



MEMORANDUM

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

Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Time: 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Location: Denver Regional Council of Governments: 1001 17th St #700, Denver, CO 80202, USA

Subject: Central Segment Stakeholder Coalition: Meeting 2

ATTENDEES

SEGMENT COALITION MEETING PARTICIPANTS

- Chuck Attardo, CDOT
- Justin Begley, City and County of Denver
- Lee Cryer, RTD
- Steve Durian, Jefferson County
- Sarah Grant, City and County of Broomfield
- Phil Greenwald, Longmont
- Tim Hester, Denver International Airport
- Daniel Hutton, Denver South Economic Development Partnership
- Matt Jones, Boulder County
- Rick Klein, City of La Junta
- David Krutsinger, CDOT
- Lisa Nguyen, Denver International Airport
- Ron Papsdorf, Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Carson Priest, North Area Transportation Alliance
- Pete Rickershauser, BNSF Railway and SWC & FRPR Commission
- Jacob Riger, Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Steve Sherman, CDOT
- Jim Souby, ColoRail
- Kathleen Turley, City of Centennial

PROJECT TEAM

- Jonathan Bartsch, CDR Associates
- Spencer Dodge, SWC & FRPR Commission
- Daniel Estes, CDR Associates
- Randy Grauberger, SWC & FRPR Commission
- Carla Perez, HDR
- Sophie Shulman, CDOT
- 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 that took place 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. Jonathan Bartsch, Project Team, then reviewed the meeting agenda, which included a status update for moving toward the evaluation process, a deeper description of context related to FRPR, and an exercise for soliciting stakeholder feedback. Participants introduced themselves, stating their name and affiliation.

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 FRPR is different than previous rail studies in Colorado, but that those studies were being used to inform FRPR. She also stated that governance options were still in development, but no official timeframe had been set.

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following:

- The number of governance options being considered, and if more options could be developed. Carla responded, stating that the four original governance options were still being considered and that other options were possible. She stated that the Project Team is currently soliciting more stakeholder feedback to inform the governance development process.

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 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).

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following:

- The current status of alignments. David responded that alignments were still being considered, no options were off the table, and that input from stakeholders would be utilized to develop the best alternatives.
- Word choice in the vision statement of ‘I-25’ as opposed to ‘Front Range.’ Mandy Whorton, Project Team, responded, stating that this issue was raised in the North Segment meeting the previous day and that the wording stemmed from the original legislation; however, ‘I-25’ is meant to be broad and inclusive. She then asked the group if ‘I-25’ should be removed from the language, to which there was general agreement.

CONTEXT

Mandy Whorton 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 (see slides for details). She described the opportunities and challenges of each of these options as well as specific issues pertaining to the Central Segment.

Participants asked questions and made comments pertaining to the following, to which the Project Team are reviewing for further consideration:

- How RTD’s rail lines fit into the network. Mandy responded, stating RTD lines present an opportunity for interconnectivity, however they are not necessarily going to be part of the “backbone.” She noted that the FRPR project is attempting to enhance and support other transit services, not replace them.
- Some of the “challenges” listed could be condensed into one category
- ROW acquisition and community disruption are issues that could be clarified in the current messaging
- If the initial “opportunities” and “challenges” listed are not going to limit alternatives at this point, it might be too specific for input at this stage
- The map depicting population centers lists some jurisdictions, while leaving others off (e.g., Littleton and Aurora appear to have higher populations than central Denver)
- If constituents from certain areas don’t see their jurisdiction on the map, they might feel underrepresented. Randy Grauberger responded, stating one idea might be to instead use a broader term like “Denver Metro Area.”
- Consider the opportunity for FRPR to align with Denver Union Station because it is an existing hub

EXERCISE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Jonathan Bartsch began an exercise by asking participants to look at three posters on the wall: a corridor-wide map, a Central Segment map with segment-specific considerations, and a list of challenges and opportunities for the project. Participants were given a questionnaire asking them to consider challenges, opportunities, and solutions. They then moved around the room to discuss the questions and write down their answers.

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

Challenges	Opportunities	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative roadblocks • Questions of political will • Not making everyone happy • Not replicating RTD • Increasing capacity around possible expansion • Taking funding away from roadways • Missing population centers on highway corridors • ROW Acquisition • Public education around possible technologies • Cost-sharing mechanism • Money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/old/different ROW – not specific to rail corridors • Ability to expand rail service in order to deal with growth • Networking with existing systems • Acquisition of ROW and property before areas develop • Inter-operational opportunities, particularly for Central Segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using population density to justify routes (e.g., European model) • Using California's system as a model for interoperability • Build coalitions across the state

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

NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS

Jonathan Bartsch closed the meeting by discussing the messaging materials handouts and thanking participants. Randy Grauberger gave an update on the next round of meetings, reminded participants to use and promote the project website (frontrangepassengerrail.com), and thanked them for their time. Carla Perez thanked the group for participating and bringing their expertise to the table.

