



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Division of Transit & Rail

4201 E. Arkansas, Room 227
Denver, CO 80222

**Transit and Rail Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2015
1:00 – 4:00 PM
CDOT/HQ Auditorium**

Member	Organization	Yes	No	Member	Organization	Yes	No
Ann Rajewski	CASTA	X		Jonathan Hutchison	Amtrak		X
Sara Cassidy	Union Pacific RR	X		Kurt Ravenschlag	TransFort	X	
Bill VanMeter	RTD	X		Larry Worth	Rural Transit	X	
Craig Blewitt	Mountain Metro Transit		X	Mike Ogborn	Omnitrax		X
David Johnson	Roaring Fort Transit		X	Danny Katz	CoPIRG	X	
Jim Souby	Colo Rail		X	Todd Hollenbeck	Grand Valley MPO		X
Matthew Helfant	DRCOG	X		Peter Rickershauser	BNSF Railway	X	
Terri Binder	Club 20	X		Will Jones	Greeley Evans Transit / Small urban areas	X	
Vince Rogalski	STAC		X				

Others Present	CDOT Present
Steve Herlberg- I-70 Coalition (Winter Park Resort) Sharon Charanova- Boulder Transportation	Mark Imhoff, Director/Division of Transit & Rail David Krutsinger, Rail & Special Projects Mgt./DTR Mike Timlin, Bus Operations Manager/DTR Jeffrey Sanders, Transit Infrastructure Specialist/DTR Michele Martinson, Bustang Project Support/DTR David Averill, Planning & Infrastructure, DTR (phone) Qing Lin, Transit Data & Reporting Specialist/DTR Rob Andresen, Transit Grants Unit Manager/DTR Herman Stockinger, Director, CDOT Policy Office

1. Introductions/Meeting Overview/Welcome

Ann Rajewski called the meeting to order at 1:05.
 Terri Binder was recently appointed to City of Arvada Transportation Board
 Mark asked to hold SW Chief discussion until Herman Stockinger arrives.

2. BUSTANG Update – Mike Timlin

Mike provided an update on Ace Express/All Aboard America as they are the new owner/operator for Horizon. The Bustang contract has been reassigned to Ace Express.
 Genfare is installing the fare boxes on the buses today and through the weekend.
 We are moving forward with maintenance agreements for CDOT-owned lots and access agreements with non-CDOT owned lots. At the Harmony Rd location, CDOT is working with the city on an

enforcement agreement. Resurfacing, restriping, and adding lighting poles is to be completed at the Woodmen Road stop. Completion is slated for mid-May.

CDOT is working with the Bustang subcommittee on the fare policy.

Danny Katz inquired on the plan for the launch date of July 13, 2015. Mike noted that the transit partners will be enlisted to assist opening day celebrations at all stops. The Grand Opening official first arrival celebration will be in the afternoon at DUS. Mark Imhoff stated that a media day will also be planned. A Bustang event was also held at CSU for Earth Week.

3. TRAC Sub Committees – Ann Rajewski, Mark Imhoff, & David Krutsinger

Ann asked David to provide updates.

- **Statewide Transit Plan Implementation:** David Averill has taken over more responsibility since Tracey MacDonald has left CDOT/DTR. TC approved the plan and we are moving forward. The first step will be an implementation plan that talks about costs, potential partnerships, strategies, and schedules. Coordination at a statewide level requires a lot of work and more uniformity. We will work with Rob Andresen, CDOT/DTR in his role in the Statewide Coordinating council to get more uniformity around the state. Development of rural regional/interregional bus/transit plan. Once Bustang is up and running, we can review how to proceed and grow. We will also plan to provide technical assistance for grant partners.
- **Bustang / Rural Regional Bus:** During meetings it was decided to provide a child fare for children between the ages of 2 and 11. Children age 12 and over will pay full fare.
- **Performance / Asset Management:** Statewide ridership increased goal, 1.5% annually. The numbers are in and we are meeting that goal: 1.71% over the past 5 years, despite drastic decrease in 2010 and 2011. An asset management plan will be developed with all grant partners by 2017. There has been discussion on how to define what constitutes a Transit Asset Management plan since there is no solid guidance from FTA. The subcommittee will continue to discuss this and do their best to anticipate what FTA will be looking for. Danny Katz inquired on what the 1.5% goal covered? David indicated that this was specific to rural and does not include the metro areas. Includes both fixed route and demand response and that is what we have the most influence over is rural and small urban. The date is for years 2009 through 2013.

