



**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2011
1:00 - 4:00 PM
CDOT/HQ Auditorium**

Members Present	Yes	No	Members Present	Yes	No
Tom Allen	x		Matthew O'Neill	x	
Gary Beedy	x		Ann Rajewski	x	
Terri A. Binder	x		Peter J. Rickershauser		x
Craig Blewitt	x		James Souby		x
Richard Hartman		x	Michael E. Timlin		x
Todd Hollenbeck		x	Bill VanMeter	x	
Jonathan Hutchison		x	Stan Zemler		x
David Johnson		x			

Others Present

Alice de Stigter, Union Pacific Public Affairs
 Edie Bryant, Colorado Rail Passenger Association
 Steve Cook, Denver Regional Council of Governments
 David Menter, Mountain Metropolitan Transit
 Bob Felsburg, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
 Steven Marfitano, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig

CDOT Present

Division of Transit and Rail: Mark Imhoff,
 Wendy Wallach, Tom Mauser, Robin Foote,
 John Valero
 Division of Transportation Development:
 Kathleen Collins
 Office of Policy and Government Relations:
 Mickey Ferrell
 Region 4: Karen Schneiders

I. Call to order

Ann Rajewski called to order the regular meeting of the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) at 1:00 pm on November 10, 2011, in the CDOT/HQ Auditorium.

II. Agenda items

1. **Introductions:** Ann welcomed the members and guests and opened the meeting with introductions. Several members could not attend this month and their representatives were present.
2. **Monthly Updates:** Mark Imhoff announced the departure of Wendy Wallach, Rail and Special Projects Manager and wanted to wish her well. Her last day is November 30. Wendy's position will be announced on the CDOT website, as well as, CASTA, Institute of Transportation Engineers, American Planning Association, and the Women in Transportation websites with the expectation of getting a good pool of candidates. The vacancy announcement closes on December 5.

Edie Bryant, Colorado Rail Passenger Association (ColoRail) representative provided an overview of ColoRail, which is a volunteer, non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to preserving, developing and enhancing passenger rail and transit services in and through Colorado. Edie distributed the ColoRail Membership Form; the annual membership cost is \$15. All members receive a quarterly newsletter, e-mail notices of important events, and access to online discussion group.

Tom Allen mentioned the construction of a multimodal transportation center for the City of Trinidad, which is expected to begin in the summer or fall next year. The planned center, to be owned by the city but operated by the South Central Council of Governments (COG), will allow ingress and egress from the city by train and bus and to COG's local transportation system. The planned center currently has an estimated cost of \$860,138. COG has tentatively secured about \$872,500 for the center, a surplus of \$12,362 in funds. The one-story building, consisting of a waiting area, ticket booths and restrooms, is expected to have a total area of about 1,100 square feet. The current train station, used only for train passengers, consists of a small pre-fabricated building located by the railroad tracks by Commercial and Pine streets. The previous station was demolished in the summer of 2007 after spending years deteriorating on the north side of the tracks. JR's Travel Shoppe on West Main Street currently serves as the de facto bus station in Trinidad.

The new multimodal transportation center is estimated to carry a construction and construction management price tag of about \$375,000. Funding for the project comes from several sources, and toward the above amount, BNSF has committed to providing about \$20,000, and COG acquired a grant for \$150,000 from CDOT, as well as a Federal Transit Authority Livability Grant for \$152,500. COG is also looking to submit additional grant applications, in the form of another FASTER grant and a CDOT Enhancement Grant, to seek additional funding for the project. Tom wanted to acknowledge Jim Souby for his active involvement in southeast Colorado and securing the coalition's support for the multimodal transportation center. Jim is getting with representatives from La Junta, Lamar, and Trinidad with an effort to tie things together to keep the Southwest Chief going through.

Craig Blewitt announced the budget process was complete and on October 3, 2011, Mayor Steve Bach, City of Colorado Springs, released the 2012 budget for adoption.

- 3. *Federal/State Legislative Update:*** Mickey Ferrell provided an overview of the Transportation Reauthorization Proposal and the Highway Trust Fund. On July 7, 2011, committee leaders presented a six-year reauthorization proposal that streamlines and reforms federal programs, expedites the project approval process, maximizes leveraging of limited resources, provides flexibility for states, and ensures long-term stability for job-creating transportation programs. The proposal outlined in July authorizes funding levels that are supportable by the amount of revenue being deposited into the Highway Trust Fund.

In September 2011, the House and Senate approved a six-month extension of surface transportation funding and programs (H.R. 2887). This legislation extends current funding levels through March 31, 2012. This is the 8th extension since the 2009 expiration of the previously long-term law. The goal of the Committee continues to be completion of a critically important multi-year surface transportation reauthorization.

