



# MEMORANDUM

**Project:** Front Range Passenger Rail Service Development Plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

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**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2020

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**Time:** 2:00pm - 4:00pm

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**Location:** Loveland Public Works: 2525 W 1st St, Loveland, CO 80537, USA

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**Subject:** North Segment Stakeholder Coalition: Meeting 2

## ATTENDEES

### SEGMENT COALITION MEETING PARTICIPANTS

- Bill Becker, Loveland Chamber of Commerce
- Tammy Herreid, SCMN/NATA
- Myron Hora, USP
- Paul Hornbeck, City of Windsor
- Mark Jackson, City of Loveland
- Will Jones, City of Greeley
- Phyllis Kane, ColoRail
- Will Karspeck, Town of Berthoud
- Rick Klein, City of La Junta
- Dean Klinger, City of Fort Collins
- Dave Klockeman, City of Loveland
- David Krutsinger, CDOT
- Jason Licon, Northern Colorado Regional Airport
- Suzette Mallette, NFRMPO
- Heather Paddock, CDOT
- Evan Pinkham, Weld County
- Karen Schneiders, CDOT
- James Usher, CDOT
- Colleen Whitlow, Town of Mead
- Kathi Wright, City of Loveland

### PROJECT TEAM

- Spencer Dodge, SWC & FRPR Commission
- Daniel Estes, CDR Associates
- Randy Grauberger, SWC & FRPR Commission
- Carla Perez, HDR
- Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates

- David Singer, CDOT
- Mae Thompson, HDR
- Jennifer Webster, Catalyst Public Affairs
- Mandy Whorton, Peak Consulting

## MEETING SUMMARY

The following summary is based on the presentation and discussions during the meeting. Attachments to this summary include the meeting agenda, sign-in sheet, questionnaire answers, communication packet, and presentation slides.

### WELCOME, PURPOSE, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Randy Grauberger, Project Director, Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail (SWC and FRPR) Commission, welcomed participants and recapped the first round of FRPR Segment Coalition meetings. He stated that input from stakeholders led to various updates, including to the vision statement. Jeffrey Range, Project Team, reviewed the meeting agenda, including a status update, evaluation process, a description of context related to FRPR, and an exercise for soliciting stakeholder feedback. Participants introduced themselves, stating their name and affiliation.

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following:

- How segment-specific perspectives (North, Central, and South) can be integrated. Jeffrey responded, stating that each segment will have unique viewpoints and issues that are viewed as most critical. Through stakeholder input, these individual views will be discussed in a corridor-wide context.
- The alignment options under consideration. Randy responded, stating that all alignment possibilities were still on the table, including going into Denver, and that these talks were crucial in helping to determine viable alignments.
- The importance of clearing congestion on I-25
- The importance of avoiding siloed discussions around alignments and integrating them with the other segments, especially the Central segment.

### PROJECT STATUS

Carla Perez, Consultant Project Manager, gave a refresher on the three critical areas of focus for the FRPR project: governance, stakeholder engagement, and project development. She reminded participants that while FRPR is different than previous rail studies in Colorado, it builds on those previous studies. She also stated that governance options were still in development and no official time frame had been set.

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following:

- The number of governance options under consideration. Carla responded stating that there had originally been four governance options discussed, but that a 'hybrid' option was also a possibility. She stated that more stakeholder engagement would be useful in the continuing governance development.

- Could other governance options be developed beyond those currently under consideration. Carla stated that too was a possibility.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

David Singer, Project Team, updated participants on the current status of the evaluation process. He read the current draft vision statement, which had been updated using participant input from the first round of segment coalition meetings. He stated that all system-wide, or corridor-wide, considerations would flow out from the vision. The four categories of evaluation criteria include operational characteristics (system specifics, travel time, technology), context (impact on communities, environmental considerations, economic benefits), financial and economic (what does it cost for both implementation and operation), and feasibility and implementation (phasing, working with existing systems).

## CONTEXT

Mandy Whorton, Project Team, gave an overview of the previous rail studies and how they informed FRPR. She described the corridor options, which include highway corridors, freight corridors, or Greenfield corridors (see slides for details). She described the opportunities and challenges of each of these options as well as specific issues pertaining to the North Segment.

