



SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE  
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION

**TRAC Update**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The central graphic features a logo with a stylized mountain range and a train silhouette. Below the logo is the text "SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION". Underneath that is the main title "TRAC Update" and the date "January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020". The background of this section is a faded image of a train station platform.



**SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE  
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION**

# Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

Project Role	Current Commissioner	Organization	Notes
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Salvatore Pace	Resident of Pueblo County	Appointment expires 7/1/2021
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Jim Souby	ColoRail	Appointment expires 7/1/2022
Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative	Nathan Anderson	Union Pacific Railroad	Appointment expires 7/1/2021
Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative	DJ Mitchell	BNSF Railway	Appointment expires 7/1/2022
Resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, or Pueblo County	Richard Klein	City of La Junta	Appointment expires 7/1/2022
North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) Representative	Becky Karasko	NFRMPO	
Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Representative	Jacob Riger	DRCOG	
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Representative	Jill Gaebler	Colorado Springs City Council	
Pueblo Area Council of Governments Representative	Terry Hart	Pueblo County	
South Central Area Council of Governments Representative	Phil Rico	City of Trinidad	
Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) Representative	Bill Van Meter	RTD	
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Representative	David Krutsinger	CDOT Division of Transit and Rail	Non-voting Member
Amtrak Representative	Robert Eaton	Amtrak	Non-voting Member
Cheyenne, Wyoming Representative	Dale Steenbergen	Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce	Non-voting Member



## Commission's Purposes (SB 17-153)

- Work to preserve Amtrak's Southwest Chief service across southeast Colorado
  - Work with neighboring states of Kansas and New Mexico to upgrade rails, ties, signal systems and other rail infrastructure on BNSF's Amtrak Southwest Chief route across the three states
  - Pursue possible Amtrak Southwest Chief service extension into Pueblo and possibly Colorado Springs from La Junta
  - Consider re-routing the Southwest Chief service between La Junta and Trinidad by way of Pueblo and Walsenburg to better serve southern Colorado
- Facilitate the development of Front Range Passenger Rail service



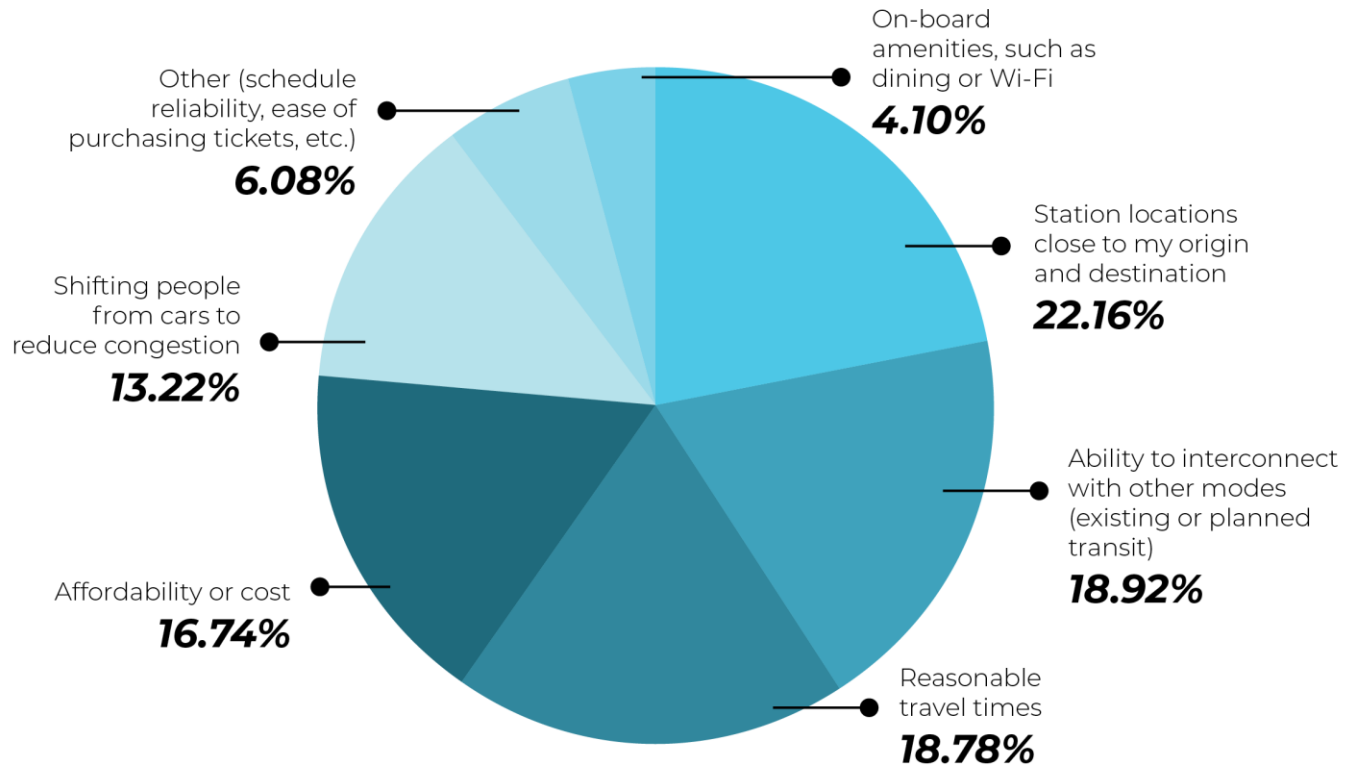
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# Online Public Meeting Input Survey Question #1

## WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS TO YOU?

7,003 total selections



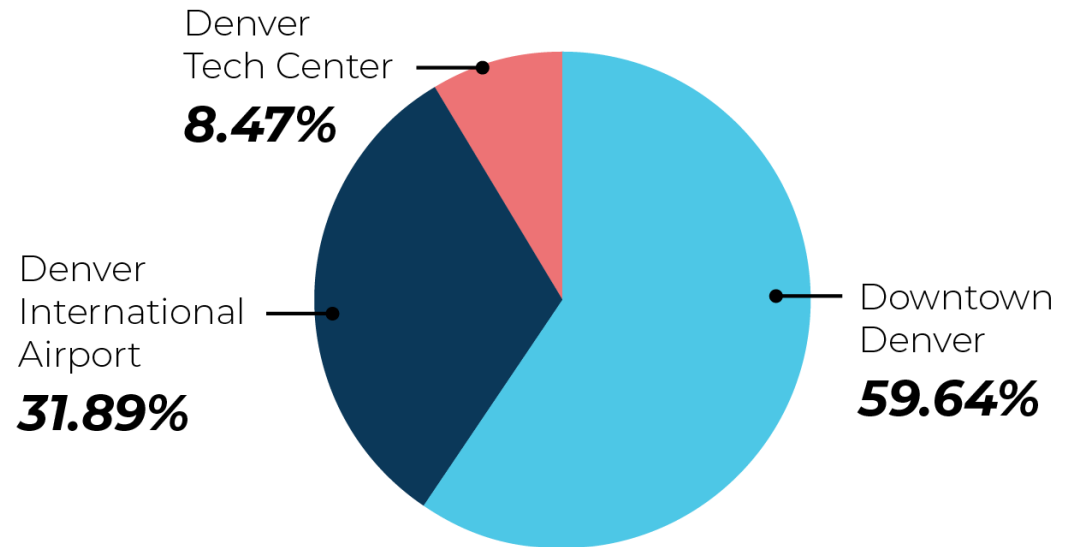


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## Online Public Meeting Input Survey Question #2

