrastructure up to higher standards to allow for the necessary connectivity with their Class I partners. Many short line railroads in the state are not capable of handling 286,000 pound loads. This places the shippers on those lines at an economic disadvantage because they cannot fully load rail cars, resulting in higher shipping costs per ton. Hence, trucks may be a more economical option for these shippers, or new shippers may not choose to locate on these lines.

Alternatively, the passenger rail system is very underdeveloped in the state, with even some of the limited Amtrak service at risk. However, there is considerable public support for improvement of infrastructure to support expanded passenger rail service throughout the state, although funding sources remain to be identified.

Evaluation of Existing and Future Capacity Conditions

in 2007 the Association of American Railroads published the *National Rail Freight Infrastructure Capacity and Investment Study*, a document that assessed the long-term capacity expansion needs of the Class I freight railroad network throughout the United States. The study evaluated the existing rail network and approximated the freight rail infrastructure improvements and investments needed to meet the U.S. Department of Transportation's projected demand for freight rail transportation in 2035. The U.S. DOT estimates that the demand for freight rail transportation—measured in tonnage—will increase by 88 percent by 2035.

and significant Class II

The study, which was coordinated with the Class I railroads, focused on approximately 52,000 miles of the Class I railroad network, or roughly one-third of the U.S. freight rail network expected to absorb the majority of future growth. These corridors were evaluated on the basis of both current rail volumes compared to current capacity as well as future (2035) volumes compared to current capacity. From this evaluation, current and future levels of service, measured from Level A to Level F, were assigned to each of the corridors.

Table 6-1 describes these freight levels of service.



Rail Facilities/Relocation Projects

existing Denver

Two of these projects, relocation of the intermodal facilities of the BNSF and the UP, were included as projects moving forward into the Plan due to their inclusion in the *Eastern Colorado Mobility Study* in 2002 and both railroads' relatively recent exploration of feasible sites for these facilities. These relocations are not a high priority for either railroad at this time and are shown as medium priority in this Plan.

The other project, the relocation of freight rail off the Front Range, is a substantial and costly project. It was proposed by members of the Stakeholder Group but is also not a priority for either railroad at this time. It is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The Front Range rail relocation project rated as a low priority. *for Colorado DOT*

All of the projects in this category (Table 6-7) are considered to be long-range projects.

Delete

Table 6-7. Rail Facilities/Relocation Projects

	Project Description	Project Source	Property Owner	Estimated Project Costs	Overall Priority Evaluation	Notes
1	Relocate BNSF Intermodal Facilities	Stakeholders/ Eastern Colorado Mobility Study	BNSF	+/- \$200M	Medium	
2	Relocate UP Intermodal Facilities	Stakeholders/ Eastern Colorado Mobility Study	UP	+/- \$200M	Medium	
3	Relocate Freight Rail off Front Range to Eastern Plains	Stakeholders	TBD	\$1B +/-	Low	

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

the future, they are similar to the FRA's "High Speed Rail Emerging" category of service as discussed in the next section, ~~for~~

The railroads have not necessarily agreed to host any new service on their existing routes or rights-of-way, *nor do freight routes meet high-speed passenger rail standards.*

Table 6-12. Proposed Passenger Service—Intercity Rail

	Project Description	Project Source	Property Owner	Estimated Project Costs	Overall Priority Evaluation	Notes
1	Passenger Rail Link to Southwest Chief, Denver to La Junta or Trinidad	ColoRail	BNSF	\$875M	Medium	
2	Rail Service from Fort Collins to Trinidad on new additional track within existing railroad right of way	Stakeholders	BNSF/UP	\$2B	Medium	
3	Rail Service on existing track from Cheyenne, Wyoming to El Paso, Texas (option through Fort Collins)	Stakeholders	BNSF/UP	\$1.5B	Medium	Includes double tracking line from Palmer Lake to Fountain
4	<i>Reestablish</i> Resurrect Pioneer Line (Denver to Seattle) on BNSF along northern Front Range	Stakeholders	BNSF	\$60 to \$80M	Medium	<i>Stand-alone</i> Cost is rough estimate of Colorado portion of 2009 study cost of \$370 to \$385 million for Denver to Seattle.
5	Passenger Rail Glenwood Springs to Aspen	I-70 PEIS	RFTA	\$220M	Low	
6	Rail service on existing track from Cheyenne, Wyoming to El Paso, Texas (option through Greeley)	Stakeholders	UP/BNSF	\$1.2B	Low	Includes double tracking line from Palmer Lake to Fountain
7	Passenger rail on Tennessee Pass Line Gypsum to Leadville	Stakeholders	UP	\$120M	Low	
8	Provide connection to Amtrak's Zephyr, Pueblo to Dotsero via Tennessee Pass	Stakeholders	UP	\$120M	Low	
9	Passenger rail Glenwood Springs to Steamboat Springs	I-70 PEIS	UP	\$350M	Low	

Issues: Shared Corridors

Whenever freight and passenger trains use the same tracks, operational conflicts occur due to the differing service requirements. Shared corridors often have limited capacity for new passenger services due to the volume of existing freight traffic. Passenger train speeds can be limited due to conflicts with slower freight trains. Shared corridors require agreements to share operating and maintenance costs. Private railroads will require protection of their **present and future** freight capacity and will insist that the public fully pay for the capacity it consumes. For future passenger train operations, FRA regulations will require a Positive Train Control (PTC) signal system. While these systems may be costly, a well-designed system can increase rail capacity on a particular line. To preserve the capacity required for the railroad's existing and future freight service, additional mainline track and passing sidings likely will be required. Passenger trains require higher track standards and improved signals for higher speeds. Even with the added tracks and signal improvements, delays to passenger trains can occur on shared tracks due to freight operations such as switching on-line industries.

Slow orders that are acceptable for freight operations must be **carefully managed** ~~corrected rapidly~~ to avoid passenger delays. Freight operations limit allowable super elevation on curves, limiting passenger speeds. Freight railroads have to agree to any changes made to their track structure (i.e. super elevation) or their signal system. Potential disruptions with freight derailments are always possible, including hazardous materials spills.

Opportunities: Greenfield Alignments

With an entirely new "Greenfield" alignment, **versus an existing freight rail route,** a new corridor right-of-way can be designed and built for higher speeds with standards for higher speed passenger trains. The new corridor, if only used by passenger trains, has many distinct advantages as witnessed by the TGV intercity passenger trains in France, the Shinkansen in Japan, and the new HSR lines in China. This can include steeper grades to reduce cuts and fills. In France, grades up to 4 percent are used as compared to a desired maximum of 1 percent in the U.S. for freight operations. Higher rates of super elevation on curves without freight trains are acceptable allowing passenger trains to attain higher speeds. All of the new capacity is available for passenger trains, potentially reducing the need for double tracks in some segments since there are no freight operating conflicts.

High-level platforms can be used for faster boarding and deboarding, and Americans with Disability Act accessibility requirements can be provided more easily. The potential also exists to use lighter weight rolling stock if the passenger trains do not operate on shared track with freight. Without the clearance requirements for freight trains, a new service could use a joint corridor with a freeway or a toll road. Lower track maintenance costs result from operations with only passenger trains without the track loads of heavy freight trains, particularly unit



coal trains. Operations of the trains also are often under the control of the passenger entity. This provides more flexibility in scheduling frequent passenger trains without freight conflicts. The new corridor could serve outlying areas and new stations where new developments are occurring.

Issues: Greenfield Alignments

Offsetting these opportunities is the need for a new railroad right-of-way. This can result in very high property acquisition costs in developed areas. As a result, Greenfield alignments usually do not serve downtown areas directly. Creating a new linear corridor also could create a physical barrier to future development with the need for added bridges to cross the corridor. A new corridor could divide farm and ranch lands or residential neighborhoods. Construction of a brand new corridor would result in construction impacts, including numerous potential environmental impacts to wetlands, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites, protected species, etc.

Rail Relocation off the Front Range

At the request of the Class I railroads, CDOT and the railroads have been studying railroad relocation since 2003, analyzing the public and private benefits of such a project and examining the merit of a public-private partnership where some expenditure of public funds would be required for implementation. In 2009, CDOT completed the *Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study*. The next steps identified in that study suggested compiling the results of the *Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Study* and the *Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan* before taking further action.

During the development of this Plan, specific rail freight projects were solicited from the railroads (Class I and short line). The railroads did not propose an eastern bypass that would relocate existing through rail freight traffic off of the Front Range. This reflects a change in the Class I railroads' priorities in reaction to changing market conditions that currently do not emphasize the north/south movement of coal from the Powder River Basin in northeast Wyoming to Texas. The railroads have other projects that are a higher priority at this time. Significant amounts of railroad investment would be needed to complete a project of this magnitude, and state and federal funding for these types of projects is limited in the near-term.

Throughout the public outreach process, CDOT received comments from eastern Colorado stakeholders and communities opposing the relocation of the through freight rail movements off of the Front Range onto any new north/south alignment in eastern Colorado. CDOT also received comments encouraging further study and the implementation of a bypass for freight rail traffic east of the Front Range.

→ as well as comments supporting the relocation for economic development purposes.



CDOT has clarified its position on a future rail relocation effort. CDOT will not take the lead on a railroad relocation effort but would participate in such an effort if initiated by another party. CDOT will continue to coordinate with the railroads and other rail stakeholders on *current* transportation priorities and will participate in any subsequent discussions related to the need for further study of a north/south rail bypass of the Front Range.

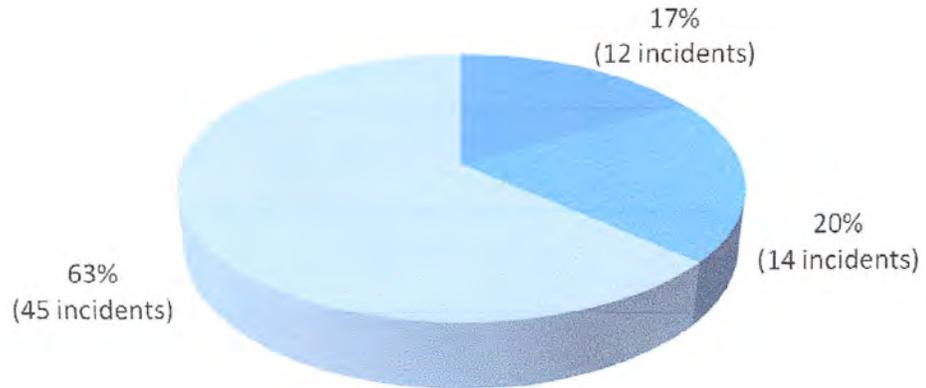
The concept of future rail relocation of through freight traffic at some location in eastern Colorado is included in the Plan's list of projects in the project category of Rail Facilities/Relocations, along with the potential relocation of the intermodal facilities of the BNSF and UP out of the downtown Denver area, and also potential tunneling improvements of the UP's Moffat Tunnel mountain corridor. The prioritization evaluations ranked these projects in this category as "medium," while the concept of eastern Colorado rail relocation received a "low" ranking.

As a result of CDOT's position not to take the lead on the rail relocation effort and with the project receiving an overall "low" priority ranking, the project should be considered inactive at this time. However, should such a project be included in subsequent updates to this Plan, a public input process would be initiated to determine the best course of action moving forward. A study should be conducted to determine the impacts and benefits of rail relocation on eastern Colorado communities *and for the entire state.*

This study would explore the specific impacts from any rail relocation as well as examine what job creation and other positive economic development opportunities might occur from potential rail relocation. Mitigation of local community concerns and issues, such as cattle crossings, emergency/farm equipment crossings, and requirements for agreements with land owners for "other utilities" being included within rail rights-of-way, should be a high priority in appropriate environmental clearance documents that would be completed prior to implementation of any future rail relocation project. CDOT will work in partnership with stakeholders in eastern Colorado if the concept of a future project becomes active again in the future.

Moffat Corridor

Another issue that was identified in the stakeholder outreach process was the capacity-related constraints of east/west rail traffic through the state. There is one active east-west contiguous rail route through Colorado: the UP Moffat Corridor that connects Denver and Salt Lake City through Grand Junction. This line is constrained by numerous single-track tunnels, most notably the 6.2-mile-long Moffat Tunnel. The length of the Moffat Tunnel causes ventilation issues that limit the number of trains that can be moved through this tunnel. The Tennessee Pass line between Dotsero and Pueblo at one time provided additional east-west rail capacity through the state when it was part of the Southern Pacific, and previously the D&RGW, but it was placed in "out of



■ Fatal Incidents ■ Injury Incidents ■ Property Damage Only Incidents
 Figure 5-12. FRA Highway/Rail Crossing Incidents in Colorado by Severity (2008–2010)

Other Rail Safety Issues

Trespasser Issues

Incidents resulting from individuals trespassing on railroad property are a significant safety concern. Trespassing can be defined as actions prohibited on railroad property, such as unauthorized entry to railroad right-of-way by walking on or around the tracks, sleeping on the tracks, driving or walking around downed crossing gates, and intentionally jumping into the path of oncoming trains. Each year, preventable railroad fatalities occur because of individuals and motorists trespassing on railroad property.

across
fishing from rail bridges,

✓ The state and the railroad industry are committed to decreasing incidents of trespassing. The following are representative actions that have helped achieve this goal:

- Educational efforts directed at potential victims of trespassing incidents (Operation Life Saver)
- Enforcement of state and local laws concerning motorist responsibilities at crossings and access to railroad property
- Funding physical improvements, as well as funding research on new technological solutions, that reduce the likelihood of mishaps from trespassing
- Promoting good behaviors that help decrease trespassing activity *through education*

Additionally, funding is provided to Amtrak by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through its Transit Security Grant Program for enhancements to security for Amtrak intercity rail operations.

Freight Security

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the American Association of Railroads established a Railroad Security Task Force. That task force produced the *Terrorism Risk Analysis and Security Management Plan* that was designed to enhance freight rail security. The plan remains in effect today. As a result, freight railroads enacted more than 50 permanent security-enhancing countermeasures. For example, access to key rail facilities and information has been restricted, and cyber-security procedures and techniques have been strengthened. In addition, communication among security officials, law enforcement, and the railroads is critical to ensure secure operations on Colorado's rail transportation system, *and continues to be enhanced.*

The railroad system in Colorado is vulnerable to trespassers and is difficult to secure. The state and the railroads ^{are} ~~should~~ ^{ing} build upon the efforts of the Railroad Security Task Force and identify key railroad yards, interchange points, and major structures that may need to be secured from open public access. Security strategies ^{to} ~~that could~~ be examined to protect key assets include video monitoring for all major structures; upgrading fencing and installing fencing around the perimeter of major rail yards; securing vehicular access to rail rights-of-way at grade crossings; and securing assets, such as rail equipment and train control signals systems.