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following:

- Whether the vision statement should include the phrasing 'I-25' or 'Front Range' as it relates to the area serviced by FRPR. Mandy responded that the reason for the use of 'I-25' in the vision statement was due to phrasing used in the legislation commissioning the FRPR study. Further, Mandy stated that the project was not necessarily designed to strictly serve the I-25 corridor and that 'Front Range' might be more apt.
- What is the purpose of FRPR; is it designed to be a commuter rail or an express rail; determining purpose will likely aid in determining alignments. David Singer responded, stating the legislative intent labelled FRPR as "inter-regional," meaning one large population center to another. However, commuter rail has also been shown to be effective in other studies, and the current stakeholder engagement processes are intended to help steer these decisions.
- Buildout of passenger rail should be incremental with FRPR serving as a "backbone" for a larger transit system.
- The value in learning from other transit organizations, such as RTD, in developing FRPR
- Is population growth and other similar variables being considered and, if so, in what ways? Mandy responded, stating that the ridership models include a range of variables and that the ridership model being used by CDOT currently is a statewide model, which is more sophisticated than those used in previous studies.
- Can governments use their easements for a separate track or ROW? Randy Grauberger responded that FRPR would not be buying time slots; rather, it would be acquiring ROW, potentially in the railroad ROW.

- How is the ridership model being developed? Mandy responded that there are many factors included, but much of it will come down to a mode shift calculation and travel time.
- Are property acquisitions anticipated? Randy responded by saying that yes, this was a possibility, but no alignments were determined at this time. Randy stated that a document describing how governments can use railroad company ROW will be added to the FRPR website (fronrangepassengerrail.com).

## EXERCISE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Jeffrey Range began an exercise by asking participants to look at three posters on the wall: a corridor-wide map, a North Segment map with segment-specific considerations, and a list of challenges and opportunities for the project. They were given a questionnaire asking them to consider challenges, opportunities, and solutions. Participants moved around the room, discussing their questions and responding to the questionnaire questions.

The following themes were discussed after the participants had time to reflect on the posters:

Challenges	Opportunities	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population change</li> <li>• Clearly defining the project</li> <li>• Costs (implementation and operation)</li> <li>• Culture (smaller communities not wanting to leave their cars for rail)</li> <li>• First and last mile considerations</li> <li>• Alignments</li> <li>• Financing</li> <li>• Location acquisition</li> <li>• Perceived inequity between groups of voters</li> <li>• Clear objectives</li> <li>• Northern businesses supporting a system that will transport labor to Denver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a rail backbone for the next century</li> <li>• Building and connecting communities who have previously not been connected</li> <li>• Reshaping travel in Colorado</li> <li>• Thinking long-term about the future for Colorado</li> <li>• Developing a system that will support Colorado socially, economically, and environmentally</li> <li>• Eventually having a rail system that also goes east and west</li> <li>• Serving the aging population and those with medical conditions</li> <li>• Cost effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquiring locations before prices rise and/or areas are developed</li> <li>• Interconnectivity of transit systems (i.e., using Bustang as a first and last mile solution)</li> <li>• Integrating into regional transportation network</li> <li>• Locating key locations for best alignments</li> <li>• Implementing 'skip-stop' technology to account for both multiple stops along a route and speed</li> </ul>

## QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS

The verbatim questionnaire answers have been typed for legibility and are attached to this summary (see Appendix A). The following themes were mentioned in the answers:

- Alignments
- Communication/outreach
- Equity/access
- Governance/politics
- Project development
- Costs
- Modal Interconnectivity
- Railroad ROW's
- Highway ROW's
- Coalition building
- Technology
- Economic Benefits
- Future modeling
- Engaging climate and other activist groups
- Engaging millennials

## NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS

Randy Grauberger thanked the group and reminded people to check the website ([frontrangepassengerrail.org](http://frontrangepassengerrail.org)) for project updates. Jeffrey Range encouraged participants to use the materials handed out at the meeting to communicate with their constituents. Carla Perez thanked the group for their time and sharing their expertise.

## ACTION ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Update the vision statement from including the phrasing 'I-25' to 'Front Range'
- Create a directory of project team members and what aspects of FRPR they are working on
- Add a document to the FRPR website describing how governments can use railroad company ROW

**APPENDIX A.**

**FRPR SEGMENT COALITION 2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS: NORTH SEGMENT**

*(Note: These answers have been typed for legibility from the hand-written questionnaires of stakeholders at the FRPR North Segment Coalition Meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Stakeholders names have been removed.)*

**Instructions: Please review the challenges and opportunities maps posted around the room for all segments and consider the following questions.**

- 1. Of the challenges and opportunities displayed on the graphics, are there any missing? Please list.**