**WHERE WOULD YOU MOST WANT THE  
ALIGNMENT OF FRONT RANGE RAIL TO GO?**



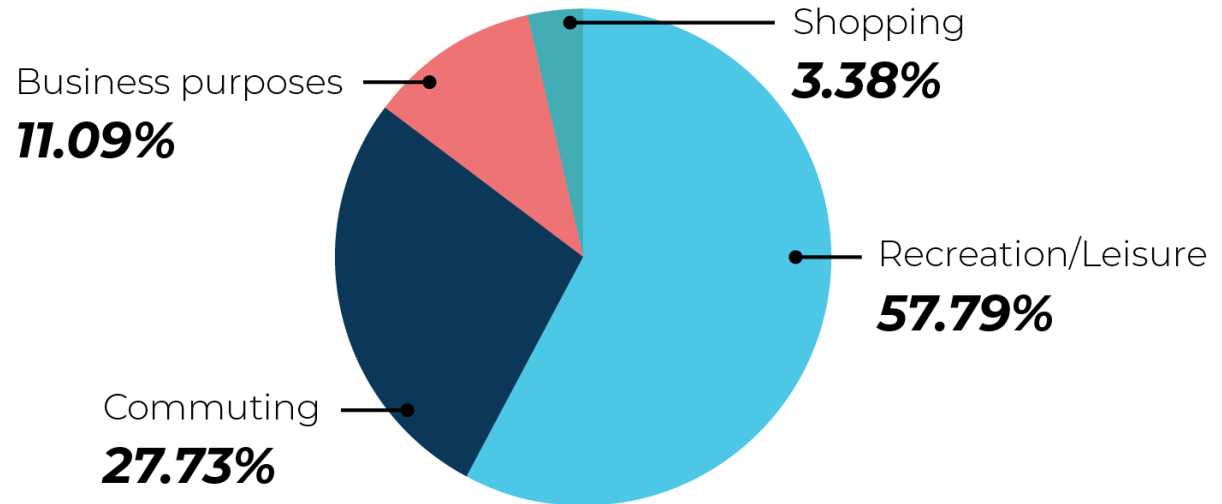


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## Online Public Meeting Input Survey Question #3

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PRIMARY PURPOSE  
FOR USING FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL?**