Improved communications among railroads and all security-cleared officials at the state, emergency responder, and police agency level to track the location and contents of trains with any high-risk contents hauled throughout the state also would enhance security for Colorado's railroad system.

Rail Security—Summary

Effective and continuously-improving

Security of transportation infrastructure is a major issue that has faced the nation in new ways since the events of September 11, 2001. ~~Improving~~ communication among security officials, law enforcement, and the railroads is critical to ensure secure operations of Colorado's rail transportation system. Continued improvements in technology also ~~will~~ help to ensure the security of the state's rail freight shipments and infrastructure. Comparable security initiatives at Amtrak and future commuter railroads will continue to be introduced, thus enhancing Colorado's ability to protect its citizens.



the freight and passenger rail objectives applied to both categories, so an additional category, General Rail Objectives, was created. The goals and objectives described below were finalized by the Steering Committee on September 13, 2011.

Goal #1—Create a balanced transportation system utilizing cooperative land use planning to create freight and passenger rail connectivity and accessibility without compromising existing rail service and infrastructure

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| General Objectives | <p>#1—Provide a venue to identify and discuss issues pertaining to local government/railroad interface issues (e.g., blocked grade crossings, environmental impacts, planning related to land uses adjacent to rail lines/yards, etc.)</p> <p>#2—Increase the number of intermodal connections/facilities to help create a balanced transportation system</p> |
| Freight Objectives | <p>#1—Provide a venue to identify and discuss issues pertaining to the locating of rail intermodal facilities</p> <p>#2—Encourage development of rail served industrial parks, including on short line railroads</p> |
| Passenger Objective | <p>#1—Increase travel choices and improve connectivity throughout the state</p> |

Goal #2—Provide for the safety of people, infrastructure, and goods

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| General Objectives | <p>#1—Maximize the safety of existing and future railroad/highway at-grade crossings and consider grade separation as appropriate</p> <p>#2—Minimize safety risks for future expanded rail capacity</p> <p>#3—Provide adequate emergency response access along and across rail lines</p> <p>#4—Reduce rail-related incidents due to trespassing</p> <p>#5—When designing joint freight/passenger facilities, maximize safety at passenger stations without impacting freight operations</p> <p>#6—When planning for rail in public rights-of-way, consider appropriate elements of the complete streets concept</p> |
|---------------------------|---|



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Goal #3—Expand rail infrastructure and freight and passenger rail services to meet future demand through strategic investments which include public-private partnerships with privately-owned service providers

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| General Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">#1—Streamline public processes to expedite rail expansion projects#2—Position Colorado for future funding opportunities#3—Seek out innovative financing and partnerships (both public and private)#4—Recognize both rural and urban criteria in establishing prioritization#5—Expand sidings on joint passenger/freight lines, as appropriate |
| Freight Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">#1—Develop state program for improving infrastructure of short line, and possibly Class I railroads#2—Encourage short line railroads, Class I railroads, and shippers to work cooperatively to expand freight rail service and usage |
| Passenger Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">#1—Support implementation of the National High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program#2—Focus on completing gaps in the existing system |

Passenger Rail System

Overview

The passenger rail system in Colorado is presently ~~very limited~~ ^{provided by} Amtrak, with ~~its~~ ^{as part of its} two routes in the state, ~~is the only provider~~ of long-distance passenger rail service. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) in the Denver metro area will use some commuter rail service to supplement its light rail service as part of its FasTracks program. In addition, given Colorado's railroad history and the state's natural beauty, a number of scenic railroads provide tourist-oriented service.

Amtrak

The National Passenger Rail Corporation, also known as Amtrak, was created by Congress in 1971 and is the sole provider of intercity passenger rail service in the United States. Amtrak operates on more than 21,000 miles of rail and serves more than 500 stations in 46 states. In federal fiscal year 2009 (October 2008 through September 2009), Amtrak provided service to more than 27 million passengers throughout the U.S. On average, about 74,000 people ride nearly 300 Amtrak trains per day in the U.S. Amtrak's long-distance routes provide critical intercity service to many rural communities. Colorado is served by two long-distance Amtrak routes, the California Zephyr and Southwest Chief routes (as depicted on Figure 3-19).

The California Zephyr runs daily between Chicago and San Francisco with major stops in Omaha, Nebraska; Denver, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; Reno, Nevada; and Emeryville, California. The California Zephyr is Amtrak's longest route, serving 34 communities and covering 2,438 miles in a little over 51 hours. In Colorado, the line has stations in Fort Morgan, Denver, Fraser/Winter Park, Granby, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction. East of Denver, the BNSF Railway owns, operates, and maintains the majority of the route to Chicago. West of Denver, the Union Pacific Railroad owns the track on which Amtrak operates this route.

The Zephyr line served more than 355,300 passengers in 2011, or 975 passengers daily, and had 2011 revenues in excess of \$44 million.⁹ The California Zephyr serves a diverse set of markets between Chicago and Emeryville; nearly three-quarters of the passengers are spread among dozens of smaller markets, each with less than 3 percent of the total ridership. Five larger markets comprised the remaining 25 percent of the riders. The Chicago-to-Denver portion of the route accounts for the largest percentage of ridership at 9 percent and frequently sells out during the peak summer months. Because of the proximity of Glenwood Springs to several of Colorado's ski areas, Amtrak limits sales in the Denver to Glenwood Springs market to ensure availability of seats for longer distance travelers. Only 4 percent of

⁹ Amtrak, CDOT Data Request, 2012



- **Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility**—RTD needs the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility to repair, maintain, clean, fuel, and store the vehicles that will serve the four FasTracks commuter rail corridors: Gold Line, East Corridor, Northwest Rail, and North Metro. The maintenance facility is a 30-acre site located at 48th Avenue and Fox Street, just northwest of Interstates 70 and 25. The facility will be adjacent to the Gold Line and Northwest Rail alignments and will be operational in 2015. The Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility and the East Corridor and Gold Line are being funded and constructed as a part of the Eagle P3, a public-private partnership design-build project.
- **East Corridor Commuter Rail**—The East Corridor Commuter Rail Line will be a 22.8-mile commuter rail transit corridor between Denver Union Station and Denver International Airport and will have five intermediate stations. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed for the line and a Record of Decision was issued in 2009. Final design of the project began in 2010 and construction began in 2011. The line, part of the Eagle P3 project noted above, is scheduled to open in January 2016.
- **Gold Line**—The Gold Line, also part of the Eagle P3 project, is an 11.2-mile commuter rail transit corridor that will connect Denver Union Station to Wheat Ridge, passing through northwest Denver, Adams County, and Arvada. The line will include seven stations. An EIS was completed for the project and a Record of Decision was issued in 2009. Gold Line construction is scheduled to begin in 2012 and will open to the public in 2016.
- **North Metro Rail Line**—The North Metro Rail Line is a proposed 18-mile corridor from Denver Union Station north through Adams County, Commerce City, Northglenn, and Thornton. An EIS was completed for the project in 2011 and construction of the first phase of the project from Denver Union Station to the National Western Stock Show will begin in 2012. The remainder of the project is not currently funded.
- **Northwest Rail Corridor Line**—The Northwest Rail Corridor Line is a 41-mile route from Denver Union Station to Longmont, passing through North Denver, Adams County, Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, and Boulder. A Final Environmental Evaluation for the first phase of the project between Denver and Boulder was released in 2010. The project is not currently funded.

fully

Scenic Railroads

Colorado is home to six scenic railroads that operate on standard or narrow gauge tracks. Table 3-8 lists Colorado's scenic railroads, routes lengths, and dates of operation.

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
March 1, 2012

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3-6

Amtrak provides passenger service over BNSF east of Denver, connecting Denver with Chicago, and over BNSF across southeastern Colorado, connecting Lamar, LaJunta and Trinidad with Chicago, Kansas City and Los Angeles.

3-32-3

Colorado's rail network has 97 grain elevators located throughout the state. These elevators provide storage for surplus crops at harvest time and serve as transfer points for grains to truck and rail as the market demands. Figure 3-10 displays agricultural lands in Colorado and the locations of grain elevators along the freight rail network. The primary infrastructure model in Colorado is dominated by the "country elevator" with limited load out capacity that generally restricts rail shipments to less inefficient and more costly methods of shipping in small groups of railcars versus trainloads.

There are currently only five high volume trainload "shuttle" loading elevators in Colorado (none in the southeast part of the state): two on BNSF, two on Union Pacific and one dually-accessed by both Class 1's on the GWR. These high volume train-loading facilities have become virtually the transportation standard in much of the western U.S., both as shipment points for grain producing areas and receiving points for imported feed needs. The lack of similar infrastructure within Colorado leaves many producers and feed grain users with more expensive transportation options that result in lower returns than those of many of their peers in the neighboring states with more efficient infrastructure. A key issue impacting shuttle elevator development in Colorado is the economics of density. Colorado production is highly variable due to climate. As a result, the ag industry has been slow to make the capital investment in high-speed shuttle elevators when the volume to economically support that investment is so highly variable. Development of "shuttle" facilities in Kansas and Nebraska that are in relatively close proximity to Colorado's production areas has led many producers to increase their use of longer truck hauls to transport their products to out-of-state elevators in order to capture the higher prices offered at train loading facilities.

Development of "shuttle facilities" in rural areas has greatly enhanced additional economic development opportunities. The track infrastructure required to meet minimum train loading requirements easily translates into the ability to receive unitized bulk fertilizer and other agricultural products as well as energy-related products such as pipe, drilling sands and other related products. This model has both enhanced the underlying investment for grain handling

that enhances overall producer returns and offers other industries a lower cost of entry in development of economical transportation options.

3-41-2

In January 2010, BNSF announced to Amtrak that all maintenance costs for continued operation of the Southwest Chief between La Junta, Colorado, and Lamy, New Mexico would have to be borne by Amtrak, if Amtrak wished to continue operating service over this route, as BNSF was no longer providing freight service over this line. BNSF also declared that it will maintain the tracks between Hutchinson, Kansas and La Junta, Colorado at a 60-mph passenger train maximum speed instead of the existing 79-mph maximum speed unless Amtrak chose to bear the cost of maintaining the tracks at the higher speed limit, as agreements between the parties permit Amtrak to do. BNSF and Amtrak had discussed rerouting the Southwest Chief over its freight route through Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, effectively eliminating the Southwest Chief service in Colorado. At this time, Amtrak has chosen to maintain the current service and pay the additional costs of maintaining the line. BNSF is not encouraging or even discussing moving the Southwest Chief from its current route, and will continue to accommodate Southwest Chief service on the existing route at whatever speeds Amtrak is willing to support.

5-20

Alternatively, to most effectively take truck traffic off I-70 in the intermountain area as well as provide double-stack intermodal freight access on the Western Slope, clearing the Moffat Corridor may make economic sense for Colorado in the long term.

6-18

Further, the lists of projects presented are suggested and do not imply that these projects are feasible, have been fully designed, or been approved for construction.

Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
March 1, 2012

Definitions To Add In The Glossary

Association of American Railroads (AAR) – The major trade association for large railroads in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Represents rail industry interests to federal and state government legislators and agencies. Provides mechanisms for setting equipment standards and procedures, and disseminating information of industry-wide importance. Two subsidiaries provide technological support services, including the Transportation Technology Center located just east of Pueblo, CO.

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) – The primary trade association for fulfilling common needs of shortline and regional railroads. Provides information to members and represents interests of its membership in relation with large railroads and with federal and state legislators and agencies.

Branchline – A freight railroad’s lighter-density feeder line which connects shipper locations with the freight railroad’s main line and the North American freight rail network.

Demurrage – A tariff application designed to limit the amount of time a customer has a car for loading or unloading. It includes a schedule of charges assessed against the customer when a car is held in excess of the allotted free time.

Intermodal (passenger) – Passenger movement between modes, including but not limited to private auto to/from public transport, bus to/from passenger rail.

Intermodal (freight) – Movement of freight in international or domestic containers or truck trailers by more than one mode of transport, including freight rail.

Slow order - A local speed restriction on a portion of a rail line which sets a train’s speed below the track's normal speed limit. Slow orders are usually imposed when there is a requirement to perform maintenance on a section of railway track.

Super-elevation - The cant or cross-level of a railway track, the difference in elevation (height) between the two rails, normally done where the railway is curved; raising the outer rail provides a banked turn, allowing trains to safely traverse the curve at higher speeds than would otherwise be possible.

Team track – A track and area provided by a railroad where freight railcars are placed for the use of rail customers for loading or unloading freight.

Transload – A shipper or carrier facility, other than automotive or intermodal facilities or team tracks, that provides services to either a single freight rail shipper or receiver, or to the general shipping public on a for-hire basis to ship or receive freight, where freight is transferred from one railcar to another or from one transportation mode to another. Short-term incidental storage may also occur at the transload site.

7504 East Jefferson Drive
Denver CO 80237
March 1, 2012

Mr. Mark Imhoff
Director, Division of Transit and Rail
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E Arkansas Ave
Denver CO 80222

Dear Mr. Imhoff,

RE: Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan,
Draft of January 30, 2012: Comments on

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the subject document. I am pleased to submit comments; these are not representing any organization but are my individual comments base on my experiences on the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS Mountain Citizens Advisory Committee and the Collaborative Effort conflict resolution panel, as well as other transportation experience with CDOT and RDT.

First, my high compliments to you and all of the staff, consultants and outside participants involved in the project of producing the Plan. It is a very good foundation for the future, and is well-organized, well written, well provided with good graphics and tables, and highly informative. I hope that it gets full attention from the Governor, Congressional Delegation, General Assembly and other officials at all appropriate agencies.

Here are my specific comments.

1..Given the dominance of freight rail over passenger rail at present, and the great importance of freight rail to Colorado and regions beyond, it is understandable that a majority of the document's content should be devoted to freight rail. However, the need and opportunity for rebuilding the passenger rail facilities of Colorado - facilities and systems that in effect built this state – It would be rewarding to see a pro-active enthusiasm for rapid and intense dedication to the people-oriented elements of rail and related transit.