**Stakeholder Responses:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should focus on inter-regional -- fewer stops, higher speeds, connects communities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFRMPO Non-motorized masterplan has rail corridor: BNSF trail – recreational promotion opportunity</li> <li>• Opportunity: if trail is also constructed</li> <li>• Challenge: increase in rail traffic (noise and traffic)</li> <li>• Highway corridor opportunity: I-25 backbone would benefit more communities</li> <li>• Challenge: need for new structures and parking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge - funding - being really prepared and having a really good plan that Colorado voters will be willing to pay for</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does new rail impact existing travel routes and corridors</li> <li>• Is there an opportunity to invest in DNSF/UP for access</li> <li>• Scope is too broad -- need to put more clarity on what is to be accomplished... perhaps this whole discussion is too aspirational</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can it compete with bus service (Bustang)</li> <li>• Currently can get to Union Station from Fort Collins in less than an hour. That could be hard to compete with, especially if the route is almost identical to existing route</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited ability to plan for the future in regard to population density. If we believe growth will be to the east, then build rail to the east.</li> <li>• Opportunity: private partnership in order fund project. Potentially having private sector operate the rail to reduce public risk</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic workforce impact: “shipping our workforce to Denver”</li> <li>• Potential population capture; and first and last mile capture</li> <li>• User cost elasticity: how much are people willing to pay?</li> <li>• Funding mechanism and competition for scarce transportation money</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost effectiveness of rail vs. other technologies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities - connection w/ other transportation systems</li> <li>• Challenges - first and last mile</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you don't know what you want, anything will get you there</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems like challenges and opportunities are comprehensive. Could the magnitude of some of the "challenges" be understated, i.e. could they be fatal flaws</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population centers today will be different than what it will be in 10, 20, 30, etc. years. How does the potential alignment support the long term population centers in Northern Colorado?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be incorporated in the lists below</li> </ul>

**2. Of these challenges and opportunities displayed on the graphics, please list the top 5 challenges to address and opportunities to capitalize on.**

**Stakeholder Responses:**

<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highway - away from population centers - drive to PnRs</li> <li>2. Rail use of ROW</li> <li>3. Truckage is not the same for passenger vs. freight</li> <li>4. Systemic solutions</li> </ol>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ballot measure</li> <li>2. Perceived inequity of transportation investments</li> </ol> <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce congestion on I-25</li> <li>2. Communicate environmental messages (fewer cars on road)</li> <li>3. Communicate re: human interactions and kindness</li> </ol>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highway corridors would require a park n' ride or way for riders to transfer</li> <li>2. Highway corridors are already constrained -- where would infrastructure go?</li> <li>3. How would the I-25 alignment consider grade crossings?</li> <li>4. What is the benefit/cost vs. bus rapid transit?</li> <li>5. Is there overlap with other plans/RTD/existing transit</li> </ol> <p>Opportunities</p>

1. Incorporate past studies that can provide the best alignment based on population demands
2. An executive summary of previous plans and how this is different/similar
3. Obtain data from more than just a high-level or I-25 perhaps more specificity on why people are traveling, i.e. work, fun, etc.

Challenges

1. Proximity of corridors to communities
2. Agreements with railroads
3. Horizontal geometry for high speeds
4. Rural corridors have less impact, but serve less people
5. Property Acquisition

Opportunities

1. Corridors align with population centers
2. Interest from railroads and Amtrak

Challenges

1. Urban sprawl
2. Speed
3. Cost - build/infrastructure and ticket price
4. Operations and maintenance (can't be RTD; needs to be reliable)
5. Last mile

Opportunities

1. Shift Bustang service to a larger grid to communities off I-25
2. Connect to other transit services mobility hubs
3. Plan for O+M and make sure pricing for conductors is appropriate
4. Get all transit systems on one system
5. Move North Metro Line to connect to SH7

Challenges

1. Need for grade separated crossing
2. Agreements with the railroads
3. Right of way constrained
4. Property acquisition
5. Proximity of corridors to communities

Opportunities

1. Interest from railroads and Amtrak
2. Fewer environmental and community impacts
3. Reduced ROW acquisition
4. Burnham Yard
5. Corridors align w/ population centers

Challenges

1. Proximity to rider population
2. Right of way complexity



3. Geometry challenges
4. Ability to work with freight lines
5. ROW/Property acquisition

Opportunities

1. Corridors align with population centers
2. Potential or reduced ROW acquisition
3. Quiet zones
4. Economic development

Challenges

1. Public support
2. Competition with other modes
3. Reduction in VMT by those stuck in driving their own car
4. Too many changes and turns -- pick an alignment!

Opportunities

1. Millennials and young people so focused on climate change and what they can do
2. Growth in Noco (Northern Colorado) will drive individuals into mass transit

Challenges

1. Right of way constrained
2. Rural corridors serve less people
3. Agreements w/railroads
4. "Selling" to voters

Opportunities

1. Corridors align w/ population centers
2. Interest from Amtrak and railroads
3. Create holistic NoCo (Northern Colorado) system of transit
4. Land use shift to more density TOD
5. Address climate change

Challenges

1. Northern Colorado in 2045 won't look the same as it does in 2020
2. 'Passenger Rail' is not clear in the minds of community residents
3. City form/transport choices not relatable to people
4. Speeds matter
5. Station spacing matters

