Front Range Passenger Rail: Tools for Providing Mobility in Rapid Growth Western Cities

Rail Passengers Association
Washington, DC
Today’s Agenda

(Times in Mountain)

1:00pm - Overview of Call Structure & Agenda

1:02pm - Introductory Remarks
    ColoRail President Jim Souby

1:05pm - Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Update
    Project Director Randy Grauberger

1:25pm - Moderated Q&A

1:40pm - Legislative Strategies to Address COVID-19’s Threats to Service
    Rail Passengers VP of Policy Sean Jeans-Gail

1:55pm - Call to Action on INVEST in America Act
    Rail Passengers President & CEO Jim Mathews

2:00pm - Tease of Next Month’s Webinar – We answer your questions about INVEST in America Act
Welcome

Jim Souby, President
Colorado Passenger Rail Association
Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Update

Randy Grauberger, Project Director
Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Role</th>
<th>Current Commissioner</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Rail Transportation Advocate</td>
<td>Salvatore Pace</td>
<td>Resident of Pueblo County</td>
<td>Appointment expires 7/1/2021</td>
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<td>Public Rail Transportation Advocate</td>
<td>Jim Souby</td>
<td>ColoRail</td>
<td>Appointment expires 7/1/2020</td>
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<td>Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative</td>
<td>Nathan Anderson</td>
<td>Union Pacific Railroad</td>
<td>Appointment expires 7/1/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative</td>
<td>Peter Rickershauser</td>
<td>BNSF Railway</td>
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<td>Resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, or Pueblo County</td>
<td>Richard Klein</td>
<td>City of La Junta</td>
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<td>North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) Representative</td>
<td>Becky Karasko</td>
<td>NFRMPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Representative</td>
<td>Jacob Riger</td>
<td>DRCOG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Representative</td>
<td>Jill Gaebler</td>
<td>Colorado Springs City Council</td>
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<td>Pueblo Area Council of Governments Representative</td>
<td>Terry Hart</td>
<td>Pueblo County</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Central Area Council of Governments Representative</td>
<td>Phil Rico</td>
<td>City of Trinidad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) Representative</td>
<td>Bill Van Meter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Representative</td>
<td>David Krutsinger</td>
<td>CDOT Division of Transit and Rail</td>
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<td>Amtrak Representative</td>
<td>Robert Eaton</td>
<td>Amtrak</td>
<td>Non-voting Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheyenne, Wyoming Representative</td>
<td>Dale Steenbergen</td>
<td>Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Non-voting Member</td>
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Commission’s Purposes (SB 17-153)

• Work to preserve Amtrak’s Southwest Chief service across southeast Colorado
  
  • Work with neighboring states of Kansas and New Mexico to upgrade rails, ties, signal systems and other rail infrastructure on BNSF’s Amtrak Southwest Chief route across the three states
  
  • Pursue possible Amtrak Southwest Chief service extension into Pueblo and possibly Colorado Springs from La Junta
  
  • Consider re-routing the Southwest Chief service between La Junta and Trinidad by way of Pueblo and Walsenburg to better serve southern Colorado
  
  • Facilitate the development of Front Range Passenger Rail service
Developing passenger rail that serves Front Range communities from Pueblo to Fort Collins is a critical component of Colorado’s future.

Front Range Passenger Rail will provide a safe, efficient and reliable transportation option for travel between major population centers along the Front Range and create a backbone for connecting and expanding rail and transit options in the state and the region.
Agency Coordination

Project team members have coordinated with federal agencies including Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and Federal Highway Administration.

Three meetings occurred on the following dates, as well as several coordinating phone calls:

- October 21st
- January 13th
- April 2nd
The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission, in partnership with CDOT and other partners noted below, successfully applied for a $225,000 CRISI grant from the USDOT for the “Southwest Chief Thru-Car Service to Colorado Springs Feasibility Study.”