The "Purpose" of the Plan, (page 1-1), the "Adopted Colorado Rail Vision" (page 1-3) and Table 6-2 Item 7, (page 6-8) certain of the "Goals and Objectives") (pages 1-3 through 1-6) all could receive a sharper focus on public mobility and quality of life through development of efficient, economical and attractive multimodal *people-oriented* transportation. The needs and benefits of transit-dependent citizens and those whose economic conditions are severely impacted ort limited by a lack of mass transit should be specifically mentioned. At present the Plan almost totally ignores "Environmental Justice" and the needs of transit-dependent citizens, including those low-income people whose percent of family income that must be devoted to car travel is inordinately high. These tie to adequate and affordable job access for all. ADA is mentioned

briefly in the context of RTD's commuter rail (page 5-18). Most of the implementation actions in these matters are more intra-city than intercity, but the various references in the Plan draft to commuter rail, multimodalism and similar matters are the basis for increased emphasis. The section on "Demographics" (page 5-7) and "Community Impacts and Opportunities" (page 5-13) could include references to the "Environmental Justice" issues.

As further planning progresses, attention continually should be given to improving modal splits of transit/rail vs. automobile travels.

2. The Scenic Railroads (page 3-45) deserve a bit more attention, even though only two of them are subject to Federal jurisdiction based on shared lines. These lines are excellent economic and employment generators for local areas, and a laudatory identification of their benefits would not be amiss. Additionally, for the enjoyment and edification of much of our citizenry and visitors, they enable young people to become acquainted with a mode of travel other than the car, and with the wonderful history associated with the railroads, their equipment, their locales and environments.

3. The Chapter 5 discussion of "Rail Issues and Opportunities" (page 5-1), includes economics. It could provide valuable discussion of economic issues by at least noting that that petroleum fuel prices may well continue to escalate into the future, with adverse impact to motorized passenger and freight costs. No one can warrant that such a scenario will or will not occur, but there are ample sources of information that suggest, in the interests of societal-economic resilience and sustainability, preparedness for a different future would benefit from improved available rail and transit modes.

4. The "Glossary" (which follows page 8-7 and which should be but is not specified in the Table of Contents) defines "Advanced Guideway System" (AGS) as "New technology and non-conventional rail transportation system, typically using a high-speed magnetic levitation system." This definition is erroneous and misleading.

First, it should not state that it typically uses a magnetic levitation system. This is especially relevant to the I-70 Mountain Corridor PEIS and the Record of Decision based on the Consensus Agreement of the Collaborative Effort Panel. The CE Panel was firm in saying that we were, and AGS is, technology neutral, i.e., all feasible modes are to be examined with no bias for any mode. We were in full agreement that this was the CE Panel decision on this matter. There were several monorail maglev "enthusiasts" on the Panel but even they recognized that the very limited global implementation of such transit and the decades of research on it do not provide a basis for favoring it over other rail.

Second, the term "non-conventional" is only marginally accurate or certainly subject to interpretation. The Rocky Mountain Rail Authority study notes a number of high-speed steel-on-steel rail vehicles that are conventional in other nations. In America, they are non-conventional only relative to the heavy push-pull trains such as the Amtrak trains, (with the exception of the fast Acela on the East Coast.) The foreign trains are nearly all electric powered, which, for America is non-conventional for long haul passenger trains but common in commuter rail.

Similarly, the term “Advanced” is subject to interpretation and confusion. Perhaps much of this is a result of the Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority (CIFGA) studies as discussed elsewhere in these Comments. In the context of the Collaborative Effort Panel and Consensus Agreement, which are determinant decisions, “Advanced” should be a fixed guideway fully or partially elevated, dedicated to passenger rail, and in geometry capable of handling fast or high-speed trains appropriate for the mountain environment and to be designed for one of a variety of rail technologies.

5. Appendix B of the Draft. in the Section “A Summary of Other Rail-related Studies,” should be expanded to give proper attention to CIFGA and related studies as identified in Attachment B hereto.

Sincerely,

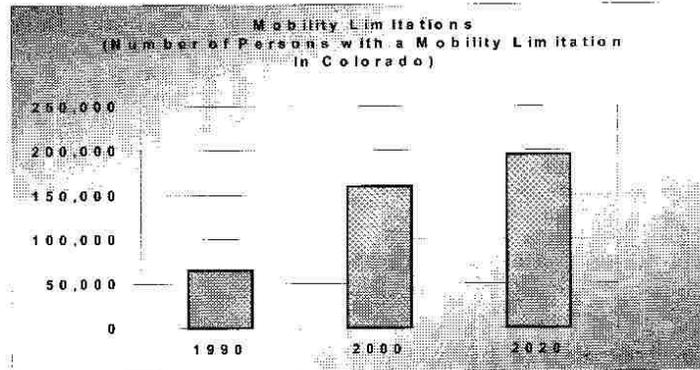
Albert G. Melcher
Former I-70 Mountain PEIS Collaborative Effort Panel Member
7504 East Jefferson Drive
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Attachment A:
Examples of Transit-Dependency and Mobility Economics

To illustrate the “Environmental Justice” and economic issues relevant to access to public intercity and intra-city transportation, three pages from “Smart Transportation: Choices for Colorado 2002” published by the Colorado Mobility Coalition are attached. These are merely examples for illustrative purposes. It is noted that the adverse economic conditions of 2002 are probably much more severe in our current economic conditions.

IV. Our Environment and Quality Of Life

A Mobility-Limited Environment for Citizens



CDOT defines "Mobility Limitation" as a long-lasting health condition that makes it difficult to go outside the home alone." ("Investing in Colorado's Future: The Statewide Transportation Plan", CDOT Nov. 2001.) Senior citizens, disabled persons, individuals with respiratory problems, young people, non-drivers for any reason: all are mobility-limited as regards access to places and services that they cannot obtain except with public transportation.

Mobility-limited citizens want the same travel choices and transportation as all other citizens, in general. Many elderly and disabled need specialized services, however.

These Colorado Citizens and their families pay taxes into the Colorado General Fund. Their Colorado tax moneys should be spent to meet their travel needs instead of subsidizing auto drivers.

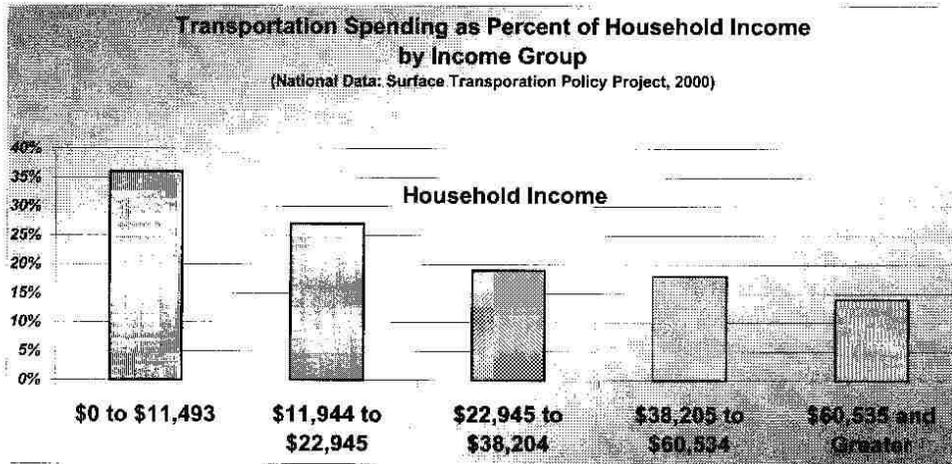
Most other States give fair and equitable mobility to these citizens by funding transit capital and operating costs. (Multistate Technical Assistance Program, American Society of Highway and Transportation Officials, 1999.) This gives the elderly, the young, the disabled and other non-driving citizens access to places that other people can get to by driving.



Left: Ways to reduce mobility limitations, with Denver Union Terminal, future hub of regional – and potentially Front Range – multi-modal system.
Right: Grand Valley Transit, Grand Junction, has 7 new wheelchair accessible buses.



Affordable Transportation, Affordable Housing



"Affordable Housing" is housing that only consumes 30% of monthly household income. BUT: what about "Affordable Transportation"?

A lack of transportation choices in Colorado means that service job workers, policemen, pipefitters, clerks and others who must rely on a car will spend 15% to 25% of household income on transportation.

Annual driving costs of a single-occupant small car were estimated at \$6,041 (15,000 miles per year, 1999). (American Automobile Association.)

Annual costs per person for public transportation: \$200 to \$2,000 depending on mileage traveled and includes transfer, distance or zone, time-of-day, express charges. (APTA.)

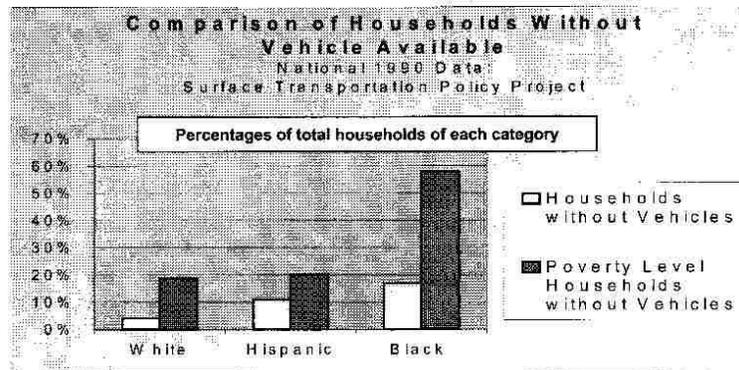
Money saved on travel can go to housing, education, health care, better diet, and recreation. A household can have fewer cars per household and fewer miles per car, with significant financial benefits to those households. Payments for housing build value; for cars, it only depreciates.

"Location Efficient Mortgages" are available in some states: households near public transit qualify for higher mortgages because they can save money on travel and thus pay more for housing. ("The Roads Aren't Free" by Clifford Cobb, "Redefining Progress".)

New urban development approaches can solve affordable housing and mobility problems. (Congress for New Urbanism.) Transit and housing linkages are planned and used in many states. Access to transit can justify reduced amounts of land and investment otherwise needed to provide high ratios of parking spaces per dwelling unit. (Surface Transportation Policy Project, "STPP", and other presenters, "Rail-Volution" Conference, 2001.)

As just one national example, San Mateo, CA, uses transportation funds to help finance more compact development with some affordable housing within 1/3 of a mile of a transit station. (Rich Napier, San Mateo Congestion Management Agency, "Rail-Volution Conference", 2001.)

Citizens Without Cars; the Less Affluent



Households at poverty level generally need public transportation and can't afford cars. Many entry-level and service jobs are at poverty-level wages. Many fixed-income retirees and widows/widowers are in the poverty category, as are many students.

Adequate public transportation enables these citizens to get their children to school and day-care and get to a job and to other places (clinics, education, church, recreation) without spending hours and hours riding inadequate public transportation.

Federal Environmental Justice Laws applying to CDOT deal with provision of mobility to the sectors identified here; minorities are the most impaired by inadequate public transportation. Spending all of State funds on highways, which assumes that everyone can afford to drive a car, is contrary to Environmental Justice laws. It is a social injustice not to spend some of those State funds on transit to serve the mobility needs of those who cannot afford a car.

Building Communities With Public Transportation

Public transportation is fundamental to creating thriving communities. Partnerships within communities, and between the public and private sectors, can promote networks of transportation service that spur economic growth and create a sense of place. We need to think in different terms than those of the past. The public wants a "sense of community" and the community as a whole benefits from investments oriented toward this goal. Transit investment is falling behind the needs in meeting these objectives. (Excerpted from presentation by The Hon. Jennifer Dorn, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, "Rail-Volution" Conference, 2001.)

Public funds must be used as the foundation for a vision of a smart and sustainable future -- looking at least 50 years ahead -- of livable communities. Public funds and public-private partnerships in transportation investments are essential to ensure livable communities for the future. (The Hon. Phil Angelides, State Treasurer, California, "Rail-Volution" Conference, 2001.)

"Our urban environment cannot much longer tolerate the divisive, disruptive, dispersive and land-consuming effects of an unbalanced transportation system; greater attention must be devoted to analysis of the socio-economic aspects of an unbalanced auto-oriented urban environment, such as sprawl, exposure to accidents, non-driver transportation obligation, and land use and parking in both the central core and in suburban areas." (1967 "Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee to Denver Metropolitan Area Transportation Study," Intercounty Regional Planning Commission, predecessor to DRCOG.)

Attachment B: **Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority (CIFGA)**

NOTE Here are three excerpts with information on the Advanced Guideway System efforts by the Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority (CIFGA), established by the General assembly in 1998 (?) as an independent enterprise with a limited life. Item 1 is a brief description of its planning. The reference to rejection by voters is in regard to the CIFGA proposal to obtain and spend \$50 million of State funds to build a test track (ten miles) in the mountains, with another \$50 million to be received from Federal sources. Item 2 is another study that was underway in the early years of the I-70 PEIS and Mountain Citizen Advisory Committee planning. The excerpt here is the CDOT plan for the study; the outcome is that a negative report regarding the feasibility of proposed Maglev for the corridor resulted from this study. Item 3 is a short summary of CIFGA's sunset. If information on CIFGA is included in the Plan, CDOT is requested to improve upon the material here.

I note that discussions of "Advanced" fast public transit were extant in the 1960's. Monorails were in operation in Disneyland, Seattle and other places. Maglev research was going on in various places. I was appointed to the Highway Commission in 1967 by Gov. John Love, who stated that he would like to see fast rail to the mountain resorts. A number of technologies were brought to the attention of transit/rail advocates, some quite "far out" such as a fast aerial tram from Denver to the resorts.

1. Monorail Society Web site <http://www.monorails.org/tmspages/TPTTrV.html>

The Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority was the state entity responsible for planning an I-70 fixed guideway system. CIFGA was established for the high-speed fixed guideway project which was first planned to connect Denver International Airport with Denver Metro, and in later phases were to run along interstate highway I-70 to the foothill and mountain communities, terminating at Eagle County Airport. CIFGA developed a performance specification for the I-70 corridor which addressed the challenging physical attributes of the corridor - the steep grades, tight curves, 100 mph crosswinds, heavy snowfall, icy conditions, frequent blizzards, and need to protect the pristine alpine environment. In early 1999, CIFGA requested technology proposals from known suppliers. Seven responses were received. Following an extensive technical review of the proposals, CIFGA selected steel-wheeled inverted-T monorail. Technologies that were rejected included noncontact maglev systems and conventional trains. Colorado voters turned down a ballot measure that would have funded a full-scale test track.

