

May 28, 2026

Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC)

Invited danny@copirg.org jflint@steamboatsprings.net Jan Rowe - CDOT Kay Kelly - CDOT Maux Sullivan - CDOT Deseri Scott - CDOT Paul Desrocher - CDOT djohnson@rfta.com Ann Rajewski CASTA david.averill@smarttelluride.com ewilson@avon.org garybeedy@gmail.com Audrey Dakan - CDOT Craig Secrest - CDOT Christina Curtiss - CDOT She Her George Gromke - CDOT ahull@nfrmpo.org Ben Gellman - CDOT Ricardo Light - CDOT Emily Barden - CDOT Philip Von Hake - CDOT Michael King - CDOT gclark@allpointstransit.org nanderson@up.com gary@aptransit.org Lindsay Miller - CDOT Angie Hainer - CDOT Scott Skinner - CDOT Emily Haddaway - CDOT alexander.khalfin@amtrak.com lan.rao@coloradosprings.gov michael.davies@rtd-denver.com rarthur@douglas.co.us ttrujillo-martinez@nfrmpo.org matthew.helfant@coloradosprings.gov Heather Pickering-Hilgers - CDOT Joan Lyons - CDOT kenneth.mooney@necalg.org Thomas Joyce - CDOT mike@ogbornconsultinggroup.com Shilpa Kulkarni - CDOT Julie Howe - CDOT Annie Altwarg - CDOT Darius Pakbaz - CDOT Jeffrey Dawson - CDOT Ryan Arthur

Summary

The meeting consolidated funding formulas for Clean Transit Enterprise and refined Front Range Passenger Rail infrastructure plans.

Funding and Formula Updates

The Clean Transit Enterprise board approved the fiscal year 2027 funding formula with a 375 percent allocation increase for Regional Transportation District. Staff also initiated a study to determine allocation methodologies for the 5311 grant program.

Front Range Rail Planning

The project finalized a cost-efficient strategy involving limited station

development and reduced infrastructure requirements for the Denver to Fort Collins service. Board members are finalizing access agreements with BNSF before December 2024.

Station Feasibility and Studies

Teams are evaluating West Metro station locations based on strict grade and buffer requirements while initiating station studies across the Mountain Rail Corridor. Analysis for a preferred West Metro alternative concludes in August.

Rate this Summary: Helpful or Not Helpful

Next steps

[Kay Kelly] Create Executive Summary: Write a concise summary for the dense technical report produced by the statewide transit pass exploratory committee.

[Craig Secrest] Post Allocation Table: Publish the fiscal year 27 allocation table to the website to improve accessibility.

[Craig Secrest] Issue Notice of Award: Distribute the Notice of Award for the fiscal year 27 program by the end of June.

[Paul Desrocher - CDOT] Draft Feedback: Submit the initial HDR state management document to the track for review.

[Maux Sullivan - CDOT] District Update: Coordinate a session with the Front Range Passenger Rail authorities regarding ballot polling.

[Joan Lyons - CDOT] Study Findings: Present results from the West Metro station analysis to the committee.

Details

- **Meeting Commencement and Roll Call:** Paul Desrocher opened the meeting and conducted a roll call of members, noting that Anna was absent and David Averill would serve as acting chair. David Averill confirmed they were prepared to proceed with the agenda.
- **Office of Innovative Mobility Staffing Update:** Kay Kelly reported that Erin Kelican successfully competed for the post-award team lead role. Interviews for the post-award manager position are scheduled to begin next week, with a potential start date of July 13th due to state year-end system shutdowns. Additionally, an accounting administrator position is expected to be posted in mid-June, with hiring projected for midsummer. The department will onboard three fellows and four interns starting in July.
- **Statewide Transit Pass Exploratory Committee Proposal:** Heather Pickering-Hilgers provided an update on the committee established by SB 24-32. The committee's proposal, due to the legislature on July 1st, recommends creating a centralized booking hub to allow for statewide trip planning and purchasing, with revenue routed to respective agencies. The proposal suggests agency-controlled pass durations for fixed-route, on-demand, and paratransit services. A final report is available on the website, and a public comment period remains open through June 12th. An executive summary will be added to the report to address its technical density.
- **Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE) FY27 Formula Approval:** Craig Secrest announced that the CTE board approved the FY27 funding formula on Tuesday. The program aims to reach a sustainable annual funding level of \$80 million. Under the new allocation, RTD (the mega category) receives 55% of funds, small agencies receive approximately \$1.5 million, and the remainder is allocated to large agencies. The board implemented safety measures, including a 45% cap on increases, a 15% floor for small urban agencies, and a 5% minimum increase for all agencies to ensure equitable distribution. RTD's allocation will increase from \$9.25 million to \$44 million, representing a 375% increase.
- **CTE Grant Administrative Procedures:** Craig Secrest discussed a proposal to combine grants for small agencies into two-year awards for those receiving between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to reduce administrative burdens. A Notice of Award is expected in June. Agencies may utilize existing plans from FY26 if their

scope remains unchanged; a new full application is required only if there are significant changes or for new applicants.