Opportunities

1. Preserve/protect or enhance special community and natural features that create local identities
2. Talking about characteristics of trips ... types/purposes will help define what it is and is not
3. Provide example cities ... Dallas, LA, Toronto and their option-sets. People choose "more like" and "less like" comparisons
4. Speeds will narrow alignment options and station spacing

<p>5. Values of residents will determine what makes/defines appropriateness of station spacing and access/egress expectations</p>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rail - Agreements with railroad -- understated</li> <li>2. Highway -- ROW constrained = understated</li> </ol>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Current rural corridor serves less people but what about future</li> <li>2. Working with railroad</li> <li>3. ROW</li> <li>4. Direction travel for future population</li> </ol> <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If correct alignment is selected it could help w/future growth as rural becomes urban</li> </ol>
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial - funding sources and commitments and rider fare affordability</li> <li>2. Account (realistic) for cost increases between planning and building</li> <li>3. Opposition from public (esp. north) on funding another transit project when they still don't have the first transit projects they funded (and still are) 10+ years ago (i.e., FasTracks)</li> <li>4. People here LOVE their cars , that will always remain a challenge</li> <li>5. Aging population - likelihood of them utilizing the service</li> </ol> <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bringing transit to the North Front Range</li> <li>2. To connect ridership with other transit sources - bus and light/commuter train and HOV lanes</li> <li>3. Separate entity than RTD</li> <li>4. Work with local agencies and TMA's to help promote this project - they know the employers</li> <li>5. Younger generation - all about alternative modes of transportation, use this age group as advocates</li> </ol>

**3. Do you have any ideas how to solve these challenges and/or capitalize on these opportunities?**

**Stakeholder Responses:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenario testing with housing prices, fuel price, higher roadway congestion</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rail has so many benefits that need to be marketed when compared to vehicles; in other areas the two work really well together</li> <li>• I hope the commission “goes into the weeds” and investigates the ideal look, sound and feel of the train. A battery-electric train w/ a nostalgic look; and comfortability would go a long way in marketing</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental - Kilowatt per passenger mile is very high and is more environmentally friendly. Much better than driverless vehicle</li> <li>• Look at local government transit dollars post rail. Bus routes be altered for the better.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data drives decision making may not be effective in this politically charged discussion - seems like we are all trying to ensure our communities are going to be left out of future transit opportunities</li> <li>• Understand the goal/vision better - are we trying to achieve alternatives to I-25 single occupancy vehicles? Are we trying to improve commute times for those traveling to work? Provide an alternative for tourism visitors? Providing an alternative to getting to DEN</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to look at the transit network holistically for the future of the state in 2050/2075. If discussed as a spine, we need to articulate speed and then mode shift or how to get back to home or work “last mile”</li> <li>• I-25 corridor will be the best backbone due to geometry and speed only, if you run rail corridor you’ll never get speeds and it will rarely be used as interregional because time will be too long, unless you can address the speed issue</li> <li>• In Denver (central) need to offer a C-470 route and US/Burnham, not an either/or but both (SH7 mobility hub)</li> <li>• Bustang could be transfer instead of an I-25 backbone but the bus route to connect to city centers (Boulder, FC, Greeley, etc.)</li> <li>• Sell the benefits of rail over other modes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interface well with local transit systems</li> <li>• Develop public and private partnerships to help reduce cost to public</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use younger generation to help</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have the opportunity to really think about first mile/last mile services as part of the rail (“premium”) backbone. This can be modeled with the statewide model by varying the transit and auto access/egress options</li> <li>• Map of trunk-branch system... what can you reach in 45-60 minutes?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify fatal flaws as soon as possible</li> <li>• Iterate -- time of delivery/cost/fares w/ working through challenges</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local jurisdictions and local TMA’s to get the word out, use their connections they have with the employers</li> </ul>

**4. What additional information do you think is needed to help verify the effectiveness of your proposed solution?**

**Stakeholder Responses:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early fatal flaws</li> <li>• Who are you serving? For what purposes? Commuters need to make first and last mile connections</li> <li>• What makes the most sense in order of construction - spine first then connection or connection then spine</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding specialized cars. A pet car, or a car that just stores bikes would really help</li> <li>• Can commercial cars be added to reduce cost? What if Amazon could lease a car to transport inter-city packages?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a private sector partnership solution to this?</li> <li>• Determine demand and see if there are opportunities for other public investment in the last mile to connect or to enhance service offerings from more local transportation assets such as airports, regional public transit, transportation network providers such as Uber/Lyft (groom transportation)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think design details and cost will end up determining the best backbone/spine alignment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the cost of the rail system?</li> <li>• How is this going to be sold to the public?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear vision from each community of what their community will look like in 2045</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$\$\$</li> <li>• Fatal flaws</li> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• N. Segment special consideration</li> <li>• BRT - yes or future BRT in FC</li> </ul>