2. Colorado Department of Transportation - Magnetic Levitation Research **PUBLIC INFORMATION PACKAGE (5/14/02)**

The Colorado Department of Transportation has entered into a "Memorandum of Understanding" to conduct research and development under the federal Urban Magnetic Levitation program. The other parties to this agreement are:
Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority (CIFGA)
Sandia National Laboratories (SNL)
MagLev Transit Group (MTG)

In 1999, CIFGA and SNL were identified by the US Congress to each receive \$1.75M to study and develop magnetic levitation technology for use in urban transit. MTG was selected, based on competitive

proposals, by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to receive \$742,000 to conduct magnetic levitation research.

CDOT is receiving these \$4,242,000 in grant funds through a cooperative agreement with the FTA and is contracting with the three participants to conduct the research and development. The state funds being used for appropriately related analysis in the ongoing I-70 west Programmatic Environmental Impact Study (I-70 PEIS) provide the required match. The I-70 PEIS study is expected to result in a Record of Decision in 2004.

CDOT is working in partnership with the other groups involved to provide accurate and complete information regarding possible advanced technology alternatives for the I-70 West Corridor. Information about this system, along with information on other fixed guideway systems, and highway, rubber-tire transit (bus), and other transportation alternatives, will be used to determine a preferred alternative for a long-term plan for the corridor.

Objectives:

1. Identification of the best urban maglev system or set of sub-systems (levitation systems, propulsion motor system, guideway, and vehicles) where the situation is similar to the I-70 west corridor. Safety, security, and integration of all the components will be considered.
 2. Identification of parameters that will make a viable system for the corridor: system performance, routing, station design parameters, vehicle design, power alternatives, greenhouse gas emissions, economics, innovative financing, commercialization, etc.
 3. Advance the SERAPHIM motor from the concept stage to the design stage. Static and dynamic testing of a scaled motor will be performed to establish thrust, lift, heating, efficiency, and other design and performance parameters. These parameters can then be used for comparing it with other systems.
- All the parties will be working together to assure that these research objectives are met, however, the primary focus for each is as follows: Objective 1 - MTG, Objective 2 - CIFGA, and Objective 3 - SNL. CIFGA will provide information to the I-70 mountain corridor PEIS about the application of advanced technology in the I-70 West Corridor. Design and construction of a full-scale prototype system would proceed depending upon the selection of a preferred alternative in the programmatic EIS. If appropriate, CDOT will seek funding under phase 2 and 3 of the federal program described below for design and construction of a full-scale prototype system and eventual deployment in the I-70 West Corridor, depending upon the selection of the modes that would form the preferred alternative...

FTA's Urban Magnetic Levitation Transit Program

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Urban Magnetic Levitation Transit Technology Development Program (Urban Maglev Program) was authorized by federal law and described in a January 29, 1999 Federal Register Notice. The program seeks to improve one or more Maglev technologies (both superconducting and non-superconducting types) using advancements resulting from American technology research and development. FTA's program, consists of three phases: (1) Evaluation of Proposed System Concepts, (2) Prototype Subsystems Development, and (3) System Integration and Deployment Planning. The program is intended to develop an advanced technology Maglev system for specific identified deployment locations. The Colorado effort is one of several similar programs.

Funded Phase 1 Projects now in progress: General Atomics Corporation (GA) team will develop low speed magnetic levitation technology in the following main task areas (1) system studies, (2) base technology development (including technical risk identification and resolution), (3) route specific requirements, and (4) projection of overall system performance and a preliminary design for a full scale

demonstration system concept. Currently they are evaluating a demonstration site in Pennsylvania.
Contact: Sam Gurol; sam.gurol@gat.com

Colorado Department of Transportation is contracting with Maglev Transit Group, Sandia National Laboratory and the Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority to formulate an advanced technology alternative that incorporates urban maglev parameters and constraints derived from the varied terrain and weather conditions found in the mountainous areas between the Denver metropolitan area and Eagle Valley. The corridor extends from Denver International Airport west along the mountainous I-70 corridor. This route is very demanding, with at least one stretch of 8% or higher grade and subject to very severe weather conditions. The steep grade and severe weather requirements provide rigorous performance targets for an urban maglev transit system that can be built anywhere in the United States.
Contact person: richard.griffin@dot.state.co.us

3. TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (TLRC) **"CIFGA Progress Report and Wrap-up Plan" July 16, 2003**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251600621322&ssbinary=true>

STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (TLRC)

House Committee Room 0112

State Capitol Building

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

3:15 PM Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority (CIFGA)

Sally Hopper, Chairman, Board of Directors, CIFGA, said that CIFGA will sunset at the end of 2003, and the authority has completed its mission. She noted disappointment in the loss of the election to construct a demonstration project and provided two handouts to the TLRC (Attachments G and H.) She said that the high-speed rail option has been endorsed by residents of the I-70 Corridor. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has proposed the preservation of right-of-way to accommodate a rail option in the future. CIFGA is working with the federal government on the development of "MagLev" (magnetic levitation) technology and has received a \$4 million grant for this purpose. (NOTE: This is Item 2 above in this Attachment.)



March 2, 2012

Mr. Mehdi Baziar
Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 Arkansas
Denver, CO 80222

Re: Colorado Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Baziar:

The Colorado Rail Passenger Association (ColoRail) is pleased to provide comments on the referenced Plan. The Plan will be an important first step toward providing the state with a more economic and environmentally sound transportation system. Simply stated, such a system will provide more passenger trains and connecting transit services. This is a major, necessary and overdue shift in the deployment of state transportation resources.

Throughout this letter, major problems and their remedies are highlighted. The 15 comments below were included in our letter of October 12, 2011 though some were less specific at the time and offered as general comments to guide the development of the Plan.

Major Points – The Plan Must Be Strengthened

1. Strengthen the purpose of the Plan with regard to passenger rail service

The passenger rail system in Colorado is in its infancy. This Plan must be clear and convincing in order to create the basis and public understanding for current and future passenger rail development. The purpose statement should take this into account. Restate the purpose on page 1 – 1: **Improve the overall effectiveness of the freight rail system and provide a plan for the establishment of an effective passenger rail and transit system within the state. In addition, the Plan has created a vision for rail improvements in the state that can greatly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the state’s overall transportation system.**

2. Strengthen commitment to effective corridor level planning and project evaluation

The draft Plan does not move the bar far enough with respect to passenger rail development in the major transportation corridors in and through Colorado. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said decades ago, “Plans are nothing, planning is everything.” A planning process must have teeth if it is to be employed effectively and respected by the public and political leaders. **To remedy this major deficiency we recommend CDOT/DTR commit to such a mechanism in Goal 4, set it forth as one of the major findings in Chapter 8, emphasize it in any forthcoming executive summary and ensure that it is**

integrated into the 2040 plan. In our comments of October 12, 2011, ColoRail called for such a system. In a period of scarce resources such a mechanism is even more important (see Comments 9 and 13 for details).

3. Strengthen and clarify the goals and objectives of the Plan – Goals and objectives represent commitments to outcomes and should be clearly stated for passenger rail

The goals and objectives need to be clarified and strengthened to shape policy and help leaders and citizens realize the benefits of improved passenger rail services particularly in view of economic and demographic trends. This is especially important in a time of limited funding. Explicitly state that establishing passenger rail services between city centers and communities in major corridors is a goal and high priority in order to serve the maximum number of Coloradans on a daily basis. To make these services most effective, the Plan should explicitly state CDOT/DTR's commitment to provide connectivity with local, regional and intercity transit services to the maximum extent feasible at all stations (see Comment 9 for details).

4. Recognize rail based tourism as a major Colorado economic engine and rail opportunity for the future

The Plan pays little attention to opportunities for tourism expansion through scenic rail lines, Amtrak, future passenger rail services, Amtrak Vacation packages and private rail car charters. Just three scenic rail lines in southern Colorado served over 60,000 passengers combined in 2010, and national and international demand for rail based, historic and cultural tourism will grow in the future. This is especially important to rural communities and counties (see Comment 12).

5. Rank the priority for retaining the Southwest Chief in Colorado as "High"

This issue is given only medium priority (page 6-19) while it is an urgent priority for the communities along the line. Resolutions to retain the Southwest Chief have already been passed by southeastern communities and counties as well as other entities and the Plan should reflect their needs. CDOT should be leading the effort to secure funding for improving the line (see Comment 12).

6. The acquisition of exclusive "Colorado" passenger cars for use on Amtrak trains serving Colorado should be investigated

Amtrak equipment is insufficient for demand in the summer and current equipment is aging. Colorado should investigate acquiring cars for the exclusive use of Colorado bound tourists during peak seasons. Perhaps tourism funding could be arranged for this acquisition. Several states have a major equipment acquisition in the works for 2015 and Colorado could realize savings by joining this effort. The cars could be used for ski tourists in the winter or subleased to other parts of the country such as Florida bound trains (see Comment 12).

7. Reassess future capacity issues before it is too late

Capacity issues will arise throughout the state as the passenger rail and transit system is developed. Furthermore, these issues will become more difficult to resolve as time passes. For example, at Denver Union Station (DUS), the planned stub end track configuration limits its future usefulness as a central hub as front range passenger rail and additional intercity services are brought on line. This limitation

has been raised continuously over the DUS planning period. However difficult it may be, a through track configuration should be explicitly examined before it is made completely impossible. A through track configuration could double the capacity of DUS as an intermodal hub, improving the economics of the station and Denver. Use of the Consolidated Main Line (CML) for through passenger services will be a poor substitute and discourage ridership on future commuter and high speed rail services. There are likely other capacity issues arising at stations throughout Colorado.

8. Establish a high level consultation process with the freight railroads in order to clarify and resolve development issues in an orderly and productive way

Issues and disagreements between passenger rail and transit developers and the freight railroads are inevitable and have already arisen in several locations. While the Plan calls for a forum to air these issues this is not sufficient. These issues must be identified, characterized and elevated into a process that provides for orderly and businesslike resolution. Difficult negotiations are likely to arise and it is essential that issues be dealt with at a level where the incentives are not simply to hang on to a position. This kind of resolution process usually calls for a process convened by high level leaders and executives. That level of intervention should be demonstrated and sought in the Plan.

Detailed Comments

9. Restated Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 is not clear and incorporates strategies/objectives that confuse the intent of the goal. It is not clear what is to be “balanced” and why a “balanced” system is preferred rather than the most effective and efficient system. If there is a clear advantage to balance it should be explained and an objective created to achieve it.

Restate the goal as:

Improve the statewide transportation system by maximizing the benefits of freight and passenger rail services and enhancing intermodal connectivity and accessibility available to citizens and businesses.

**Add General Objectives: #3 Minimize damage to existing services and infrastructure
#4 Employ cooperative land use planning to mitigate negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of rail and transit services**

Goal 3 Strengthen this goal by eliminating strategies/objectives in the goal statement and clarifying and strengthening the Passenger Objectives.

Restate the goal as:

Expand rail infrastructure and freight and passenger rail service to meet future demand.

Clarify and strengthen Objective #2 by restating as follows: Establish passenger rail links between city centers and communities in Colorado’s major transportation corridors in order to maximize service for Colorado citizens. Provide local, regional and intercity transit connectivity at each station to maximize ridership.

Add Passenger Objective #3 Explore and develop interstate/intercity links with surrounding states and encourage the expansion of Amtrak services in and through the state.

#4 Seek out innovative financing and partnerships (both public and private) for the expansion of rail based tourism such as state financed passenger cars and passenger sidings for Amtrak and charter rail car tourism operators.

Goal 4 is weak and limited by the inclusion of a strategy or objective in the goal statement.

Restate the goal as:

Promote the energy efficiency, environmental, and economic benefits of freight and passenger rail transportation throughout the state.

Add as first General Objective: #1 Develop and employ a performance based evaluation process for transportation corridor planning. This process should compare the energy efficiency, environmental, economic and other social benefits of alternative modes in order to invest in those that provide the best, most effective and efficient transportation services and provide the great return to the state and regional economy and its citizens. Use the findings to educate the public about travel choices.

Goal 5 should be strengthened to read: **Use the efficiencies and economic development advantages of freight and passenger rail to support communities and enhance economic growth throughout the state.**

Add Passenger objective: #4 Identify ways to support the expansion of rail based tourism within the state.

10. Chapter 2, History

Former Amtrak trains such as the *Pioneer* and *Desert Wind* should be mentioned as their routes and destinations provide information about possible intercity services in the future. The *Pioneer* was inaugurated in 1977 to serve the Pacific Northwest and much of the passenger friendly infrastructure still exists. The train was abandoned in 1997 after a sporadic career of changing routes, infrequent service and varying communities served. It is mentioned along with a disputed Amtrak study about its resumption in the appendices. However, the fact that these passenger services ran in the 1990's is worth noting in the History Chapter.

11. Chapter 3 Colorado Rail System

This summary of rail services in Colorado is useful and the Plan is a good compendium of background information

We commend the drafters for creating a compendium of important historical and economic data on freight and passenger rail service in Colorado. This information provides an important basis for assessing future freight and passenger rail services and should be maintained and updated.

Some questions arise, for example, will the new/stricter mercury standard impact Colorado coal exports/shipments and transshipments?

Also, in the Railroad bios, it should be mentioned that BNSF Railway hosts the Amtrak Southwest Chief linking Denver with Kansas City, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles by thruway bus service; the Union Pacific hosts the Amtrak California Zephyr which connects Denver with Chicago, Omaha, Salt Lake, Reno and Oakland/San Francisco. **These small mentions are important for, as the Plan mentions later, the average Amtrak passenger does not travel the whole route but rather travels between 600 and 1,000 miles between cities along the routes.** This passenger behavior also explains why trains with 65% occupancy upon origination are considered full in order to accommodate passengers boarding along the route.

12. Chapter 5 Rail Issues and Opportunities

Tourism as an economic engine is lost in the shuffle. Consider rail based tourism as a major Colorado economic engine and rail opportunity for the future.

The Plan pays little attention to opportunities for tourism expansion through scenic rail lines, Amtrak, future passenger rail services, Amtrak Vacation packages and private rail car charters. For example, some of these opportunities are under evaluation by communities along the route of the Amtrak Southwest Chief and have attracted the attention of Amtrak Vacations, a contractor with Amtrak.

From Amtrak Vacations and managers at venues such as Bents Fort, we have learned that historic, cultural and nature tourism opportunities in southeast Colorado appear especially attractive to European and Asian markets. Colorado tourist and scenic lines are a particularly attractive anchor for this activity which will bolster economic development and job creation in this region. While this opportunity is in the development stage, Amtrak Vacations has shared an excursion package with ColoRail as a model for the kind of services that could be developed in Colorado.