Matching partners included:
- Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission: $159,000 (70.7%)
- CDOT: $50,000 (22.2%)
- Pueblo County, Colorado: $10,000 (4.4%)
- City of La Junta, Colorado: $5,000 (2.2%)
- Colorado Rail Passenger Association: $1,000 (0.5%)
Southwest Chief Thru-Car Service

Proposed Front Range Passenger Rail Corridor & Connections

- Proposed Front Range Rail Corridor
- Intercity/Interregional Bus
- Amtrak - California Zephyr
- Amtrak - Southwest Chief
- Potential SW Chief Connection to Pueblo/Colorado Springs

Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission
July 24th, 2019
The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission and partners will be submitting an application for a 2020 BUILD Grant.

The grant would provide an estimated $17 million in funding for new rail, ties, turnouts, bridge decks and at-grade crossing rehabilitation in the 2 states.

Matching partners include CDOT, Kansas DOT, Amtrak, BNSF Railway, SW Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission and the Colorado Passenger Rail Association as well as the following communities: La Junta, Trinidad, and Dodge City, KS. Additional local entities may pledge match prior to the May 18 submittal of the application.
Segment Stakeholder Coalitions (North, Central, South)
**Function:** Provide project information to and obtain feedback at the local level
**Members:** Regional and local stakeholders
**Responsibilities:** Share project information with segment communities; Gather community input and share with Corridor Stakeholder Coalition
**Meetings:** November 2019, January 2020, April 2020

Corridor Stakeholder Coalition
**Function:** Create stakeholder-based recommendations for cohesive, corridor-wide project decisions
**Members:** Segment Stakeholder Coalition representatives
**Meetings:** December 2019, May/June 2020, Early Fall 2020
Front Range Passenger Rail Process

We Are Here

STEP 1
PROJECT INITIATION & SCOPING
What do we want Front Range Passenger Rail to be?

STEP 2
LEVEL 1 EVALUATION
What are the possibilities for corridors and operations?

STEP 3
LEVEL 2 EVALUATION
How do alternatives compare?

STEP 4
ADVANCE TO NEPA
Federally required process to advance major infrastructure projects

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE
• Reviewed existing Studies of existing freight rail and highway rights-of-way (Corridors)
  o Freight Rail: Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway
  o Highway: I-25, supplemented by E-470 and corridors adjacent to rail (US 85)

• Engineering will not optimize alignments to improve speeds or minimize impacts until Level 2 Evaluations.
• Goal is to understand how the existing freight rail and highway horizontal and vertical geometry, physical location, and right-of-way availability could interact with or support an adjacent passenger rail system.
• Corridor travel times will be broadly estimated considering existing & future population
Proposed Service Improvements

**Front Range Corridor:** three round trips daily, Fort Collins—Boulder—Denver—Colorado Springs—Pueblo*  

* with intermediate stops

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**Proposed Grant Program Could Help Fund Front Range Service**

Amtrak is proposing creation of a Network Modernization Program (NMP) as part of our reauthorization to support rail network evolution and expansion, including efforts to plan, develop, construct, and operate intercity passenger rail service in high-potential short-distance corridors like the Front Range.

As envisioned, the program would make federal grant funds available to Amtrak to cover up to 100% of the capital costs and initial operating costs of new corridor service; states would then gradually assume a greater share of operating costs over a five-year transition period. After this five-year period, if the states want to continue service, long-term costs would be allocated in accordance with the existing Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) Sec. 209 methodology as currently used by many states throughout the nation.

**Existing Grants Continue**

Amtrak intends for the NMP to supplement existing grant opportunities (e.g., BUILD, SOGR, CRISI, INFRA, & REI), and not to replace them.
### Proposed Amtrak Service in Colorado

**Front Range Service**® serving **Fort Collins - Denver - Pueblo** and intermediate stations

<table>
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**N.B.—**This is a high-level, conceptual schedule and has not been fine-tuned to account for special circumstances. Details are provided for illustrative purposes.

[Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com) 1-800-USA-RAIL


Online MetroQuest Survey

- 6,965 total respondents over 71 days; July 22nd—September 30th, 2019.
- 95% of respondents believe that passenger rail service could help address transportation needs along the Front Range.
- 93% support establishing passenger rail between at least Fort Collins and Pueblo.
- 92% would be interested in using the service if it were available.

RBI/Magellan Survey

- 600 responses across the 13 Front Range counties - October 4th-8th
- 85% total support (10% total oppose) passenger rail service as a mode of transportation for residents and communities along the Front Range.
- 81% total support (12% total oppose) a Front Range Passenger Rail service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo.
- 61% total support (27% total oppose) a sales tax increase to fund a Front Range Passenger Rail Service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo with an estimated cost of $5 billion.
Randy Grauberger, Project Director
Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission
randall.grauberger@state.co.us
303-512-4005
Q&A

Rail Passengers Association
Legislative Strategies to Address COVID-19's Threat to Rail Service

Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Gov’t Affairs and Policy
Rail Passengers Association
COVID-19 Leads Amtrak to Announce Service Cuts

• In response to a systemwide drop in ridership—by as much as 95% during May 2020—Amtrak has announced the following service reductions will go into effect on October 1:
  • 32% fewer frequencies on the NEC;
  • 24% fewer frequencies on the State-Supported Corridors;
  • LDRs to three times per week.
• This is *contingent* on receiving an extra $1.475 billion from Congress in FY21
• Normal service to resume "as demand warrants, potentially by the summer of 2021."
INVEST in America Act (H.R. 2)  
Provides Meaningful Service Protections

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INVEST in America Act - Not Just About the Money

- Directs Amtrak to provide reliable national intercity passenger rail service now and in the future.
- Realigns the makeup of Amtrak’s board of directors to better reflect the interests of passengers and Amtrak-served states.
- Provides a means for Amtrak to enforce its statutory right of preference.
- Prohibits Amtrak from imposing mandatory arbitration on passengers.
- Requires Amtrak to establish an Office of Community Outreach

- Increases transparency of the costs Amtrak assigns to states for state-supported routes.
- Establishes a working group to improve onboard food and beverage services.
- Requires Amtrak to ensure that all long-distance passengers traveling overnight have access to hot meals (not just sleeping car passengers), and removes statutory language limiting Amtrak’s ability to provide F&B due to costs.
Uncertainty in Reauthorization Calendar

• FAST Act expires September 30, 2020... but no guarantee that a full reauthorization will be done by then.

• Full passage requires:
  • Senate rail title;
  • House financing bill;
  • Senate financing bill.
A Diversified Advocacy Portfolio

- Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) may be a better vehicle for language to protect services.
  - July 8th markup for House T-HUD;
  - Mid-July for Senate T-HUD.
- Future coronavirus relief legislation.
Take Action to Support Passenger Rail

Jim Mathews, President & CEO
Rail Passengers Association
Take Action!

• Call your Representative to voice your support of the rail title in INVEST in America Act (H.R. 2):
  • Votes scheduled for June 30th - July 2nd
  • Capitol Switchboard - (202) 224-3121

• Demand that additional funds for Amtrak in FY2021 be tied to keeping workers and running daily trains:
  • July 8th markup for House T-HUD
  • Mid-July for Senate T-HUD

• www.RailPassengers.org/Action
Thank You!

Next month’s webinar: The INVEST in America Act

Wednesday, July 22nd - 3pm eastern

Presentation by Rail Passengers’ Staff & Guest Speaker, where we will answer YOUR questions in a full session Q&A

Submit your questions at mbutler@narprail.org
Thank You!

Thank you for joining today's Rail Passengers advocacy webinar. We hope you've found the information helpful.

As the oldest and largest national organization serving as a voice for the more than 40 million rail passengers in the U.S., we strive to provide the tools you need to advocate for yourself and your community at the local, state, and federal levels.

As a small charitable organization, the Rail Passengers Association relies on the generosity of others and we hope you consider supporting us.

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