ACTION ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Consider an update of the vision statement from the phrasing 'I-25' to 'Front Range'
- Update the map to better represent population centers

APPENDIX A.**FRPR SEGMENT COALITION 2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS: CENTRAL SEGMENT**

(Note: These answers have been typed for legibility from the hand-written questionnaires of stakeholders at the FRPR Central Segment Coalition Meeting on January 22nd, 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:

- What alignment would most minimize the need for costly highway widening to CDOT? This might be a different definition of “congestion relief,” especially since voters are reticent to fund transport.
- Community – maximize impact to reduce single occupant vehicle trips impact
- Corridor opportunities pending alignment: 1) serve major employment center in Boulder connecting Northern CO and 2) serve major intermodal mobility hub at I-25/SH7 – railroad, bus, rapid transit services
- Challenges: Not making everyone happy (stopping everywhere)
- Highway corridors: RTD is already set up as HUB and Spoke
- Opportunities: Highway provide express trains on existing routes, e.g., SBL (RTD)
- Why isn't there a rep from E-47 in these discussions? Feels like a missed voice @ table
- Be cognizant of political implications of graphics and maps. Is there a way to demonstrate population densities in corridors?
- First mile/last mile existing and probable/possible (more than intermodal)
- Frequency of service
- Expansion of system/expandability (capacity, system)
- Corridor opportunities - appears only active main line rail times are considered. Why leave out at this point rail corridors, abandoned rail ROW, rails-to-trails as well as utility corridors
- Along highways, identify where ROW does exist
- Challenge: legislative roadblocks (specifically the 2020 leg.)
- Opportunity: rail offers a new mode opportunity; other ROW opportunity than trying to fit all mobility into publicly owned “street” ROW

- Overarching challenge, as discussed, is to link population nodes with destinations efficiently in terms of speed/convenience — that is what will sell public
- Perhaps this is implied w/ public support, but I believe potential support is important for any ballot item trying to avoid signature-gathering. I also think baked into public support is the mistrust of RTD from outlying areas (North, specifically)
- Add “economic benefit” as its own consideration under financial and economic section
- Tangling travel markets w/ limited capacity or costly expansion for growth as a ... opportunity costs
- Economic development opportunities or institutional

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:

Challenges

1. RTD reputation vis-a-vis NW Rail and N. Metro being incomplete
2. Speed matters
3. Funding and financing
4. Voter acceptance – both \$ and my needs now

Opportunities

1. RTD rail ... shared track infrastructure opportunities
2. A lot of density accepted in Denver... opportunity for tax increase financing
3. If rail is spine, each transit agency, locally provides “branches”

Challenges

1. Garnering public support due to RTD delayed delivery on N-line and NW Rail (B-Line)
2. Capital and ongoing operational cost - developing a viable financial plan that voters will support
3. Right of way/community impact

Opportunities

1. Major employment center access
2. Interaction w/ RTD services
3. Interoperability of shared stations for multiple operators and TOD investments along this Front Range “backbone”

Challenges

1. ROW
2. Operating costs/funding

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Agreements w/railroads 4. Crossings 5. Capital Costs <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population centers - alignments 2. Amtrak 3. Ways to complement RTD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DUS to Boulder link b. Express trains c. Connect outer ring of HUB + Spoke
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connectivity w/ major destinations 2. Time-of-day services <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting regional airports as destinations 2. Areas not served by major transit 3. Mode shit
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital Cost <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connection to DUS 2. Ridership increase on A-line to DEN 3. Additional mode choice for DEN -- all alignments
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low population and number of people served going around Denver 2. High capital cost of going I-25 through Denver <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High pop and number of people served by going through Denver 2. Low capital cost of going around Denver on E-40
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Costs 2. Revenue 3. Political Will vs. Tradeoffs 4. RTD (NW line?) 5. Accountability (governance) vs. Efficiency <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost effectiveness/sharing 2. Revenue augmentation (partnering w/transit; other services) 3. Political support 4. Capacity (now/future) (two way) 5. Land use... (Housing, TOD, etc.)