This model is being used by the cities of La Junta and Trinidad in conjunction with venues such as Bents Fort, tourist lines in southern Colorado, and state and national natural resources. These communities are also looking into chartered private rail cars for the same types of excursions. Private car charters would require sidings with power and water at Amtrak crew change stations such as Denver, La Junta and Grand Junction.

Furthermore, these opportunities increase the value of Amtrak service to Colorado and the need to retain the Southwest Chief in the state. This issue is given only medium priority (page 6-19) while it is an urgent priority for the communities along the line. Resolutions to retain the Southwest Chief have already been passed by southeastern communities and counties as well as other entities.

This issue also ties in with another ColoRail recommendation from October, the acquisition of “Colorado” cars for service on Amtrak which could be used exclusively for Colorado tours and excursions. This recommendation is partially touched upon on page 6-19, Table 6-10 for the California Zephyr and dismissed as an Amtrak equipment issue. Seasonal demand on the Chief and Zephyr is elastic and the availability of additional seats and berths for Colorado customers and tourists should be investigated. States such as California and Illinois are developing a major equipment purchase over the next three years and the inclusion of cars for use on Colorado trains should be studied as a tourism issue in the near term. This approach might yield additional equipment financing options, as well.

To remedy these shortcomings, ColoRail recommends that the topic of tourism be developed as an important part of the Plan. Furthermore, ColoRail recommends that the priority for retaining the

Southwest Chief in Colorado be ranked as high, and that acquisition of exclusive “Colorado” passenger cars for use on Amtrak trains serving Colorado be investigated.

Page 5-1 The Plan should mention the issue of Amtrak constraints: aging cars/diners, too few cars and engines to meet demand.

Page 5-2, it would be helpful to discuss the sidings and passing track reference beyond the \$5 million per mile figure. How long do they need to be to facilitate better efficiency for freight and future passenger service? The information could be made more useful to the public.

Page 5-3 Rail Opportunities as above: add tourism and excursions

13. Chapter 6, Rail System Needs Assessment

At present, passenger rail interests have little power except through costly ballot measures where public opinion is subject to economic fluctuations in spite of inherent benefits of the mode of travel. The Plan will begin to bring passenger rail into focus as a well understood alternative meriting serious consideration in all transportation corridor planning. To accomplish this, the plan needs commit CDOT to legitimate planning and evaluation processes that will gain public trust.

Project Evaluation Process, page 6 – 6

This discussion should tie the proposed process back to Goal 4 (as revised) as one of the key findings of the Plan. While we commend the Department for developing ways to evaluate the performance of modes and services as set forth in Chapter 6, **we don’t see commitment to the process to drive CDOT decisions and investments set forth in Chapter 8, the Plan summary.** Such a process must provide the appropriate information and support for setting priorities, selecting transportation modes and allocating funding. Instead, the Plan simply emphasizes projects within the rail mode deemed to be sufficiently important enough to merit attention. **The planning process must show why selected projects are superior to other projects and alternative modes and therefore merit funding.**

Only a planning process that provides this evidence will lead to the kinds of changes necessary to improve Colorado’s overall transportation system and its passenger rail component. Only this kind planning process will provide the public with enough information to overcome entrenched interests and lobbies supporting existing high cost modes such as automobiles on ever widening highways.

Furthermore, only this kind of planning process will provide decision makers with the evidence and arguments to obtain funding for passenger rail improvements or, for that matter, select other modes. This evidence must include economic advantages such as avoided costs and retention of resources within Colorado rather than exporting them, for example, as fuel and insurance costs.

In our October comments, we referred to the analytical model developed by the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET) which takes into account major economic impacts of alternatives beyond traditional project costing and subjective ranking.

Proposed Passenger Service – Commuter Rail, Page 6 – 20 and Table 6-11. The way this table is introduced and discussed tends to balkanize the Front Range commuter rail situation in one of if not the most important transportation corridors. CDOT should reorder this discussion by tying it back to Goal 3

and introducing the more specific goal of Front Range commuter rail linking Fort Collins to Pueblo as a high priority for the state system in view of population and energy trends, I-25 congestion, economic development and land use issues. The Plan could then discuss how this might be staged over time as circumstances demand it starting with FasTracks completion and how the Interconnectivity Study will relate to planning and staging these future services. The plan should also describe the issues arising with the Northwest passenger corridor in FasTracks and how the State can help RTD resolve them.

Table 6 – 11 could then be titled as **Proposed Passenger Service – Staging Front Range Commuter Rail**.

Table 6-2, Item 10 Cost Effectiveness The use of traditional benefit/cost ratio and return on investment approaches must be applied carefully for passenger rail services for which external benefits such as land use impacts may not be accurately included in the analysis. This is why a sophisticated performance based evaluation process is so important. For example research has shown that metro regions with good passenger rail and transit systems and their citizens pay 20 % less on transportation. Research has also shown that a patron riding transit and rail services is the equivalent of 4 motorists because of the tendency for that patron to combine trips to carry out various errands as well as commute on the same trip.

Table 6-10, Item 3, page 6-19 Preserve the Southwest Chief route cost estimates: in estimates provided by the BNSF to Amtrak, there were two components, one year capital costs of \$94.4 million and annual maintenance costs of \$11.6 in 2010 dollars. These amounts accounted for repair of some 632 of the 686 miles, from Newton, KS to Lamy, NM, in order to bring the route up to passenger standards, presumably 79 mph, grades and curvature permitting. This would be an Amtrak expenditure presumably under a contract with the owner, BNSF Railway. Amtrak would probably need increased appropriations from Congress to make these repairs. **Given the high priority given to this line by cities and counties in Southeastern Colorado, this priority should be increased to high and the state should work to help secure federal funding.**

Table 6-10. Item 4 In its October, 2011, comments ColoRail recommended the acquisition of “Colorado” cars for Colorado tourism purposes on Amtrak’s trains. This recommendation was omitted in the Plan and not ranked. Item 4 only refers to upgrading cars on the California Zephyr and states it is a low priority and an “Amtrak issue”. It may be more important to acquire cars for southeastern Colorado tourist excursions which could emanate from both Chicago and Los Angeles and be marketed by Amtrak Vacations in the U.S. and overseas. It may be possible to work with other states along the route to such as New Mexico which also has dramatic rail based tourism potential. Demand for travel on Amtrak trains is virtually elastic in the summer and additional equipment might provide greater opportunities for local venues. In the off season, cars might be subleased to Amtrak for other routes.

14. Chapter 7 Public Funding Sources

This chapter is a helpful summary of funding approaches. The possibility of tourism related funding for some facility improvements, acquisition of equipment or other rail based tourism needs may be another source of future funding.

Mr. Mehdi Baziar, March 2, 2012

15. Chapter 8 Plan Summary

As mentioned before, this chapter should be strengthened from a simple summary discussion of rail plan recommendations to reflect the imperative that CDOT commit to the goals and objectives set forth in the plan including a serious planning and evaluation process for future transportation development in major transportation corridors. **The Plan's lack of a more specific vision for passenger rail and rail transit services and commitment to a mechanism to evaluate them in comparison with other modes and specify funding is a major flaw. Furthermore, the Plan should commit to integrating the revised goals and processes into the CDOT 2040 plan.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to the incorporation of these comments into the final Colorado Freight and Passenger Rail Plan.

Sincerely,

/s/
James M. Souby
President

Colorail Website References

<http://www.colorail.org/documents/issues/Colorail%20Comments%20State%20Rail%20Plan.pdf>

<http://www.colorail.org/documents/ADDITIONAL%20THOUGHTS%20ON%20THE%20STATE%20RAIL%20PLAN%20JANUARY%2017.pdf>

March 2, 2012

To: Mehdi Baziar, CDOT, Manager, Mobility Analysis Section

From: Diane Mitsch Bush, Routt County Commissioner and Chair of the 5 County Northwest Transportation Planning Region, STAC Representative for NWTTPR, Board and Executive committee, Club20; Former Board, Executive committee, and Feasibility Study Steering Committee of Rocky Mountain Rail authority



Subject: Comments on CDOT Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, due March 2, 2012 Plan Draft January, 2012

First I want to thank everyone who spent so much time and effort on this study, which appears to be comprehensive in most areas. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

I would like to comment on the area in which it is not comprehensive: high speed rail.

Glossary

1. Needs definition of various types of High Speed Rail. You must distinguish between lower speed “high speed rail” and true, over 220 MPH high speed rail. This is glossed over in the whole section on HSR in Ch. 6 and in Ch 8. The study needs to be revised to clarify the technical distinctions, and the actual findings and recommendations for implementation from RMRA Study. The reason they are important is because they affect service and thus cost/benefit and operating ratios. Having positive ratios is critical for any public private partnership to build and operate HSR in Colorado or anywhere in the US.

2. Need a more complete and technical definition of mag lev and mag lev systems. This is mention in the definition of AGS, but not clarified.

Chapter 8 and relevant appendices

1. page 8-7, the bulleted list should specifically add new developments at FRA, new Federal and State legislation, and technical breakthroughs
2. On 8-7 add a brief section on coordination with USDOT/FRA on High speed, especially on designation of Colorado as a high speed corridor. This is mentioned briefly elsewhere in chap 8, but should be highlighted here.
3. Also on page 8-7 add a brief section on CDOT coordination with the Western High Speed Rail Alliance. I know that DRCOG is coordinating with them, but CDOT should also coordinate our efforts

4. THIS IS KEY. The section on pages Appendix B-17 and 18 is inadequate and does not present an accurate picture of the RMRA Study. The data and discussion in Chapter 12 of the full RMRA study, especially pages 12-2 through 12-9 must be clearly summarized and be part of our current, 2012 State Rail Study. The essential importance of having BOTH I-25 and I-70 for ridership and efficiencies resulting in positive Benefit/Cost ratio (data show 1.49) and positive Operating ratio (data show 1.90) See also and be sure it is incorporate in the 2012 State wide Rail Study: section 12. 8 of RMRA Study: I-70 West Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

In particular, the second paragraph on page B-18 of this January 2012 SWFPRS give very short shrift to the detailed 4-phase RMRA development plan detailed in both the RMRA Executive Summary (ES). See pages 10-1 to 10-35 of the full RMRA Study document, or if you do not want to read that much, consult the ES at pages ES 19 through ES 22.

Nowhere does this draft of the 2012 CDOT Colorado Freight and Passenger Rail study detail the RMRA findings (see pages 9-24, all of chapter 10 and all of chapter 12 of the full RMRA study or pages ES16-22. the benefit cost ratios of 1.49 and the operating ratio of 1.49. these data are critical to an adequate assessment to our next steps.

I get the feeling that whoever wrote this section just glanced at bullets and did not read either the full 23 pages of the RMRA Executive Summary (ES), the pages of the full Study I cite above, or the whole study that taxpayers spent \$1.4 million dollars on with the full faith that it would actually be used to help guide our future.

Here are some links to help you and your staff read the pertinent sections:

Full Study entitled Rocky Mountain Rail Authority High Speed Rail Feasibility Study Business Plan, March 2010 with 12 full Chapters and 10 Technical Appendices (Very large files for each)

http://www.rockymountainrail.org/RMRA_Final_Report.html

Executive Summary

<http://www.rockymountainrail.org/documents/RMRAExecutiveSummary-FINAL.pdf>

Table of Contents

http://www.rockymountainrail.org/documents/RMRABP_Preface_TableofContents_03.2010.pdf

March 2nd, 2012

TO: Mehdi Baziar
Manager, Mobility Analysis Section
Colorado Department of Transportation

Comments on State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG)

CoPIRG would like to commend the Colorado Department of Transportation for its diligence in moving a State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan forward. We believe it is critical for Colorado to upgrade our transportation system to the 21st century and a critical component of that will be to invest in a comprehensive rail system that connects the state. This plan is a necessary step.

As a statewide, public interest, membership organization, we do not have the technical capacity to comment on the specific data that this document has collected and organized. This document is extremely thorough and we do not have any additional data that we advocate be added.

Our comments center around the context in which this plan exists and the overall support and excitement that exists for passenger train travel in Colorado.

Context – The people of Colorado are excited and eager to see a 21st century transportation system as we will demonstrate later in this letter. To the average Coloradan, it is not clear why we do not have a comprehensive rail system or what the steps are to create such a system. Therefore, it is hard to articulate how this plan moves us toward that vision. Our recommendation is to include a section that outlines the simple steps that need to be accomplished to go from our current situation to a comprehensive rail system up and operational. For example:

To move from our current rail system to a more comprehensive system, the following steps must occur:

- *Completion of State Freight and Rail Plan that meets FRA standards*
- *Inclusion of Rail Plan into CDOT State Transportation Plan*
- *Development of XXXX plan that meets XX standards*
- *Completion of federally required Environmental Impact Statements*
- *Acquisition of funding*
- *Awarding a contract*
- *Construction*
- *Operation*

This kind of a timeline can clarify where this particular plan fits into the long and important process

that leads to an actual passenger rail system. Not only will that address some confusion that we and others have experienced when asking the question “now where does THIS plan fit in the larger planning process?” it also can increase the likelihood that more people will want to comment on it because it clarifies the importance of this plan. More comments will not only improve the final product but also increase involvement which will help future efforts to make this plan a reality.

In addition to this outline, we recommend that this document include a map that helps summarize the summary in Chapter 8. In Chapter 8, there are a number of short-range and long-range investment programs that are recommended. Given that the entire document does an excellent job of providing maps, this would be an excellent place to have a map that visually demonstrates these program opportunities for the state. Given the context that this document is a plan, we have had many members ask to see the plan. A visual map would enhance the ability for people to understand the potential opportunities for both freight and passenger rail.

In addition to the map, we recommend that the end of Chapter 8 include a clearer description of how this plan will also be synthesized not just with the Statewide Transportation Plan, but with the other transit-oriented studies that are happening simultaneously such as the Interconnectivity Study, the I-70 planning and the regional bus work.

Overall Support for Passenger Rail – As a statewide membership organization, we felt it was important to outreach to our members to gauge the level of enthusiasm for a comprehensive passenger rail vision for Colorado. To make it easy for our members to comment, we asked if they supported the following general vision for Colorado rail:

1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo.
2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area.
3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains.
4. Rail options to the rural communities.