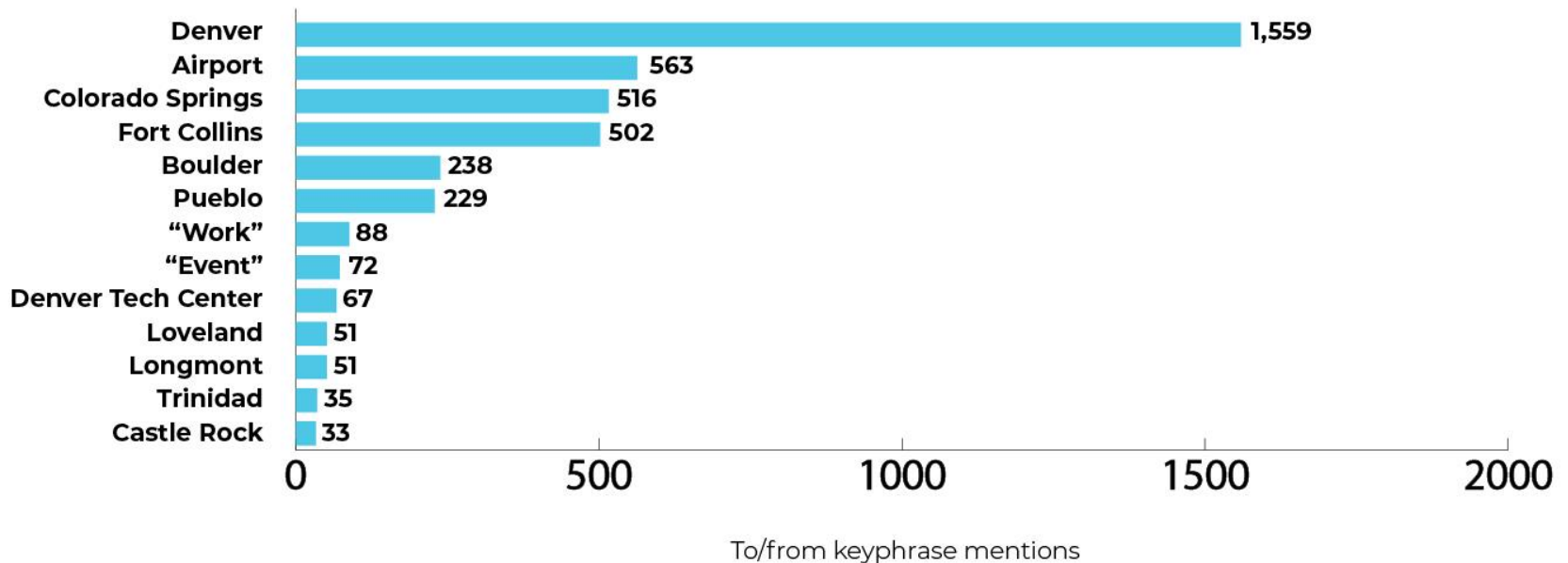


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## Online Public Meeting Input Survey Question #4

*WHERE WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO GO ON FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL?*





## Online MetroQuest Survey

- 6,965 total respondents over 71 days; July 22<sup>nd</sup>—September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- **95%** of respondents believe that passenger rail service could help address transportation needs along the Front Range.
- **92%** would be interested in using the service if it were available.

## RBI/Magellan Survey

- 600 responses across the 13 Front Range counties - October 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>
- **81% total support** (12% total oppose) a Front Range Passenger Rail service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo.
- **61% total support** (27% total oppose) a sales tax increase to fund a Front Range Passenger Rail Service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo with an estimated cost of **\$5 billion**.





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## Initial Ridership Modeling Results

# Big Takeaway: Model Projects a Notable Demand for Rail

After months of data-intensive work and many simulated runs, we found:

- There would be notable demand for rail service all along the Front Range.
- Demand is highest for commuters, but there's also substantial demand for recreation and special events.
- Front Range Passenger Rail ridership projections fare well when compared to other successful intercity rail lines across the country.
- There would be real reductions in emissions and vehicle miles traveled.



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## Initial Ridership Modeling Results

# Results Show BNSF Alternative (through Boulder/Longmont) Produces High Ridership

System	Length	Population	Trains/day	Stations	Annual ridership	Weekday ridership
BNSF	191	7.0M	25 (In each direction)	14	2.9M	9,200

Model runs including secondary stations (Ft. Carson, Monument, Louisville and Berthoud) increased ridership nearly 20%

When fares are based on .17c/per mile instead of .32c/per mile, ridership increases nearly 50%