David Krutsinger asked for updates on asset management from Transit Partners who are present. Craig Blewitt indicated they are working on an asset management plan this year. They plan to have a solid plan in order to be smart about protecting investments going forward. They are trying to anticipate what will be required by FTA, looking at fleet, IT, and facilities to identify commonalities. There is a city-wide facilities asset plan that is being developed now, so need to make sure to those requirements are also met.

Bill Van Meter noted that RTD continues implementing their asset management program. As a whole division they are pretty well-staffed. They have completed a baseline inventory of rolling stock (rubber-tired) and are working towards expanding the database and inventory to include steel-wheel, park-n-rides, and other infrastructure. They are still quite a ways away from a detailed inventory. They are also looking at useful life of drivetrains, and other major rolling stock components. They will inform of purchasing decisions and fleet maintenance cycle. They have a 15-20 minute PPT presentation that they can share.

Larry Worth stated that even in a rural community without resources to do a detailed asset management plan, a Kaplan plan is essential. The hope is that they can come up with ways for rural providers to implement an asset management plan with 1-2 staff members and limited resources.

Mark Imhoff noted that there has been a lot of discussion on how to award fleet replacement funds. There is the miles versus age factor and the question of if there should be asset management criteria in order to qualify for funds. There was discussion of the age versus miles question included as another factor. David Averill noted that maintenance practices also need to be broken down and in place and adherence to those schedules have to also be measured. A certified agency asset management plan must be adhered to and considered. In one county, the vehicles were getting in such bad shape, that it was incurring additional costs that put burden on operating costs and operating funds increasing end up offsetting capital costs. Ann Rajewski noted that there are also agencies operating at a high altitude, and there is concern that this has more wear and tear on engines and undercarriage (rusting out). Colorado has a lot of different landscapes and this may make a difference to the longevity of the vehicle. Consideration of even if engine is running, is the floor stable?

Ann closed subcommittee discussion.

4. State Freight Plan- Jeff Sudmeier

(Deferred until schedule 2:45. Moving to Transit Grants program management.)

Over the past year Jeff has been working with The Freight Advisory Committee. He is hoping to reconstitute the committee soon. A lot of input was provided that fed into the state highway freight plan. The plan is to complete this component in the next two months and submit it to FHWA. This is not a federal requirement, but we do need this plan in order for certain highway projects to be eligible for additional funding. The second phase includes development of an integrated freight plan. The plan is to pull in the highway and freight & passenger rail plan. DTD will be working closely with DTR. They are looking to engage the advisory committee and bring back the subcommittee with original and possibly new members. The integrated freight plan will be more of an umbrella plan that pulls in highway freight plan, freight & passenger rail plan, aviation plan, and intermodal connectivity.

Mark Imhoff noted that there is very little infrastructure on the freight side. A lot of the freight rail takes place through the state. We need to consider what percentage should be on the rails versus on the roads. This will help guide funding. P3s are possible with the rail companies to approve freight rail movement that lessen demand on highways. We have barely scratched the surface, in completing the freight rail plan, there was some discussion, but the other modes were not a part of that process. Jeff noted that there is a lot that is not under our control with freight. There are connectivity issues. The integrated freight plan will look at questions of connectivity with other modes and trade-offs between modes.