Below are the names of individuals and the cities they live in who demonstrated their support for this vision. A few wrote additional messages that we also included. We hope that demonstrates that Coloradans from across the state are excited to see a comprehensive rail vision and that this encourages CDOT to continue to work thoroughly but swiftly to make a 21st century rail system a reality in Colorado as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to working with you to make rail a reality in Colorado.

Sincerely,

Danny Katz
CoPIRG Director
303-573-7474 ex 303
danny@copirg.org

I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including:

First_Name	Last_Name	City	ZIP
Rebecca	Abbott	Bellvue	80512
Mallory	Abramson	Englewood	80110-1019
Paul	Adams	Denver	80206-3114
Timothy	Allard	Denver	80207-1050
Crissy	Anderson	Parker	80134-3623
M L	Anderson	Denver	80210-5527
Mark	Andre	Fort Collins	80521-1364
Janice	Arey	Denver	80220-2528
Cheryl	Armstrong	Pine	80470-9687
Scott	Barnett	Denver	80210
Rhoda	Barr	Breckenridge	80424-2509
Joel	Bartlett	Lafayette	80026-1427
Scott	Beavers	Boulder	80301-3849
Laura	Beer	Golden	80401-2132
Yashika	Berg	Boulder	80302-3847
Thomas	Bidell	Denver	80206-4132
Joseph	Blackwell	Denver	80211-1221
Glenn	Bodnar	Denver	80238-2542
Donna	Bonetti	Boulder	80303-8323
Kathryn	Bowers	Estes Park	80517-9471
Rylan	Bowers	Boulder	80301-1516
Catherine	Brantley	Boulder	80302-3603
Sara	Breindel	Denver	80206-3423
Wendy	Brown	Arvada	80004-2195
Rebecca	Browning	Boulder	80306-1026
Greg	Bruckbauer	Durango	81301-8637
Linda	Buch	Aurora	80012-1295
Bill	Burns	Boulder	80303-2932
Charles	Calisher	Red Feather Lakes	80545-8952
Paul	Callanan	Lafayette	80026-2343
Grant	Campbell	Laporte	80535-9731
Theodore	Cannon	Golden	80401-1657
Paul	Caouette	Denver	80212-2061
Julie	Carmen	Lakewood	80228-4114
Nick	Carney	Denver	80210-2501
Sue	Carroll	Denver	80203-3755
Doug	Cecere	Fort Collins	80528-7157
David	Chagala	Boulder	80301-5376

Spencer	Chase	Denver	80210-2417
Greg	Ching	Nederland	80466-0372
Kathleen	Cohan	Golden	80401-4863
Mark	Comerford	Westminster	80030-5633
Barbara	Comstock	Niwot	80503-8528
Lenora	Cooper	Boulder	80304-1555
Andrew	Cousin	Boulder	80302-5518
John	Craig	Englewood	80112-4607
Ara	Cruz	Denver	80211-5139
Ellen	Dale	Boulder	80302-6059
Willis	Dalldorf	Longmont	80504-2525
Rob	Danin	Manitou Springs	80829-1720
Dan	Daughtry	Wheat Ridge	80033-3037
Lori	Daughtry	Wheat Ridge	80033-3037
Angus	Day	Fort Collins	80521-2566
Megan	Devenport	Denver	80210-5136
Lois	Dewhurst	Arvada	80004-1751
Dan	Dial	Denver	80212-1628
Christopher	Duane	Boulder	80304-1806
Ellene	Duffy	Golden	80403-7764
Margaret	Dunham	Denver	80218-2983
Gail	Eamon	Colorado Springs	80919-2717
Elizabeth	Elvig	Louisville	80027-9408
Kathy	Emery	Boulder	80304-1806
Jane	Enterline	Boulder	80304-3720
Kathy	Epperson	Denver	80238-2513
Brian	Esau	Denver	80205-5330
Jodianne	Escalante	Denver	80224-2515
Amy	Essig	Longmont	80501-6937
Chris	Evans	Broomfield	80020-2025
Stacey	Farley	Aurora	80013-2741
Ellena	Fawns	Frederick	80504-5547
Robert	Felty	Arvada	80004-2242
James	Finster	Denver	80231-4138
Amy	Flakne	Denver	80211-2856
Cheryl	Fleetwood	Denver	80238-2451
Carol	Forman	Golden	80401-2137
Leroy	Frankel	Longmont	80501-6923
Matthew	Franzen	Aspen	81611-3125
Kevin	Frashure	Denver	80220-1109
Susan Marie	Frontczak	Boulder	80305-5531
Karen	Frye	Fraser	80442-0626
Andrew	Fullerton	Denver	80203-2015

Jimmy	Gantenbein	Loveland	80537-4847
Demitra	Garner	Mesa	81643
Albert	Gauna	Trinidad	81082-1916
Joscelyn	Gay	Denver	80220-2429
Brandon	Geer	Boulder	80303-2926
Caye	Geer	Durango	81301-9136
Alexandra	Gerrity	Boulder	80304-4112
Barbara	Glass	Colorado Springs	80906-5419
Amy	Glatt	Denver	80209-4108
Chris	Goodwin	Boulder	80301-1322
Mike	Gordon	Golden	80403-2151
Elizabeth	Gottlieb	Denver	80207-3260
Robin	Grabowski	Lyons	80540-0841
Jane	Graham	Fort Collins	80526-2091
Cheryl	Graves	Durango	81301-6010
Julia	Grice	Boulder	80303-1121
Elissa	Guralnick	Boulder	80302-7378
Bilge	Hacioglu	Boulder	80301-5490
Kristin	Hamman	Boulder	80305-5507
Jennie	Hammers	Nederland	80466-1202
Scott	Hammers	Nederland	80466-1202
Lisa	Hanckel	Boulder	80305-5220
Scott	Harmon	Longmont	80501-4820
John	Harris	Longmont	80504-8729
Kathryn	Hart	Grand Junction	81501-7409
Alexander	Higbie	Aspen	81612-1565
Forest	Hill	Lafayette	80026-3488
Justin	Hirsch	Steamboat Springs	80487
Pat	Hobbs	Boulder	80304-1055
Andi	Hollingsed	Denver	80204-1595
Holly	Horner	Denver	80211-4079
Kate	Horsley	Denver	80209-2112
Lynne	Hull	Fort Collins	80522-1239
Samantha	Hutchinson	Loveland	80537-5344
Brad	Jacobsen	Erie	80516-7534
Eric	Jarvis	Boulder	80305-5207
Mark	Jarvis	Denver	80238-3505
Christopher	Jenner	Denver	80205-2669
Mary	Jenson	Boulder	80303-3214
Lori	Johnson	Lakewood	80228-4200
Sarah	Johnson	Fort Collins	80526-7413
Michael	Jones	Boulder	80302-5915

Nanci	Kalamaya	Longmont	80501-5438
Tom	Kayen	Centennial	80122-3628
Farrah	Keanaaina	Aspen	81611-3425
William	Keating	Colorado Springs	80907-7202
Harlan	Kefalas	Fort Collins	80521-1938
Nancy	Kellogg	Boulder	80305-7182
Katya	Kennedy	Evergreen	80439-7006
Jan	Kerr	Denver	80209-4538
Cindi	Kestrel	Loveland	80538-9140
James	Kettering	Boulder	80306-4740
John	Kirk	Denver	80205-5521
David	Kjosness	Longmont	80504-2324
Daniel	Klein	Boulder	80303-4416
Adam	Kneipp	Denver	80209-2113
Richard	Kommrusch	Fort Collins	80528-6393
zach	Krapfl	Paonia	81428-1191
Carol	Kreck	Denver	80207-3724
Tim	Kuzniar	Highlands Ranch	80129-5770
Lee	L'Enfant	Denver	80220-6000
Karen	LORIMER	Boulder	80304-0873
Marlynn	LaGreca	Evergreen	80439-4837
Helen	Ladner	Colorado Springs	80903-2502
Sig	Langegger	Denver	80211-3619
Donna	Lawrence	Evergreen	80437-3516
Chris	LeHouillier	Fountain	80817-3538
Jim	Lederhos	Fort Collins	80521-1416
Johanna	Lezius	Greenwood Village	80111-3130
Georgia	Locker	Fort Collins	80525-1524
Michael	Logan	Carbondale	81623-1823
Leslie	Lomas	Boulder	80304-0912
First_Name	Last_Name	City	ZIP
Michelle	Lyon	Golden	80401-1019
Asnat	Macoosh	Boulder	80305-7027
Catherine	Marinelli	Denver	80238-2517
Reina	Martinez	Castle Rock	80104-5262
Larry	Mason	Fort Collins	80524-3834
Jeff	Mauck	Denver	80209-2322
Alan	McAllister	Boulder	80301-5428
Scott	McComas	Boulder	80302-5825
val	McCullough	Loveland	80538-2417
Dennis	McGilvray	Boulder	80302

Erin	McKee	Boulder	80303-2733
Eric	McPherson	Boulder	80306-0462
Kathryn A.	McWilliams	Colorado Springs	80909-1321
Michael	Melio	Westminster	80021-4553
Mary	Meyer	Fort Collins	80521-2618
Jola	Michalik	Lakewood	80226-4510
Judi	Miller	Nederland	80466-1117
Margaret	Mohr	Aspen	81611-1544
Denise	Moore	Louisville	80027
Joseph	Mosley	Boulder	80303-1149
Elizabeth	Mosser	Golden	80401-4250
Percy	Muetz	Bailey	80421-2387
Terri	Mungle	Denver	80212-1213
Amanda	Murray	Denver	80218-2329
Kristina	Murray	Boulder	80304-2841
William M.	Musser IV	Golden	80401-1423
Elsa	Nagy	Hesperus	81326-9403
Kathleen	Nelson	Denver	80220-5901
Theresa	Neuroth	Arvada	80003-4956
Molly	Noland	Penrose	81240-9756
Michael	Nolte	Denver	80211-2834
Devin	Nordson	Boulder	80301-1713
Laura	Nordson	Boulder	80301-1713
Blair	Norman	Boulder	80304-2155
Elmer	O'Brien	Boulder	80303-3829
Adriana	Olivas	Boulder	80303-2526
Joy	Om	Boulder	80301-1647
Peter	Papazian	Golden	80401-6149
Kate	Paradis	Boulder	80304-2334
Larry	Parker	Denver	80210-5930
Kathleen	Parrish	Evergreen	80439-7638
Lee	Patton	Denver	80209-4222
Sheryl	Pause	Fort Collins	80525-1414
Susan	Peirce	Lyons	80540-8450
V.E.	Perkins	Franktown	80116-9221
Suzanne	Polacek	Boulder	80303-1495
Joseph	Priestley	Boulder	80303-3530
Adam	Prusinowski	Northglenn	80233-3536
Aron	Ralston	Boulder	80304-4147
Alyssa	Reindel	Carbondale	81623-1558
Grant	Riley	Boulder	80302-4615
William	Rivers	Longmont	80503-6483
Adrienne	Roberts	Fort Collins	80524-3132

Greg	Rodekuhr	Lakewood	80226-4510
David	Rose	Boulder	80301-1609
Michael	Roseberry	Boulder	80304-1443
Mary	Ross	Aurora	80015-6624
Sharron	Ruesewald	Colorado Springs	80909-4538
Ken	Ryan	Aspen	81612-7350
Earl	Sampson	Boulder	80302-7209
Ashleigh	Sartor	Littleton	80123-1896
Peter	Schaefer	Denver	80209-4602
Marc & Carol	Schatz	Frisco	80443
James	Scoggins	Denver	80211-3650
Wolfgang	Seibold	Lafayette	80026-3157
Andrew	Selig	Denver	80220-1557
Lauren	Shepard	Boulder	80305-6030
Linda	Silverthorn	Boulder	80302-5495
Scott	Simkus	Louisville	80027-1054
judson	Skaife	Boulder	80302-5825
Diana	Smith	Denver	80220-2671
Philip	Smith	Boulder	80303-5125
Vince	Snowberger	Louisville	80027-9510
Kelly	Snyder	Manitou Springs	80829-2733
Kristal	Southcotte	Durango	81301-7684
Steven	St.Clair	Manitou Springs	80829-2437
Andrew	Stafford	Denver	80211-2791
Ardella	Stake	Denver	80224-1871
Guy	Stocking	Golden	80401-1081
Alec	Story	Boulder	80302-9426
Tim	Sullivan	Broomfield	80020-9031
Janice	Sutherland	Denver	80209-4536
Kim	Sweitzer	Gunnison	81230-4149
Sharon	Switzer	Boulder	80304-0417
David	Taenzer	Aurora	80014-1860
Kelly	Tannenbaum	Commerce City	80022-8850
Justin	Taroli	Denver	80237-2807
Damien	Thompson	Denver	80205-4713
Louana	Turner	Colorado Springs	80906-1028
Craig	Twaddell	Lafayette	80026-9364
Rachel	Uslan	Denver	80206-3127
Scott	VANDER WALL	Denver	80223-1818
Ron	Van Buskirk	Nederland	80466-0963
Jeremy	Van Hoy	Colorado Springs	80905-1325

Jason	Wagner	Denver	80211-1204
Erika	Walker	Denver	80238-2488
Lorti	Wallander	Woodland Park	80863-2314
Wayne	Wathen	Highlands Ranch	80130-5887
Susan	Watson	Steamboat Springs	80487-3122
Susan	Weinstein	Denver	80207-3442
Ginny	Weller	Bailey	80421-1262
Kathleen	Wellman	Boulder	80304-1611
Rena S.	Wells	Boulder	80301-1014
Randy	Will	Denver	80222-3528
Margaret	Williams	Fort Collins	80521-2308
Michael	Wise	Laporte	80535-1492
William B	Wood	Boulder	80302-8038
Eileen	Yelverton	Lyons	80540-0697
J.	Zabdyr	Lakewood	80226-3067
Ruth V	Zebarth	Breckenridge	80424-8925
Kevin	Zegan	Idaho Springs	80452-9740
Nancy	Zeilig	Denver	80222-3930
Maria	aragon	Boulder	80305
christine	bopardikar	Longmont	80503-9436
tara	calvin	Denver	80207-2725
clay	chase	Denver	80202-1685
carol	duster	Colorado Springs	80904-4725
sacha	logan	Carbondale	81623-0996
keith	roark	Denver	80220-1238
patrick	runions	Loveland	80538-1728
Joshua	schuler	Denver	80211-2829
Joshua	schuler	Denver	80211-2829
Fawne	wyatt	Lakewood	80215-6226
Christian	Holbrook	Fort Collins	80526-5930
Diane	Rehner	Fort Collins	80524-2940
Guy	Johnson	Woodland Park	80866-4306
Carol	Cantrell	Fort Collins	80521-2422
Amy	Williams	Bellvue	80512-6061
Amanda	Pease	Denver	80203-3057
James	Escalante	Denver	80224-2515
Robert	Helmer	Denver	80210-5158
Becky	Selig	Denver	80203-3164
David	Cantrell	Fort Collins	80521-2422
Benjamin	Walkup	Boulder	80303-2510

Chris	Lahiff	Denver	80204-5134
Victor	Pueblo	Steamboat Springs	80487-3103
Debby	Gersham	Morrison	80465-1567
Gary	Kuntz	Englewood	80110-3515
Patricia	Rustanius	Boulder	80302-9317
Jen	Ryan	Golden	80403-0103
Robert	McAllister	Denver	80210-4016

Patricia	Acks	Northglenn	80234-3085	Light rail -- it makes sense for the environment. It will relieve highway congestion. It is safe. It is the future. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Mekayla	Beaver	Denver	80220-5313	I strongly support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado. The past improvements in rail show how much Coloradans want these options and will use them. This is a critical step in ensuring long term viability of our state and I encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. A comprehensive rail system that connects the Front Range, including Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Longmont, Boulder, Metro Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo. 2. Better rail options along I-70 connecting DIA and Denver with the mountains. 3. More commuter rail options for the Denver suburbs in addition to completing the FasTracks system. 4. Regional rail options in rural areas like the Roaring Fork Valley, the Eastern Plains and Southwest Colorado.

