



**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2012
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 Van Meter		X
Jonathan Hutchison		X	Stan Zemler		X
David Johnson (phone)	X		Jacob Riger	X	

Others Present

Alice de Stigter UP Public Affairs
 Bob Felsburg, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
 Steven Marfitano, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
 Lee Cryer, RTD
 Scott Weeks, David Evans
 Cliff Davidson, North Front Range MPO
 Randy Grauberger, PB

CDOT Present

Division of Transit and Rail: Mark Imhoff,
 Tom Mauser, David Krutsinger
 John Valerio, Julia Spiker
 Division of Transportation Development: Debra
 Perkins-Smith, Mehdi Baziar, Jason Wallis,
 Tracey MacDonald, Sandi Kohrs

I. Call to order

Ann Rajewski called to order the regular meeting of the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) at 1:10 pm on May 11, 2012, in the CDOT/HQ Auditorium.

II. Agenda items

1. *Introductions*

Everyone at TRAC introduced themselves.

2. *Monthly Updates*

TRAC Membership Update. Tom Allen has taken a position in another part of the state and can no longer represent South Central COG on the TRAC. In general, the TRAC has seen changes in membership most from normal turnover such as changes of jobs, retirements, and the like. TRAC members generally serve 2-year terms and there are currently no term limits. The original TRAC members were appointed in 2011, with either a two- or three-year term, so that half the TRAC would be up for re-appointment or replacement every other year. The first round of two-year terms is coming up in De-

ember 2012. CDOT staff sought recommendations about the process during the meeting and proposed to replace I-70 representative. Terri Binder commented that it would be better to re-appoint incumbent members who are interested and performing in their roles well, due to the learning curve. She stated it takes approximately 1.5 years to get up to speed on TRAC information. If half of TRAC were theoretically to be replaced with new members each year, a lot more training would be required. Another TRAC member suggested that it is important to have representation from both UPRR and BNSF, as well as a representative of the short line railroads, or three total railroad seats. There are two currently. CDOT staff will keep TRAC members posted on replacements.

Mountain Metro Transit. Craig Blewitt provided updates on Mountain Metro Transit (MMT). Over the last five months MMT staff members have met almost weekly with mayoral appointees regarding ways to make MMT more efficient, looking at strategies including new revenue, more riders, coordination with elderly & disabled services, and using more small buses. Recommendations are on the website. MMT also completed a Governance study, looking at the level of service desired, then designing the governance structure and funding to support it. The governance study looked at a variety of possibilities including shifting MMT governance from the City to PPRTA, and pursuing other funding sources (i.e.: lodging tax, property tax, vehicle registration). Based on both efforts, MMT is looking to get business endorsements that MMT is doing as much as it can with the current budget it has.

Passenger Rail Service: Jim Souby noted the National Train Day Golden Spike Commemoration, will be held May 10. SJR25 passed in the Colorado legislature, urging Amtrak to preserve the Southwest Chief service. It is resolution without money tied to it.

DRCOG Activities / FasTracks Review: Jacob Riger provided an update on DRCOG's Senate Bill 208 review of the FasTracks program. RTD has decided not to go to the ballot in November 2012. Without new corridor options being accepted, such as the controversial hybrid alternative on the Northwest corridor, the FasTracks program remains the same as was passed in 2004. No formal amendment to the plan is currently expected. Without a tax increase or other additional revenue the current estimate is that the FasTracks program would be completed in 2044. On a related note, the I-225 extension had its ground-breaking ceremony this morning.

DRCOG is starting its major update of the Metrovision, moving from a 2035 to 2040 planning horizon. The Metrovision update is a 2 year process. An open house/kickoff will be held at History Colorado.

DRMAC regional call center is hiring a consultant. DRMAC is trying to decide if the consultant role will be limited to scheduling, or whether it will be a full one-call, one-click system. In the interim, DRMAC's call center will continue to be a point of contact. Greyhound submitted a support letter for the DRMAC effort. Integrated ticketing is a common interest.

Miscellaneous Updates:

MAP-21, the SAFETEA-LU successor is at a conference committee in the US Congress.