Danny Katz inquired on if freight safety (derailing, chemical/oil spills, etc.) factors into the freight plan. Jeff noted that the plan will address community impacts and impact on resources. There will also be sections that will discuss hazardous materials.

Pete Rickershauser asked if the highway freight plan was available on the CDOT website for members who would like to see it. Jeff indicated it was not posted on the website, the draft circulated through STAC. There will be another revised draft issued mid-May based on comments/feedback and they will get the draft plan out to TRAC. Pete stated that the economy changes the demand for freight railroads. Changes over time in commodity and population, and volume of freight movement. Sara Cassidy noted that BNSF reported a record \$5 billion in capital investments. Mark Imhoff also indicated that air freight is very interesting, DIA has interest in increasing freight movements. An example of this would be beef. It is ranches in Colorado, trucked to Dallas, and then flown overseas. DIA wants to be involved.

5. Southwest Chief Commission – Jim Souby

Deferred until Herman Stockinger arrives. Began with Herman summarizing the bonding bill before discussing Southwest Chief.

Trans Bond Bill: This week, Trans 2 Bill was introduced. The bill requires CDOT to bond for \$3.5 billion with a payback for 20 years, which comes to \$250 million/year. CDOT would spend \$3.5 billion on a specific list of transportation projects. The list was developed while consideration of SB 228 funds was a possibility. This bill will go to the voters to see if we can bond for additional revenue. Governor Hickenlooper and CDOT are opposed to the bill. This bill does not come with any additional revenue, so it works with the existing budget. Right now we primarily work on maintenance projects. Most programs would have to be reduced and/or essentially eliminated. CDOT wants to incorporate the Governor's 5-point plan to allow transportation plans to flow. We would like to find a compromise. About 2/3 of interested parties are opposed, but about 1/3 to 1/2 are supportive, with many counties supporting the bill. We are short on time and there is probably not enough time to create a compromise. The hospital provider fee has not yet been introduced to the House or Senate and there may not be enough interest to get both passed.

Pete Rickershauser noted that the central portion of Southwest Chief route is what is now being looked at by the Southwest Chief Commission. Amtrak, as a passenger rail is required to maintain rail above the level required for BNSF as a freight rail. BNSF has very low traffic on the eastern portion of the route and between Trinidad and New Mexico, there is no BNSF traffic. Amtrak requires the rail to handle 79+ mph. The TIGER 6 grant application was submitted with surrounding governments, cities, counties, and agencies making a funding commitment. The City of La Junta submitted the application. Seneca was utilized as the consulting firm, they are the firm that was utilized for the successful TIGER 6 grant for Garden City, Kansas.

Mark Imhoff noted that CDOT staff put together the initial list of projects in November and December for the Transportation Commission. The original list anticipated the full \$1 billion was coming to CDOT so it was a very large list. This original list included up to \$3 million for TIGER grant matching funds. In May, CDOT committed to go to TC to request \$1 million from SB 228 to go towards SW Chief. Amtrak committed \$4 million, and BNSF said they were willing to participate in a "meaningful way." Assuming they will contribute a meaningful amount of money. The goal in CO is to raise \$100,000 from local communities, Kansas will try to get \$50,000 worth of local funds. Guidance from Seneca is that the TIGER application will need to display "independent utility" in Colorado. The strategy is still being formulated and if this comes together in the next week or so, it will be provided to the TC. Based on historical analysis, CDOT hasn't fared well in getting TIGER grants. A lot of multi-modal programs and cross-jurisdictional groups is what has succeeded. Herman noted that the expectation is to ask the TC \$1 million dollars. If the TIGER grant is unsuccessful, the \$1 million would be reallocated to other SB 228 priority projects. Pete noted that currently the total cost of replacing this rail will be \$54-55 million, with \$24 million covering the Colorado rail. The funding pays for rail restoration, BNSF has agreed to install the rail and replace the ties and ballast underneath. Once the rail is replaced and track is restored to allow for 79 mph travel, BNSF will continue to maintain the rail at this level. Mark stated that Kansas has put in \$3 million and CDOT will ask the TC for \$1 million. All parties are working hard to make this happen, not knowing what our chances are with the TIGER application. Last year the TIGER program had \$600 million, and this year it dropped down to \$500 million. Herman noted that it is an uphill battle, but there may be an increased chance of being awarded the TIGER funds if CDOT supports the project and wants to preserve the Southwest Chief line.