Liz	Birthright	Denver	80220-1448	<p>While I am in favor of a solution to our growing traffic issues in the state of Colorado, I am not sure I can support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado. My primary concern is the amount of money it will cost the state and the taxpayers for initial construction, and also for the operation and maintenance costs for the future. I do not think it is wise to spend a lot of money to build a system which will have to operate at a loss, therefore further burdening taxpayers and residents of Colorado. Our state seems to be cutting expenses across multiple areas - mental health facilities, public schools, etc - so I find it hard to believe we have the additional money in the budget which would be necessary for the build and maintenance of such a large project. If, however, the financial plan for the construction, operation and maintenance of such a system is solidly in the black - meaning, the constructed rails will operate and at least break even without federal funding or increasing taxpayer burdens, then I would support the construction of the rail line. In that case, I would like to see</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 2. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 3. Rail options to the rural communities. <p>Again, I am only in favor of proceeding with a rail option if the financials show it will NOT be a taxpayer burden for state, local and federal taxpayers during the construction and for the foreseeable future while it is in operation. Times are tough, and to me this seems like more of a "luxury" than a necessity for Colorado residents.</p>
Elisabeth	Bowman	Boulder	80305-3408	<p>Since I was a kid growing up in Colorado, I could never figure out why we didn't have a rail system. After living in Europe and on the East Coast (without a car!), I feel even more strongly that Colorado needs a statewide passenger rail system. To protect the beautiful mountains we all love. That's why I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area, including and especially 36 between Boulder and Denver. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Eliza	Carney	Fort Collins	80521-1362	<p>No more 20th century responses to 21st century needs! Let's join the rest of the developed world and much of the developing world! I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.

Maralyn	Devlin	Denver	80212-1931	Rail transit is an important step in kicking oil to the curb and stopping deaths due to traffic accidents. It has been on hold while oil producers, tire manufacturers and auto/bus makers had a stranglehold on transportation. Now is the time to break loose. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Jim	Eskridge	Denver	80207-3207	We can no longer afford to be enslaved by our roads and the endless pollution they engender. More, we can no longer afford to be held hostage by oil interests, both foreign and domestic. For these reasons, I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. Yes, starting from scratch now will be daunting, but so was the massive change from rail to concrete in the middle of the last century both daunting and expensive. We found ways then; so can we now. Please take us back to our better future.
LIBERTY	GODSHALL	Crested Butte	81224	Thank you for reading this!. Colorado and railroads belong together. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Christina	Hildebrandt	Longmont	80501-6588	Why do we like traveling in Europe? Because they were foresighted enough to understand the importance of investing in rail infrastructure to shuttle people around with less pollution and traffic than cars. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Edwin	Jenkins	Carbondale	81623-1807	Please lead Colorado into a successful future. I fully support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: Rail, for passengers and freight, north south and east west across our great state. Let's make winter travel safe and enjoyable for our visitors and residents. hook I-70 to spurs to the ski areas. Thank you

Michele	Kayen	Centennial	80122-3628	ALL of THE OPTIONS below! I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. Michele Kayen 8219 S. Jackson St Centennial, CO 80122
Melissa	Lamberton	Denver	80220-6010	I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado because it will provide access to many parts of the state that are inaccessible to those who can't drive or find driving difficult for various reasons. A comprehensive rail system is long overdue in Colorado and implementation will also reduce air pollution, reduce Colorado's reliance on foreign oil and improve our economic competitiveness. And, as our population ages, lives will be saved if people can choose to visit cities along the front range and along the I-70 corridor by rail instead of getting into their car. I encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Joel	Nevison	Fort Collins	80521-1363	As the future needs for energy conservation come upon us we will need rail more than ever. Roads have been heavily supported for decades at the expense of alternate transportation options, please begin reversing this process and give all our citizens their due. Having traveled to places where public transportation is ubiquitous, I have experienced the benefits of systems so much better than we have in the US. We need better options here in Colorado. Thank you, Joel Nevison 2215 Sun Rose Way Fort Collins, CO 80521
Carl	Nicoletti	Boulder	80303-3956	We MUST get out of our cars. Our physical health and our nations security demand it. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.

Rory	Pierce	Wheat Ridge	80033-4961	[CAPS DENOTES PERSONAL MESSAGE] COLORADO SHOULD BE ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF ENERGY CONSERVATION AS WELL AS RENEWABLE ENERGY. LIGHT RAIL COVERS BOTH, WHILE GIVING US THE ADDED BENEFIT OF JOB CREATION. IT WILL ALSO GIVE US A STEP UP ON A BID FOR THE OLYMPICS, WHICH WILL RAISE AWARENESS FOR TOURISM, AND MAKE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT MUCH LOWER TO GET FANS - AS WELL AS ATHLETES TO THE SLOPES AND THE ICE CENTER IN COLORADO SPRINGS. THAT IS WHY I AGREE WITH EXPANDING LIGHT RAIL TRANSPORTATION. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
BARBARA	REYMAN	Denver	80207-3721	I drive from Denver to Colorado Springs every week. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Nora	Reznickova	Boulder	80303-4434	As a person who grew up in Europe and only used public transportation system I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. Sincerely Nora Reznickova,MD 124 Mineola Ct Boulder CO 80303
Jeff	Schatz	Boulder	80304-0930	I personally would regularly use rail options between Boulder and Denver, and between Boulder and mountain towns such as Silverthorne, Frisco, and Vail. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. Thank you for your consideration and for enabling cleaner, easier travel in Colorado!

Doug	Spencer	Evergreen	80439-7638	To Whom it May Concern: I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. This is an issue that has lingered for at least 20 years. Set up the taxing authority and get it done. The revenue over 50 years will more than recoup the up front costs. Sincerely, Douglas S. Spencer 6420 Bluebell Lane Evergreen, CO 80439
Richard	Teichler	Lafayette	80026-9387	Weekend traffic on I-70 between Denver and the ski areas is insane. We are in danger of strangling one of the most profitable and popular industries in the state. Either we take the bold move of putting in rail to Summit and Eagle counties, creating a modern system like Switzerland, or we kill the state's signature recreation. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
Stephanie	Thiel	Denver	80209-2128	Expanding the rail system in CO is desperately needed!! In the long run, investing in this now will help save our environment by having less cars on the road and save money by having less maintenance on railways. I encourage you to think about including these things in your plan: - More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. Commute traffic is ridiculous!!! We need less cars on I-25 and I-70. - More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains... Just look at the amount of traffic that travels to and from the ski resorts every single weekend. There would be potentially a lot of benefits to charging people for a "ski trip" rail pass!! - more rails built between the major cities- Ft. Collins/Denver/CO Springs
Eddie	Wilson	Longmont	80501-6732	I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado. I encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 2. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. Thank you.
Gretchen	Wilson	Durango	81301-5846	If we had developed a rail plan 30 years ago, imagine what life would be like. Think of Washington, D. C. without the Metro. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.

sharon	kansas	CANON CITY	81212	I THINK WE SHOULD BUILD WHAT THE REST OR THE WORLD IS GOING TO-HIGH SPEED RAIL. CHINA AND EUROPE HAVE THIS AND USES ALMOST NO GAS!! I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
sarah	michl	Boulder	80302-7127	Rail transport is far cheaper, cleaner, more reliable, and easier to expand than continued reliance on cars, trucks or even buses. I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities.
sharon k	wilson	Fort Collins	80524-3150	I strongly support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive including: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. 3. More rail options along I-70 that connects the Front Range to the mountains. 4. Rail options to the rural communities. I'm a Colorado native who has lived outside the state and traveled to other countries, and I find it suprising and rather embarrassing that we are so far behind in public transportation. It's time we catch up!
Laura	Lowan	Colorado Springs	80903-2615	I support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado! I encourage you to create a plan that includes: 1. Rail along I-25 from Fort Collins and Greeley through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo. 2. More commuter rail options within the Denver Metro Area. I would love to take the train from Col Springs to Denver to see plays, ballets, and museums. I would like to take the train from Col Springs to DIA for travel, particularly international travel. There are probably things I would do in Fort Collins, but I wouldn't even think of going there without a train. I would rather see Colorado support train travel than more roads.
Paul	hildebrandt	Longmont	80501-6597	I recently returned from the Nürnberg, where I was able to conduct extensive business for a week without ever using a car. The contrast between regions with mature transit systems and an area like Northern Colorado is remarkable. Bavaria has about the same population density as the Front Range, yet the overall quality of life is much higher. Example: I rode my bike to Denver one Sunday expecting to take a bus back, only to discover that schedule had been cancelled. It added 3.5 hours and 45 miles to my bike ride. That can have an impact on a 55-year old. Please do the right thing and invest in rail for Northern Colorado now. The longer we wait, the more expensive it gets, and the less likely any of us will harvest the promised improvement in quality of life.

Elizabeth	Wald	Boulder	80302-6005	It is high time that we have real mass transit options in Colorado that move away from complete dependence on autos and fossil fuels. I completely support a statewide passenger rail plan for Colorado and encourage you to ensure the plan is comprehensive
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PAN-AMERICAN

RAILWAY, INC.

PETER COOPER
1671 E. MILES AVE.
HAYDEN, IDAHO 83835
(208) 661-1675
PeterCooper@pan-americanrailway.com

March 2, 2012

Gentlemen,

The Pan-American Railway, Inc. (PANR) and its founder Peter Cooper have studied the draft Colorado Passenger & Freight Rail Plan. Mr. Cooper sees an opportunity to develop a passenger and freight rail network serving the Southwestern US. This network would be part of a national system he is working on.

He is ready to initiate a Public Private Partnership to develop either one or both of the projects illustrated in the following outlines.

The two projects illustrated are designed to complement each other, but could be developed independently.

The project's viability assumes the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway will go along with the idea of sharing and trading rights of way providing the project is funded with public funds.

In consideration of public matching funds, the PANR would operate passenger service without public matching support providing the state indemnifies the UP & BNSF of passenger liability.

The PANR is designing its business model to capture short haul and value added freight as trucks usually carry this market segment. In studying traffic counts and freight flow models we foresee enough business to make the project viable when combined with passenger service.

Peter Cooper
Pan-American Railway, Inc.

Central Colorado Rail Network:

Project Goals:

- Link Denver to Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Provo with regional short-haul freight and passenger service.
- Provide freight and passenger service to central Colorado.
- Provide competitive long distance freight and passenger from Las Angles to Chicago & Seattle to New Orleans.

Project Funding:

From a Public Private Partnership to design, build and operate said network. In consideration for federal and state capital funding, the PANR will operate passenger service without public operating support.

- 60% Federal
- 10% State
- 30% Private

Project Market:

Services offered:

- Overhead container freight
- Passenger service running between LA, Denver, Chicago and Seattle, Denver, Fort Worth.
- Local freight originating or terminating in central Colorado.
- Local passenger and excursion throughout central Colorado.
- Mail & parcel.
- Bulk freight.
- Roll on auto ferry.
- Switching.
- Transit oriented real estate development.
- Industrial real estate development.

System Layout:

See map: Southwestern US network:

System Specifications:

Transload Terminals:

- Flagstaff AZ
- Provo/Salt lake UT
- Albuquerque NM
- Santa Fe NM
- Pueblo CO
- Colorado Springs
- Walsenburg CO

Stations Served:

Western Subdivision:

- Flagstaff
- Cortez
- Telluride
- Ourley
- Monroe
- Grand Junction
- Vernal
- Roosevelt
- Duchesne
- Heber City
- Provo

Central Subdivision:

- Monroe
- Gunnison
- Nathop
- Woodland Park
- Colorado Springs

Eastern Subdivision:

- Albuquerque
- Santa Fe
- Espanola
- Antonito
- Alamosa
- Walsenburg

System Specifications:

The network is a combination of standard gauge and narrow gauge (3' 10").*

- Grand Junction to Provo - Standard gauge.
- Albuquerque to Walsenburg - Standard gauge
- Flagstaff to Grand Junction - Narrow gauge
- Monroe to Colorado Springs - Narrow gauge

Main line track miles: 721

*In the event that traffic builds to justify standard gauge, then we will re-gauge.

Project Cost:

The figure cited includes:

- Labor & materials for track
- Patented Right of Way
- Stations & yards
- Upgrades to partner short lines

Does not include:

- Reversionary Right of Way
- Litigation
- Permitting

Capital Cost: \$2,252,500,000

Operating Plan:

- Operate single stack unite container trains during evening and early morning.
- Give priority to express passenger and mail trains during peak hours.
- Local mixed trains carry originating & terminating freight, passengers, and auto ferry during off peak hours.
- Bulk commodity trains run on Provo to Grand Junction & Albuquerque to Walsenburg.

Peter Cooper
Pan-American Railway, Inc

Front Range Terminal Railroad (FTR):

Project Goals:

- Link Denver to Cheyenne: Amerillo with regional short haul freight and passenger service.
- Provide interchange, short haul shuttle, switching, and passenger service along the Front Range corridor.
- Combine current rail operations into one operating unit to facilitate marketing and train movements.
- Increase Front Range rail capacity.