Union Pacific announced \$3.6 billion in investments across 23 states in 2012. Forty-six state DOT's will be making investments in rail transportation in 2012.

Max BRT will be having its groundbreaking in Ft. Collins on May 24th. The City of Fort Collins owns the right-of-way, with an easement to BNSF Railway. This allowed the City to negotiate a space for BRT, moving and upgrading the freight trackway in the process.

RFTA broke ground for its VelociRFTA BRT project on April 14. RFTA has decided on CNG buses.

3. Policy Discussion- Breakout Groups

TRAC split into two groups to assess policies by answering questions on intention, wording, effects on CDOT business practices, missing elements, etc. Those breakout discussions will be summarized separately.

4. AGS/ICS Update & TRAC Role – Presentation

The Advanced Guideway System Feasibility Study (AGS) was introduced. The main goals of the project are to identify technologies that can meet the system performance & operational criteria, as well as gaining consensus on questions of feasibility, cost, ridership, land use & governance. With the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) as a precursor study, this study is non-tradition in its focus on outreach to and involvement of industry. “Industry” includes: vehicle/technology vendors, Researchers, P3 developers, State/Federal rail organizations, and high-speed rail/maglev industry groups to help determine what technologies could operate efficiently in the Colorado Mountains. An industry webinar is planned later in the month (late June) to introduce the project to industry, and to solicit their input on the overall process of defining and determining feasibility.

The Interregional Connectivity Study was then introduced and described. A more traditional planning approach, the ICS will suggest a method for integrating a possible high-speed intercity passenger rail system (HSIPR) into the statewide multi-modal network. To succeed, the ICS project would need to provide cost-effective recommendations for high speed rail alignments, technologies and station locations in the Denver metro area that will maximize ridership between HSIPR and RTD. To answer those types of questions, the ICS will proceed through several steps of evaluation and screening, supported and approved by a stakeholder Project Leadership Team (PLT) and the public. The PLT is expected to be comprised of representatives from cities, counties, MPO’s, transit agencies, and other special districts. TRAC member discussion suggested the following TRAC members should be invited to be on the PLT: Michael Timlin (Greyhound), Pete Rickershauser (RR/Omnitrac), Jim Souby (Colorado Rail), Jacob Riger with DRCOG, and/or Craig Blewitt with Mountain Metro. It was also suggested that some of these TRAC members nominate others in their organization to provide a non-TRAC perspective back to TRAC members.

5. BREAK

6. FREX Update

Craig Blewitt, Mountain Metropolitan Transit, provided an update on the City’s recent discussions concerning FREX. In general the City has had a goal to maintain a 17% fund reserve, which is equal to two-months of FREX operation.

With the election of a new mayor and the change to a “strong mayor” form of government, the Mayor has formed a Transit Solutions Team (TST) to look at transit operations throughout the City. In 2011, the commuter-oriented Ute Pass Express between Woodland Park and Colorado Springs was discontinued. In addition, evening hours of service for local Colorado Springs buses were curtailed. After considering those 2011 actions and other information the TST made the following recommendations:

- 1) Make elderly & disabled/specialized transportation a competitive bid
- 2) Pursue a coordinated call center system
- 3) Use smaller buses on some routes: 20% of fleet using a 30-foot bus
- 4) Increase fares on paratransit services from \$3 to \$3.50
- 5) Implement smart cards and introduce a day pass
- 6) Eliminate the “no-advertising zone” rule for bus benches, bus stops, etc.
- 7) Discontinue local funding for FREX

In 2012, three-fourths of FREX was funded by local funding with one-quarter from CDOT. As the TST reviewed transit investments overall, the TST finding was that the FREX cost benefit didn't meet expectations considering local needs:

- 2009 the City cut 40% of Mountain Metro Transit service overall,
- Two-thirds of local routes are on 60 min frequency,
- One third of local routes are on 30 min frequency,
- Local services are serving a 92% transit dependent population

The City, through the TST review process, has chosen to serve the local transit dependent population rather than choice riders largely travelling to employment outside the region. On May 22nd the City Council is scheduled to vote. Public meetings next week will be reported to Council on the 22nd. If no action taken by mid-June, then Mountain Metropolitan Transit can't meet the termination timeline. The timing required for the 6-week shutdown process would mean terminating FREX at the end of August.