From an infrastructure perspective, the best sections of track are in New Mexico, partially because there is no freight traffic on those sections. It has been a challenge to get New Mexico on board because of this. Kansas philosophy is to focus on the worst sections of track first, and then go from there. The most degraded track is in Colorado. The key for New Mexico is that there are local communities that support retaining the train. The state Transportation Commission is supportive as well, but there are no state dollars to put towards the match. We are not sure how much money might be contributed from New Mexico. Maintenance is the bigger issue in New Mexico but TIGER is capital only and will not provide maintenance funds and this adds to the complication.

*****Break (until 2:55)**

6. Transit Grants Program Management- David Krutsinger

Going forward, unless something major presents out of legislature at the state or national level, our funding is flat or shrinking. We must be as efficient as possible in our process of getting grants out to our partners. Many times when talking about the grant process, we focus only on our grants department, but it takes a lot of work from people throughout CDOT.

All of our grants are mission driven and critical. Some quick numbers:

- 26 transit fund pools (only 2 FASTER fund pools)
- 150 transit contracts written each year
- 300 active contracts at any given time
- 1,000 invoices per year or 80-90 per month

Some number for our Statewide Grant Partners:

- 8 urban area public transit providers
- 8 intercity bus providers
- 47 rural area public transit providers
- 100+ human service transportation providers

CDOT is attempting to decrease the burden of administrating funds on a year by year basis. There is a lot of work involved specifically for the grant coordinators. CASTA survey efforts included information from grant partners. Some have experienced frustration, delays and uncertainty. Those who are not "regular" grantees have more trouble and need help understanding the process. There are challenges with invoicing in a timely fashion. At its worst, this causes a cash flow problem. CDOT is implementing changes to assure this does not happen.

Dye Management Focus Group provided similar feedback as the CASTA survey. From an organizational view, Dye Management focuses on managerial direction and response. Once money is spent, staff look at invoices and make sure they match FTA requirements, and then Business office makes sure contract terms are met. (slide 9 on the presentation shows the process flow chart) The entire process has been reviewed to determine what steps are necessary, and what steps may not be necessary. Looking at a microscopic level to improve everything we are doing. Dye Management is preparing a draft report of recommendations with a final report expected in June.

CDOT is focusing on performance measures. Variables are not all captured as some grants do not fit the standard process. CDOT will proceed by reviewing and then accepting the Dye Management recommendations, moving forward with COTRAMS, increasing staff in DTR from 3 to 4 Grant Coordinators, implement lead/lag measures, and using lead/lag measures as predictive measures to be

proactive. Craig Blewitt noted that it would be helpful to establish the expectation of time that the process will take for all involved.

7. Transit Town Hall Report Out- Rob Andresen and Jeff Sanders

Approximately 72 people attended. Had a list of items for which input was needed. Jeff Sanders will discuss Capital issues in PPT presentation. Rob will discuss non-capital issues that presented:

Issue: Incorporating Independent Cost Estimate (ICE) into capital application process.

Discussion: Price may change between application and procurement. CDOT should provide more resources in application.

Issue: How should CDOT handle capital requests to service vehicles?

Discussion: A legitimate transit need. Not as important as revenue vehicles.

Policy: CDOT will accept requests for service vehicles, but will evaluate in same way as equipment requests.

Issue: To what extent should CDOT consider mileage and age when scoring replacement applications?

Discussion: Mileage is better indication, but this would disadvantage systems (often rural) with limited service areas.