Project Funding:

From a Public Private Partnership to design, build and operate said network. In consideration for federal and state capital funding, the PANR will operate passenger service without public operating support.

- 60% Federal
- 10% State
- 30% Private

Project Market:

Services offered:

- Overhead container freight
- Passenger service running between LA, Denver, Chicago and Seattle, Denver, Fort Worth.
- Local freight originating or terminating in central Colorado.
- Local passenger and excursion throughout central Colorado.
- Mail & parcel.
- Bulk freight.
- Roll on auto ferry.
- Switching.
- Transit oriented real estate development.
- Industrial real estate development.

System Layout:

See map: Front Range Terminal Railroad.

System Specifications:

Transload Terminals:

- Cheyenne WY
- Denver CO
- Colorado Springs CO
- Pueblo CO
- Amerillo TX

Stations Served:

Northern Subdivision: Denver – Cheyenne:

Customers located on the old Colorado Southern line, and adjacent connecting short lines.

Central Subdivision: Denver – Pueblo:

Customers located on the old Durango & Rio Grande line

Southern Subdivision: Pueblo to Amerillo:

Both old Colorado & Southern, and shared Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe lines.

System Specification:

The network is a combination of corridors:

- The old Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe is upgraded to a double track main line with a “K” interlock centerline owned and operated by BNSF and UP.
- The old Durango & Rio Grande line along with old Colorado & Southern lines owned and operated by FRT.

FRT owned track: 407 miles

Shared UP/BNSF owned track: 413 miles

FRT operated passenger line: 318 miles

Project Cost:

The figure cited includes:

- Labor & materials for track
- Patented Right of Way
- Stations & yards
- Upgrades to partner short lines

Does not include:

- Reversionary Right of Way
- Litigation
- Permitting

Capital Cost: \$5,882,750,000

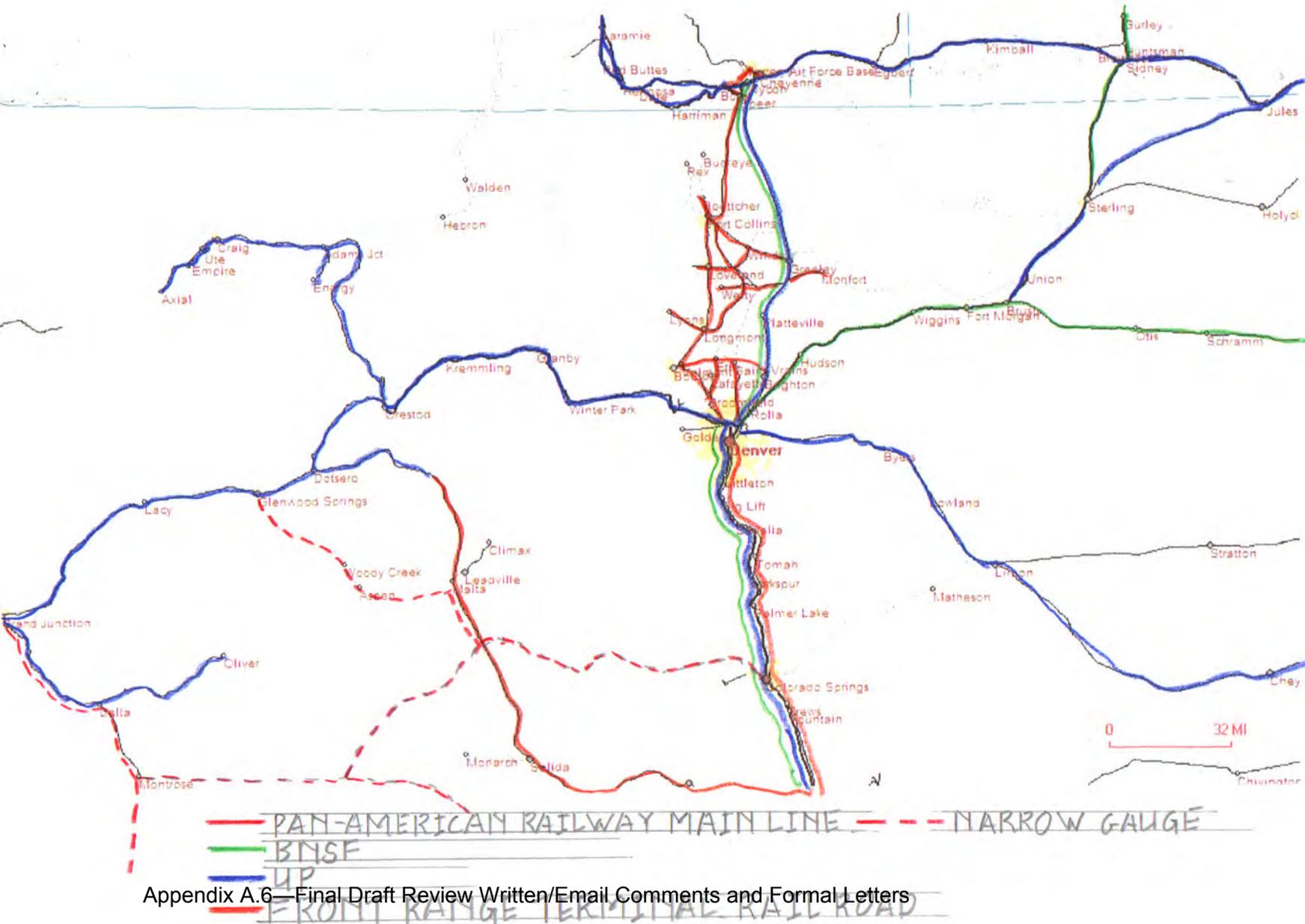
Operating Plan:

- UP & BNSF operate their traffic on their shared corridor.
- FRT operates interchange, switching, and shuttle traffic during off peak hours.
- Express passenger/mail trains have priority during peak hours.
- Mixed shuttle, passenger, and auto ferry trains operate during off peak hours.
- FRT to maintain temporal separation by the use of automatic De-rails to isolate the passenger trains from the freight.

Peter Cooper
Pan-American Railway, Inc

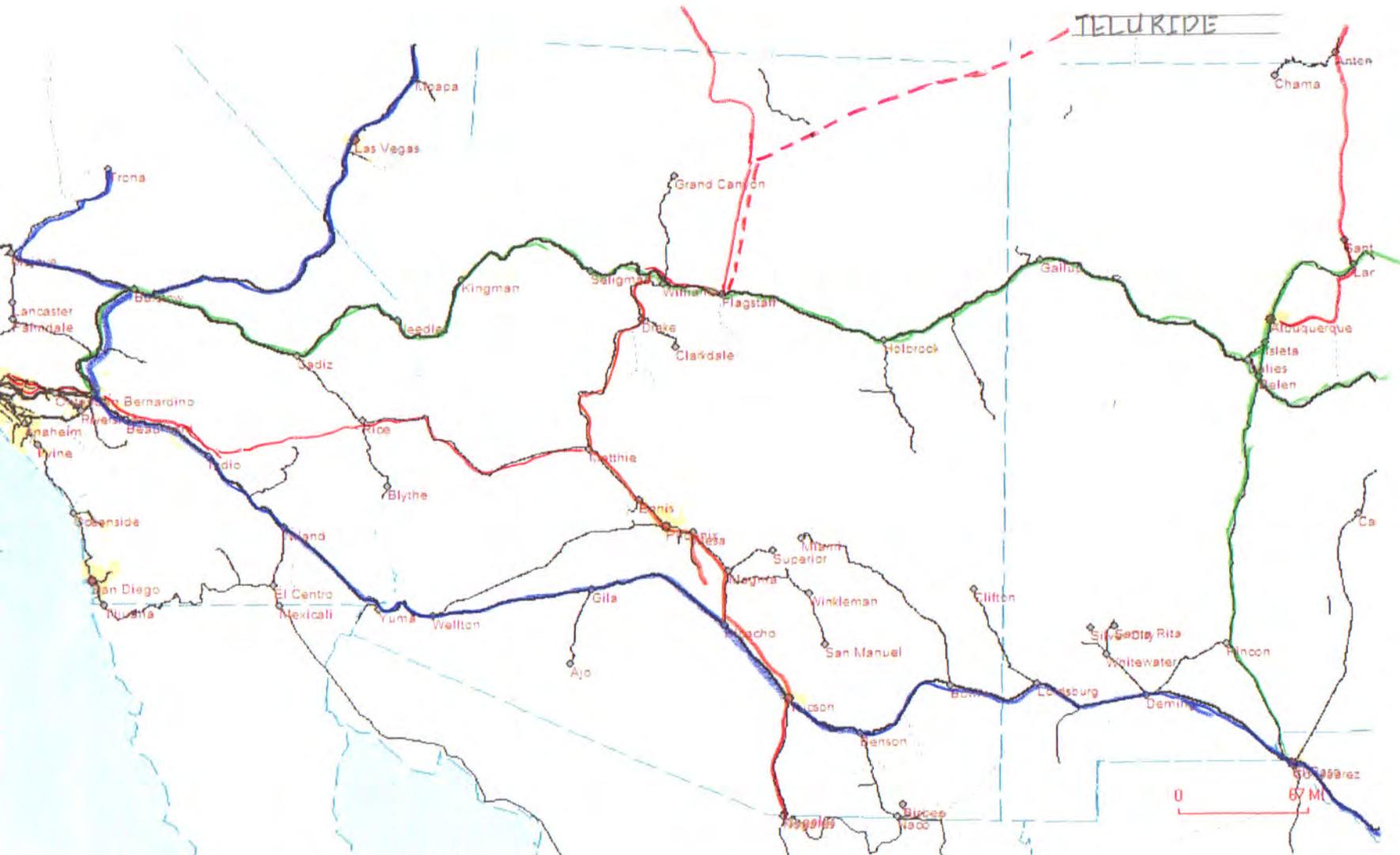
North American Railroad Map

CENTRAL COLORADO + NORTHERN FRONT RANGE SUBDIVISION



North American Railroad Map

SOUTHWESTERN US NETWORK



- PAN-AMERICAN MAIN LINE
- BNSF MAIN LINE
- UP MAIN LINE
- NARROW GAUGE

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Transit and Rail
4201 East Arkansas Avenue, Room 280
Denver, CO 80222
Phone: 303-757-9646
Fax: 303-757-9656



TO: Transit & Intermodal Committee

FROM: Mark Imhoff, Director, Division of Transit & Rail

DATE: March 9, 2012

RE: State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

The Draft State Freight & Passenger Rail Plan (Plan) was released for public comment on January 30, 2012; the full STAC and TRAC membership was included in the distribution. The deadline for comments was extended until March 2 upon request of stakeholders. In excess of 200 individuals and organizations provided comments on the Draft. Numerous requests for clarification on the Draft were made by Steering Committee members and members of the Stakeholder Group. The Plan has now been finalized, addressing the comments as appropriate; a summary of the comments and responses will be presented to the TRAC on March 9 and the STAC on March 16. A hard copy of the Executive Summary follows this memo, and the full document can be found at http://www.coloradodot.info/projects/PassengerFreightRailPlan/CFRP_Draft-State-Freight-and-Passenger-Rail-Plan/view

The Plan was the product of a 15-month effort led by CDOT's Division of Transit & Rail to qualify the state for future rail-related infrastructure funding as required by the 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA). This Plan is the first Rail Plan prepared by CDOT since the early 1980s.

CDOT and the consultant team were assisted by a 17-member Steering Committee and a Stakeholder Group that at the end of the planning effort consisted of nearly 400 individuals and organizations. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was also involved in the development of the Plan by actively participating in Steering Committee and other Project Team meetings. The following are the highlights of the comments received; a brief presentation will be made at the Transit & Intermodal Committee meeting (the Power Point presentation follows this memo):

- There were suggestions to revise/amend the Plan's Goals/Objectives and Recommendations. The Goals and Objectives listed in the Draft Plan were crafted by the Steering Committee and the Stakeholder Group over the course of several months; they have been posted on the project's website since approved by the Steering Committee in mid-September 2011. One additional Objective has been added to the Plan which emphasizes the importance of tourism as a major economic driver in the state. In addition, a Plan Recommendation has been added which embraces a performance based corridor evaluation process to include rail alternatives when appropriate.

- Some comments suggested that there should have been more “transit discussion” in the Plan. CDOT and the FRA are both interested in the connectivity of local transit systems with intercity passenger rail. CDOT will be conducting the Interregional Connectivity Study and the Advanced Guideway System Feasibility Study, and developing a State Transit Plan in the future that will have the stronger transit focus sought by some commenting on the Plan.
- A few respondents suggested the Plan should have identified methodologies for comparing and investing in one transportation mode versus another. That effort is expected to be done during the completion of CDOT’s Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan.
- It was suggested that County rail/highway grade crossing inventories be included in the Plan. Mention of the inventories will be made in the Plan, and reference made to the existing CDOT rail/highway grade crossing inventory program.
- There were some comments suggesting that a higher ‘prioritization’ (high, medium or low), should be applied to specific projects. The prioritization effort was conducted by members of the Steering Committee, Stakeholder Group, CDOT staff and Consultant Team members. This effort was intended to only provide a relative priority to proposed projects in the framework document. Much more detailed prioritization methodologies are proposed once funding sources for these projects are identified and obtained.
- There were suggestions that the Plan should have included detailed elements of previous studies such as the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority High Speed Rail Feasibility Study; the I-70 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; or, the Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study. While those studies and their findings are referenced in the Plan, the purpose of the Plan, as a framework defining effort, leaves details to future study efforts and the aforementioned discussion on funding sources.
- Numerous comments were received thanking CDOT for developing this framework railroad planning document and encouraging CDOT to work with its railroad-related stakeholders in building on this effort in the immediate future.

The next steps in the rail planning process after the Plan has been approved by the Commission and forwarded to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for final concurrence are as follows:

- Division of Transit & Rail (DTR) will initiate and complete the Interregional Connectivity Study and the Advanced Guideway Feasibility Study, and the next State Rail Plan will incorporate those findings.
- CDOT will monitor the activities of Denver Regional Council of Governments related to its involvement with the Western High Speed Rail Alliance.
- The Plan will become the basis for the railroad components of the CDOT Long Range Transportation Plan soon to begin development.
- DTR will work with the Commission and the Transit & Rail Advisory Committee to move forward the policy recommendations and initiatives stated in the Plan.

Thank you for your assistance throughout the development of this foundation document for rail planning in Colorado.