\*Please note, 7.0m represents an estimated Front Range population in 2045



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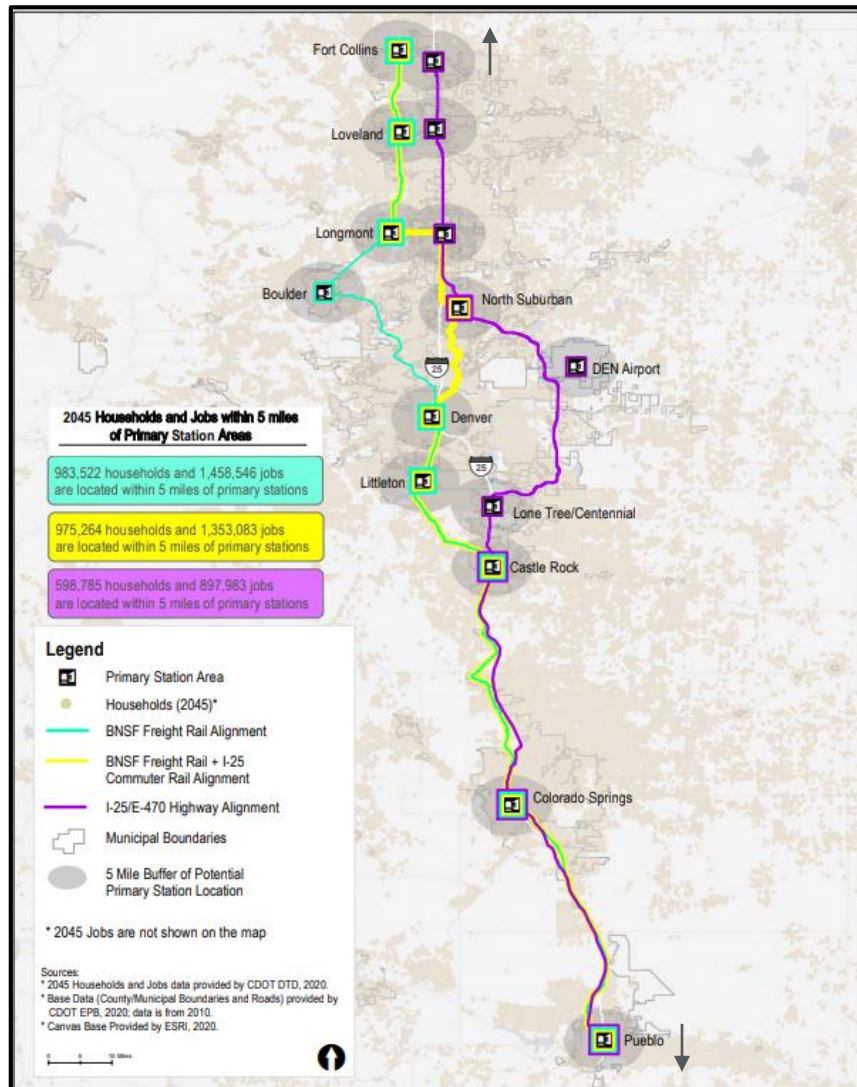
# Initial Ridership Modeling Results

## BNSF Alternative Compares Favorably to Peers

System	Length	Population	Trains/day	Stations	Annual ridership	Weekday ridership
Frontrunner (SLC)	81	1.2M	28	17	4.9M	16,180
Sounder (Seattle)	82	3.7M	6	9	4.6M	15,488
Caltrain (San Fran)	77	4.6M	47	32	4.6M	15,437
South Florida (Miami)	72	6.0M	25	18	4.3M	14,291
South Shore (Chicago)	90	2.7M	17	19	3.4M	11,435
<b>BNSF</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>7.0M</b>	<b>25 (In each direction)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2.9M</b>	<b>9,200</b>
Capital (Sacramento)	168	6.9M	7	17	1.6M	5,447
Altamont (Stockton)	86	2.7M	4	10	1.32M	4,407
Orlando	62	2.5M	20	16	852k	2,840
Hiawatha (Milwaukee)	80	11.1M	7	5	836k	2,788