Challenges

1. Public education about what FRPR is
2. Lack of understanding of service capabilities (local and express service)
3. Perception of dealing with “the railroad”

Challenges

1. Missing population centers on highway corridors
2. Agreements w/RR on rail corridors
3. ROW needs
4. Accommodating more frequent rail in communities -- noise issues

Opportunities

1. Serving population via the rail corridors
2. Interest from railroads
3. Relationship/completion of RTD corridors/Fastracks
4. Fewer environmental impacts -- I think there are opportunities here for both RR and Hwy

Challenges

1. DEN alignment does not serve western suburbs well
2. DUS route ROW is expensive
3. DEN alignment serves DEN well but misses econ
4. Development for population centers downtown
5. Highway alignments remote from TODs and not walkable

Opportunities

1. DUS is central to regional -- a transit hub w/ an existing rail line to DEN
2. DUS is central to event locations
3. Population is expanding in NE and SE; ROW will become more expensive over time
4. Capitalize on DUS investment

Challenges

1. Cost/revenue
2. Operating speed
3. Interaction w/ heavy rail
4. Public support
5. Constructability

Opportunities

1. Ridership
2. Population served
3. Burnham Yard – must go to DUS
4. TOD! -- Partnerships!
5. Technology

Challenges

1. Public support (political support)
2. Cost effectiveness

<p>3. Community disruptions (anti-growth sentiment)</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connection of Major Population centers for employment 2. Connection for destinations (DIA) 3. Connections for bolstering of RTD ridership
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balancing cost vs. feasibility - what is the sweet spot? <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating a statewide transportation network
<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ROW/Property Acquisition <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are opportunities to partner with local governments (i.e., Douglas County)

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"> • If goal is 60-minute door-to-door, then time (speed) between destinations defines how far of a reach is left for collection/distribution at each end, i.e., 40 min “trunk” time leaves 10 min access @ origin and 10 min @ destination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to assist on delivery the promise of rail service along NW Corridor and/or N Line to I-25/SH7 serving communities of North Denver Metro • Leverage the FRPR backbone to serve multiple operators or service types: Interstate/regional/local services (example: coast starlight - Seattle to San Diego Pacific Surfliner - Central CA to San Diego Metrolink Commuter - LA/Orange County Coaster Commuter - San Diego County)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express lines not being redundant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privatization • Sponsorships w/ corporate business • Can we prototype this w/ another mode? (Bustang?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all materials include a nod toward future as well as current possibilities (maps, graphics, exclude markets) • Popular understanding and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the rail on existing RR corridors to serve the central population of population centers. Moving rail to high corridors encourages more sprawl

- ROW for alignments is less expensive for DEN alignments, so time to acquire is now
 - Large investment in DUS has already been made. Further utilizing this investment could make the FRPR more politically palatable for metro Denver voters
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- Link greatest nodes w/heavy
 - Show network connectivity
 - Illustrate 2040 dire need
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- To address public support for FRPR in the North Metro area, it will have to be billed as separate from RTD or as something that will finally make RTD deliver on their corridor promises. To capitalize on connection of employment centers, the FRPR must cater to local transit in a seamless way that allows for FLM
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- Clear goals of what proposed alignments and service is to accomplish that -- is digestible and resonates w/ public
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- Hard to solve ROW challenges in the rail alignments
 - There are local government partnership opportunities for alignments along I-25

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

Stakeholder Responses:

- Fast - fewer stations
 - Slow - many stations
 - Hybrid - skip stop = more tracks for passing + more O&M cost
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- Extensive public education/outreach and polling will be needed to understand viability of any proposal to the voters
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- Can you depict population densities or other uniform need?
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- Pop/employment/entertainment establishment data so these areas are best served w/direct rail service. Bus transit should supplement the final mile trip, but rail needs to serve the CENTERS
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- Potential ridership for different alignments
 - Polling data for popularity of routes among voters in Denver metro vs. voters to north or south metro area
 - Economic development impacts of different alignments
 - Some solutions will be viable along certain corridors and not others. High-speed would work better outside of downtown. Considerations of goals should narrow down alternatives -- access vs. speed, for instance

- Nodes and TOD potential
- Pie in the sky idea: bring it down I-25 to SH7/E-470, help RTD to bring the N Line to the same end of the line location and have it split off around E-470 to DIA and down to Castle Rock, where it meets up w/ the southernmost RTD station. This gives people away from the north or south the opportunity to come into DUS/Tech Center without disrupting the running time for through passengers or those only interested in getting to DIA.
- Work w/ local governments to refine alignments