Policy: CDOT will continue to weigh mileage and age equally.

Issue: Should we allow municipalities that have an RTD/RTA to request funding for projects separately from the transit agency?

Discussion: very little discussion.

Policy: CDOT will not accept these applications without support from the RTD/RTA. Systems working independently of RTD/RTA will be allowed to submit applications.

Issue: Limit number of FASTER grants to be used as match for another grant (results in 4% local match).

Discussion: By requiring 20 percent local match for everyone, funding goes further. There are situations where FASTER grant is needed in order for a worthy project to proceed. Consider using criteria to limit eligibility (economic status, dollar limit)

Policy: Continue to allow applicants to request FASTER for local match requirement. Applicants will provide justification that will be evaluated independently from the project.

Issue: Allow use of 5310 for operating expenses

Discussion: MAP-21 allowed for operating under 5310 by merging with former 5317 New Freedom Program. Current status has agencies receiving old 5317 funds grandfathered into 5310 operating. Awarding of funds will reduce available vehicle/equipment capital.

Policy: CDOT will allow applications for 5310 Operating after the set-aside (specific \$ amount TBD) of a vehicle/equipment capital pool.

8. North I-25 Commuter Rail Update – David Krutsinger

The State Rail Plan listed projects for which we would pursue funding. CDOT spent several years focusing on High Speed Rail. In the North Front Range, communities wanted commuter rail studies. North I-25 EIS anticipated Eastern Rail Bypass to be built for freight rail movements. This did not happen, so engaged BNSF more heavily in study. The 2009 dollar cost for corridor was \$690 million. With inflation alone, price tag went up to \$820 million. That has increased again to \$1.2 billion based on eastern bypass no longer being built. Costs added included additional safety protections and attention to quiet zones. The study was not intended to provide policy decisions, but it was meant to provide information to position the communities in the event that an opportunity might arise to pursue commuter rail in the 287 corridor. There is signed environmental clearance with official record of decision. Ridership will be analyzed if we find ourselves moving forward towards implementation.

9. DTR Annual Report & Draft 5-Year Work Program – David Krutsinger

The DTR Annual Report was developed from a lot of internal discussion. CDOT provided a lot of briefings for the public, so the annual report was created and all the information was collected in one report. CDOT tried to fit in with missions, goals and objectives from the Transit Plan. The Report then provides performance measurement information, and a financial summary of revenues and expenditures. The remainder of the plan discusses transit and TRAC accomplishments for 2014. The final section highlights some specific grant partner projects.

Feedback: TRAC members like the story the report tells. The report boils down to key elements. When placing the report online, it was recommended that we provide links to full studies and additional information.

10. Member Updates

Shailen Bhatt, CDOT Director stepped into the meeting. Mark Imhoff provided the Director with a brief overview of TRAC and all members present introduced themselves.

Shailen Bhatt spoke to those present noting that he is a big supporter of Transit & Rail. He served as Chair of the Standing Committee for Public Transportation for AASHTO. Director Bhatt noted AASHTO is trying to focus on multi-modal systems. In Delaware he ran the transit system with a \$125 million/year budget. In Delaware, transit was a last resort, but in Denver, many people choose to take transit. It is frustrating that people who do not rely on transit are the ones who make decisions about it. Director Bhatt also served on the Northeast Corridor commission while he was in Delaware. Director Bhatt reiterated as a big believer in rail, we should look to rail as a solution for freight and not just focus on passenger traffic.

Ann Rajewski noted that she and Elaine recently returned from DC to get updates on continuing resolution. Answers varied from continuation from 3-6 months, to continuation through the 2016 election. There is a need to find a politically viable way to continue funding for transit. There does not appear to be a consensus in D.C. right now.

Please remember there is a CASTA conference in May (12-15 in Boulder, Colorado) and there is TRAC member pricing available. Ask Ann for additional details.

Ann Rajewski adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