Before the recession, FREX was sustainable. Since the recession, however, fares and local funding of the MMT system are both down. Local service has become the priority. Colorado Springs is the largest city in the nation that does not have evening service. The key reason for demise of FREX is not having the right governance. MMT is a city service, funded by regional entity, operating an inter-regional service. "FREX Facts" were provided.

7. Regional Bus Policy – FASTER for O&M?

The FREX decision and requests by citizens from the Pikes Peak Region have prompted the policy question: Should any of CDOT's FASTER money be allocated to operations and maintenance (O&M), and if so, under what conditions? Mark Imhoff explained that CDOT and Mountain Metropolitan Transit have talked, and neither organization believes a new contract (i.e. operated and contracted by CDOT, using FASTER funds) could be put in place in time to prevent the shut-down of the FREX service before the end of August 2012.

Mark explained further that CDOT has only \$10 million per year to allocate to projects. Capital project requests are already \$10 million or more each year. The CDOT Commission is leery of incurring more O&M expenditures in general. Strong TRAC policy position for O&M use of FASTER funds would be needed to garner the CDOT Executive Director's support, before taking this issue to the Commission. Mark then opened this topic for discussion noting that it could be provided as a discussion or informational item at next month's STAC and/or T&I committee meetings.

Q: Has CDOT considered I-70 in addition to FREX and FLEX services in the I-25 corridor?

A: *Yes. The forthcoming Intercity and Regional Bus Plan has an I-70 component in the scope. The trips in the I-70 corridor are more recreational, rather than commuter. Today's discussion about O&M use of FASTER funds is really intended to be focused on commuter trips.*

Q: Is there a way to tap into coordination with longer-distance intercity bus services?

A: *Yes and no. Yes: FASTER money could be used to contract with private providers such as those who currently provide the intercity bus services. No: 5311(f), the federal intercity bus money, cannot be used for commuter services or urbanized area service. From that perspective, FASTER funds really fill an existing gap in funding streams with FTA programs covering almost everything else: urban, small urban, rural, elderly & disabled, and non-commuter intercity service. The interregional commuter market is the only one not covered.*

Q: How many statewide commuter travel markets are there?

A: *Good question. Several TRAC members contributed thoughts to answering this question. (1) If CDOT gets into this [the interregional commuter bus market], you want it to work. (2) CDOT should consider a "base level" of service that the State would provide, with an option for local or regional governments to "buy up" to higher levels of service. (3) Shift work in many areas of the state, such as ski areas and oil and gas, will mean that the commuter market is not the same as traditional urban commuter hours. (4) Doing good market analysis is essential to "right-sizing" the service initially, and even after implementation on-going market analysis is needed.*

Q: Is the \$10 million in FASTER dollars indexed for inflation?

A: *No, it is not. Even if vehicle registrations increase statewide, the amount allocated to FASTER is fixed at \$10 million.*

Q: What about future FASTER use for commuter rail services?

A: *Buses are stuck in the same traffic as other cars unless there is a special lane, so from that standpoint there might be some advantages to investing in commuter rail services. Commuter rail services, however, are likely to be more expensive than bus service. With \$10 million total and only a portion of that possibly going to O&M in the future, it would be hard to get into the rail operating business.*

Other Comments Made:

- RFTA has submitted a proposal to update a rider travel shed study in the Roaring Fork Valley. Maybe expanding that work or that survey to include the Grand Junction to Glenwood Springs travel corridor should be considered.
- CDOT should consider the governance dimension of interregional service in addition to O&M costs.
- A conceptual limit of \$2 million for O&M (i.e. 20% of \$10 million statewide FASTER dollars) should be considered. 5309 money isn't available and FASTER funding as critical as capital replacement.
- For any interregional bus service effort, there will need to be an education piece to explain benefits. Elected officials generally don't get it, though TBD Colorado meetings show some people get it.

8. Wrap-Up

Next meeting is Friday, June 8th, 1:00 PM.