The foundation of the nation's system for funding highway and transit projects is the Highway Trust Fund. User fees — gas taxes — are deposited into the Trust Fund and distributed to states and transit agencies by formula. The promise of the Trust Fund is that these fees paid by the American people when they use the transportation system will be reinvested in projects that improve their highways, bridges, and transit systems, and not spent on other unrelated federal programs. The Trust Fund has been essential to the success of our national transportation system because it ensures a reliable source of infrastructure funding for the states and transit agencies that allows them to plan for larger multi-year projects and create long-term jobs. However, if

fiscal stability is not restored to the Highway Trust Fund, we risk losing it. In 2010, the Trust Fund brought in \$35 billion in revenue, but \$50 billion in spending was authorized. Over the past three years, Congress has had to transfer approximately \$35 billion from the General Fund into the Highway Trust Fund to keep it solvent. Continued spending at this unsustainable rate will ensure the Trust Fund goes broke in 2013. Neither Congress nor the Administration will support an increase in the gas tax. A multi-year bill that stabilizes the Highway Trust Fund is the responsible approach to investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure and providing the essential stability for states to plan major projects. The Transportation Reauthorization Bill Funding provides \$230 billion over six years from the Highway Trust Fund — consistent with the amount of revenue deposited into the Highway Trust Fund during that time frame.

Mickey provided a handout on the 2-Year Senate Authorization Bill—Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). MAP-21 reauthorizes the Federal-aid highway program at the Congressional Budget Office's baseline level—equal to current funding levels plus inflation—for two fiscal years. MAP-21 consolidates the number of Federal programs by two-thirds, from about 90 programs down to less than 30, to focus resources on key national goals and reduce duplicative programs. MAP-21 continues to provide the majority of Federal-aid highway funds to the states through core programs. However, the core highway programs have been reduced from seven to five, as follows:

New Core Programs

- Nation Highway Performance Program
 - Requires Asset Management Plans with Performance Metrics
- Transportation Mobility Program
 - Will have Performance Measures
- National Freight Network Program
 - Will have Performance Measures

Existing Core Programs

- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Under the National Freight Network Program, MAP-21 addresses the need to improve goods movement by consolidating existing programs into a new focused freight program that provides funds to the states by formula for projects to improve regional and national freight movements on highways, including freight intermodal connectors. The proposed funding for this program is \$26 million per year and states may obligate up to 10 percent (\$2.6 million) of funds for private or public freight rail projects.

Mickey concluded the presentation and announced he will be leaving CDOT on December 31.

4. ***FASTER FY 2013 Call for Projects Update:*** Tom Mauser provided a brief background on the FASTER funds marked for Transit; \$10 million for statewide projects and \$5 million for local projects. Of the Statewide funds, \$9 million is marked for projects and \$1 million will be held. Of the Local funds, all \$5 million is allocated for projects.

The FASTER transit applications are all in and have been checked for basic eligibility. There were 78 projects submitted requesting over \$36 million. Submissions reflect the varied needs of Colorado's transit agencies and local governments, from replacement and refurbishment of buses, to software purchases for dispatch and coordination activities, to maintenance facility rehabilitation. There were also several park-and-ride improvement projects submitted by CDOT Regions and some bike connection and car sharing projects. The Transit Section uploaded all of the applications and supporting documents (in .pdf format) to the DTR sharepoint site, and placed them into folders for each of the Regions for their review.

DTR will be convening an Interagency Review Panel to review and score statewide and interregional projects to be funded from Statewide funds. The six Regions will review and score local projects to be funded from Local funds. The statewide projects selection process should be completed before the Thanksgiving holiday. The Regions would complete their review and scoring in the subsequent four weeks and relay their recommendations and scores back to DTR by December 30, 2011, so that DTR can provide the recommended lists (Statewide and Local) to the Transportation Commission for January 2012 approval.

5. *Transit Asset Management Program:*

Tom Mauser provided an update on the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Pilot Program. In November 2010, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) solicited proposals from public transportation providers, state Departments of Transportation (DOT), and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)--individually or in partnership--to demonstrate effective TAM systems and "best practices", which can be replicated to improve transportation asset management at the nation's rail and bus public transportation agencies. Public sector applicants may partner with asset management system suppliers; however, the official proposer must be a public agency.

The TAM pilot program is intended to address several public transportation asset management challenges identified in previous research by FTA. The total available funding for the TAM pilot program is \$3 million. FTA will award cooperative agreements, up to \$1 million each, to successful proposers for pilot projects that will demonstrate certain aspects of TAM systems. Successful TAM pilot projects will promote the use of advanced tools and practices throughout the public transportation industry.

CDOT and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) submitted separate applications to FTA and were awarded \$1 million each. The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) did not receive a TAM grant but submitted an application to FTA for a state of good repair grant for a TAM system and was awarded.

6. *Veteran's Grant Application Submission:* Tom Mauser provided a brief background on FTA's new discretionary grant program, the Veteran's Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI). The program was a response to a national effort to incorporate veterans' programs, which traditionally have been very segregated and "siloes" from other human services programs, into existing transportation coordination efforts. In late July 2011, FTA invited states and local agencies to apply for funding to support this initiative.