- **Discussion on CTE Funding Impacts and Economic Challenges:** David Averill, Jonathan Flint, and Lan Rao discussed the effects of CTE funding on their agencies. Funds are being utilized for vehicle replacements and critical service expansions, such as the Montrose to Telluride route. Participants noted challenges with declining local sales and lodging tax revenues, which have necessitated budget cuts and reliance on CTE funds to maintain current service levels. Concerns were raised regarding fuel cost volatility and the long-term sustainability of oil and gas revenue.
- **Status of FY26 CTE Grant Executions:** Craig Secrest reported that eight of 35 grants have been executed, representing over 50% of the allocated funds. The team is working to execute the remaining contracts by the end of the state fiscal year on June 30th.
- **5311 Grant Program Formula Review:** Paul Desrocher stated that the current 5311 formula sunsets at the end of 2027, and a study is underway to determine future allocation methodologies. FHU has been hired to support a technical working group in this process. The team intends to present findings to the Transportation Commission in late 2026 or early 2027 to prepare for the 2028 distribution.
- **Concerns Regarding 5311 Capital Funding and Federal Reauthorization:** David Averill and David Johnson expressed concern that the 5311 program is increasingly focused on operations, creating a shortfall in capital funding for vehicle replacements. David Averill noted that federal reauthorization might reduce discretionary 5339 funding, which is a vital source for capital projects like regional transit centers. Participants emphasized the difficulty of funding major capital expenses through local budgets alone.
- **Ballot Initiative 175 Update:** David Johnson requested information regarding the potential impact of Ballot Initiative 175. Danny Katz clarified that the legislature passed a bill to negate funds raised by this initiative, suggesting it is unlikely to move forward.
- **State Management Plan (SMP) Update:** Paul Desrocher announced an update to the State Management Plan, which serves as the DOT's blueprint for distributing federal funds. HDR has been hired to assist with the process, which is expected to take 5-6 months and will include a 30-day public comment period. The update aims to increase efficiency by focusing the plan on federal fund distribution

processes and removing unnecessary detail regarding state and enterprise funds.

- **Joint Service and BNSF Negotiations Update:** Maux Sullivan provided an update on the Denver to Fort Collins starter service project, which targets a 2029 launch. The project focuses on cost efficiency by leveraging existing state resources without federal funding. Negotiated parameters for BNSF include 7-day-a-week service, a 79 mph maximum speed, and three daily round trips. The plan utilizes new platforms adjacent to the BNSF mainline without passenger sidings to further reduce costs.
- **Front Range Passenger Rail Joint Service and Cost Efficiency:** Maux Sullivan (CDOT) outlined the joint service plan, which involves one station each in Lewisville, Broomfield, and Westminster, representing a reduction from the original Front Range Passenger Rail plans. By limiting operations to one revenue consist at a time and eliminating the need for passenger meets or sidings, the project minimized equipment and infrastructure requirements, resulting in an estimated capital cost of \$333 million. The 79 mph maximum speed is determined by BNSF track class and specific limitations rather than average travel speed. By negotiating directly with BNSF instead of relying on a state-supported service model, CDOT achieved greater cost flexibility and minimized the necessary station development.
- **Front Range Passenger Rail Governance and Funding Timeline:** Governing boards approved the term sheet between February and April 2024, and CDOT is currently finalizing the full access agreement with BNSF, with a target of completion by late June. Following the initiation of operator negotiations with Amtrak, the governing boards are scheduled to decide on capital cost appropriations in December 2024, which will occur after the November timeline confirms whether the Front Range Passenger Rail District intends to go to the ballot and the results of that initiative.
- **Front Range Passenger Rail Ballot and Future Service:** David Averill asked about polling regarding the upcoming ballot initiative, and Maux Sullivan confirmed that polling is actively underway. The ballot measure aims to secure revenue to expand service beyond the initial three daily round trips to the full buildout vision, which includes service from Fort Collins to Pueblo and increased frequency.
- **Front Range Passenger Rail Station Amenities:** Joan Lyons (CDOT) explained the baseline resource plan for stations, which includes funding for core safety and accessibility features such as wayfinding, emergency call boxes, security

cameras, lighting, fencing, and weather protection like canopies and windscreens. The state-provided baseline does not cover parking, road modifications, or property acquisitions and lease agreements, leaving these items dependent on local decision-making and resources.

- **Mountain Rail Corridor Updates:** CDOT is managing various station studies, including a draft plan for Rollinsville via Gilpin County and a station study in Steamboat that will include public engagement over the summer. The town of Fraser purchased a former veterinary clinic near its existing Amtrak station to explore future usage, while Oak Creek, Craig, and Hayden have received DOLA funding to initiate their respective station studies.
- **West Metro Station Feasibility Analysis:** Joan Lyons (CDOT) reported on the West Metro station study, which involves coordinating with over 85 local government and elected officials across Adams County, the city of Barbata, and unincorporated Jeffco. Following a public meeting held on April 30 and a survey that received over 430 responses, the team intends to narrow the analysis down to one preferred alternative by August. The station is expected to generate higher ridership than initial projections suggest, as many residents in the western Denver area use these routes for recreational travel.
- **West Metro Station Location Constraints:** Site selection for the West Metro station is restricted by terrain and railroad requirements, including a preference for grades below 1.5% and a mandatory 100-foot buffer from crossings, underpasses, and culverts. Because Union Pacific prohibits platform sidings, the available locations are limited. Identified potential locations include 60th and Sheridan (co-located with an RTD station but requiring a new platform on the Union Pacific line), areas between Indiana, Kipling, and Sims, and a site west of Highway 93 near Rocky Sighting.
- **Specific Station Location Inquiries:** Joan Lyons (CDOT) clarified that Drake Road is the proposed station location for Fort Collins, noting that while some local interest exists in moving further north, that option would require significant local investment. Regarding Rollinsville, the proposed station location is west of Highway 119 near Talland Road, with ongoing local discussions about potential shuttle services to support backcountry touring and connectivity to Nederland and Eldora.