\*Please note, 7.0m represents an estimated Front Range population in 2045

# Alignments Recommended for NEPA

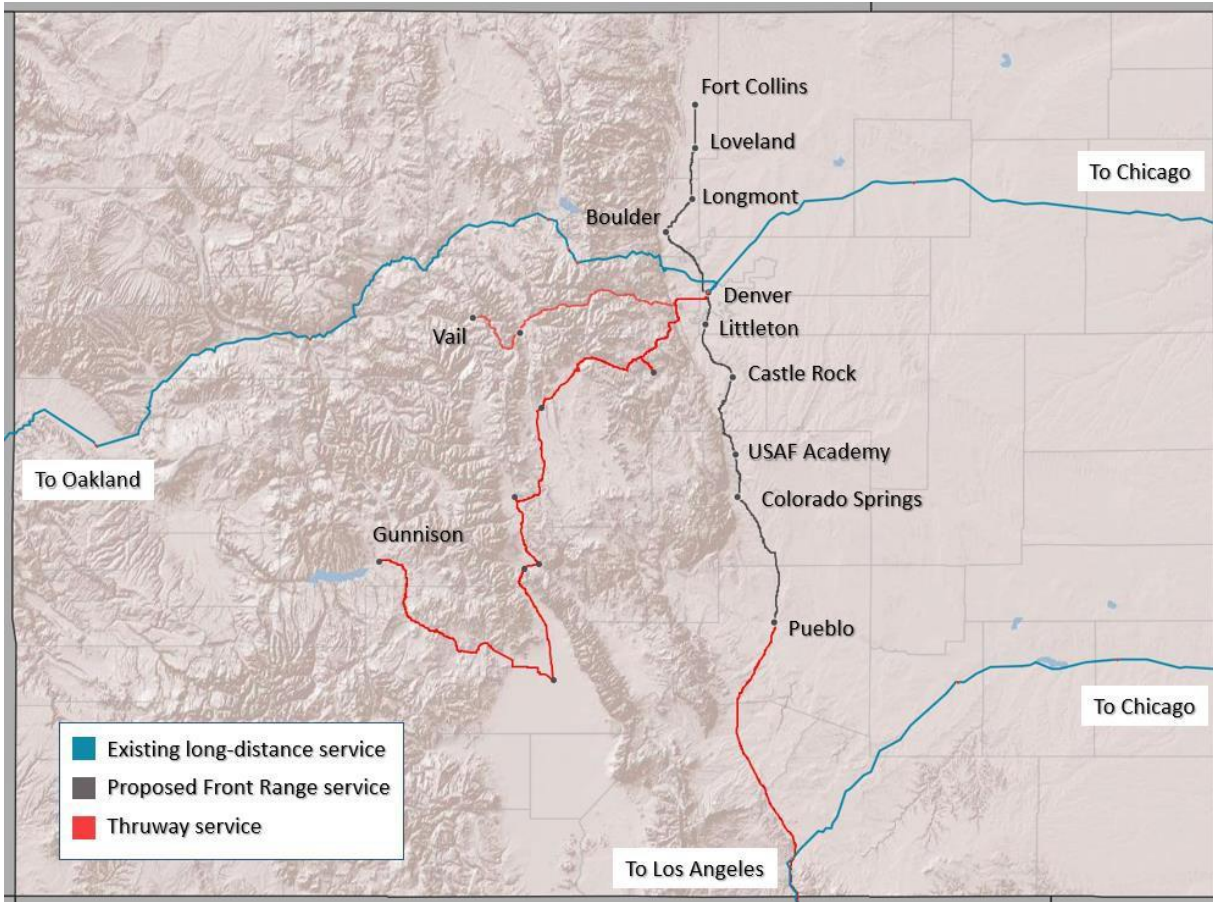


- All are technically feasible
- Reasonable range
  - Differing partnership opportunities
  - Differing impacts and benefits
  - May present ability to mix and match best components/minimize impacts

# Proposed Service Improvements

## Front Range Corridor: three round trips daily, Fort Collins—Boulder—Denver—Colorado Springs—Pueblo\*

\* with intermediate stops



### ***Proposed Grant Program Could Help Fund Front Range Service***

Amtrak is proposing creation of a **Network Modernization Program (NMP)** as part of our reauthorization to support rail network evolution and expansion, including efforts to plan, develop, construct, and operate intercity passenger rail service in high-potential short-distance corridors like the Front Range.

As envisioned, the program would make federal grant funds available to Amtrak to cover up to 100% of the capital costs and initial operating costs of new corridor service; states would then gradually assume a greater share of operating costs over a five-year transition period. After this five-year period, if the states want to continue service, long-term costs would be allocated in accordance with the existing Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) Sec. 209 methodology as currently used by many states throughout the nation.

### ***Existing Grants Continue***

Amtrak intends for the NMP to supplement existing grant opportunities (e.g., BUILD, SOGR, CRISI, INFRA, & REG), and not to replace them.



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## Front Range Passenger Rail Has Momentum!

- Three different survey mechanisms show measurable support for advancing FRPR
- Legislative and local elected interest
- Amtrak interest
- Class 1 RR interest
- Potential Partnership Opportunities



[www.frontrangepassengerrail.com](http://www.frontrangepassengerrail.com)



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Commission

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