In November 2011, CASTA, in collaboration with CDOT Public Affairs, announced the award of the discretionary grants that are aimed at improving transportation access for military families. Colorado will receive more than \$1.3 million in funding for projects that will help military families and wounded warriors receive local, affordable transportation services. The VTCLI is designed to help states and communities build or expand "one-click, one-call" centers that offer

comprehensive information on local transportation options, and other community services, with a phone call or click of the mouse. Since many military families live in areas where commutes are long and public transportation is limited, projects funded by the Veterans Initiative puts the information in one convenient location, providing better local coordination and improved services for veterans and nonveterans alike.

Colorado requested and received funding for four projects:

- Pikes Peak Area: Accessible Coordinated Transportation (ACT) will upgrade software for their joint dispatch and call center to improve outreach to the veterans' community (\$362,500)
- Western Slope: All Points Transit (APT), serving Montrose and Delta Counties, will upgrade software in its dispatch and call center to improve efficiency, thereby enhancing capabilities for scheduling rides for veterans' service providers (\$29,052).
- Western Slope: Northwestern Colorado Council of Governments, serving a multi-county region, will develop a one-call/one-click and regional billing center. The center will enhance veterans' transportation and provide a travel training program (\$321,600).
- Denver Area: Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) will create a one-call/one-click center with an information and assistance function built on an existing database. It will implement a coordinated reservations and scheduling system, beginning with several regional providers in a pilot phase, and will be scalable (\$613,580).

7. Intercity Bus Roles: Craig Blewitt provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the Front Range Express (FREX), which is operated by the City of Colorado Springs, Mountain Metropolitan Transit (METRO). METRO is the brand name of the services provided by the City of Colorado Springs' Transit Services Division, and also commonly used to refer to the division and its staff. The purpose of FREX is to provide safe, alternative flexible, affordable, weekday, peak-hour commuter bus transportation, at speeds competitive to the automobile, along I-25 between the state's two largest metropolitan areas: Denver and Colorado Springs. Under the proposed 2012 Operating Budget revenues received from the State is 1 percent; however, expenditures for FREX are 11 percent. METRO is responsible to fund FREX even though the services FREX provides benefits the Denver metropolitan area. The 5-Year Projection (2011-2015) multi-year budgeting expects FREX to be exhausted by 2015. This may require FREX to scale down services unless additional funds are received.

In 2002-2003, CDOT conducted a Front Range Commuter Bus Study to determine if service would be feasible and could even potentially be profitable between Colorado Springs, Castle Rock, and Denver. In 2004, the Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) grants were received from the Federal Highway Administration. The grants were in partnership with CDOT and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments. In 2007, CDOT provided \$6.3 million in Senate Bill 1 Funding to purchase 19 new over-the-road coach buses. The matching funds were provided by Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA). The initial operations beyond CMAQ were funded by PPRTA, Monument, Castle Rock, and Rider Fares. In 2007, 2008, and 2009, fares were raised; the farebox recovery grew to nearly 50 percent. In 2008 ridership peaked; this can be attributed to the increase in gasoline prices to \$4.00 per gallon. A total of 180,000 trips were provided in 2008.

Issues and challenges for FREX are providing a service outside of the agency funding and service area. There is misalignment between those who benefit and those who pays. In 2009-2010 local funding was cut in half and Castle Rock opted out. CDOT and METRO staff collaborated to sell nine buses to provide \$1 million for 2010 operations. Ownership of the remaining 10 buses was transferred to CDOT. FREX ridership is rebounding; 100,000+ trips are anticipated in 2011. This is more than 25 percent over 2010. The 2012 proposed budget is to sustain all 2011 METRO services, including FREX.

The group discussed the operating challenges of FREX and FLEX, which runs from Loveland to Fort Collins. DTR is struggling on how to keep both services for the state.

8. *Establishing Performance Measures:* Bob Felsburg conducted a short discussion reviewing the results of the Performance Measures exercise that was completed during the October TRAC meeting. The discussion gave TRAC an opportunity to review the draft version of the Vision Values, which allowed the consultant team an opportunity to clarify three unresolved topics.

- An additional value had been proposed: Develop passenger rail in or near major interstate corridors.
- Should expansion be included in a category, maybe as part of System Preservation?
- Should customer satisfaction be included as a value?

The group also discussed and reviewed the modified version of the Categories and Values for Accessibility, Mobility, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Environmental and Resource Conservation, Safety, Operational Efficiency, and System Preservation and Expansion.

9. *Wrap up:* Ann mentioned Bob Felsburg will return in December and continue the Performance Measures discussion. Other topics for discussion will be the 2013 FASTER Projects review and selection process .

III. Adjournment

Ann adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Robin Foote

Minutes approved by: Tom Mauser