



COLORADO
Department of Transportation



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to ensure that current planning efforts are completed in furtherance of the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission's (Rail Commission) mission. It is also the MOU's purpose to clarify the Rail Commission and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) roles and responsibilities during these planning efforts. This partnership will advance policy, program and project aspects and will be a critical step in the legislative charge to the Rail Commission to implement Front Range Passenger Rail between Pueblo and Fort Collins.

WHEREAS, since 2019, CDOT has been working cooperatively with the Rail Commission to support the development of a Service Development Plan and environmental scoping with the ultimate goal of developing a compelling and politically viable passenger rail system;

WHEREAS, CDOT previously assigned (on a part-time basis) several staff to support this work over a two-year period;

WHEREAS, a "blended team" of CDOT and Rail Commission staff have identified a long range vision for the 180-mile corridor and a plan for it to be incrementally delivered;

WHEREAS, significant budget cuts caused by the COVID-19 economic downturn have severely limited funding opportunities for the Rail Commission's continued work, and CDOT has committed to provide additional staff resources;

WHEREAS, the Rail Commission has been awarded two federal CRISI grants, one to conduct a Through-Car study for the Southwest Chief and the other to conduct rail simulation for Front Range Passenger Rail;

WHEREAS, CDOT has analyzed its in-house resources and expertise and is prepared to serve as the Grantee and fiscally responsible party for administration of the 2019 and 2020 CRISI grants. Both grants advance the Rail Commission's mission and further its work on completing the preliminary SDP and pre-NEPA work; and

WHEREAS, the Rail Commission values its strong funding collaboration with CDOT, and hopes to continue in partnering efforts to locate additional sources of funds, including current and future flexible state (subject to Transportation Commission approval) and local funds for

transit and rail, unless otherwise appropriated directly to the Rail Commission. It is important to maintain current momentum.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that with its remaining budget, CDOT will form a team to oversee or conduct this work, consisting of the following positions and subject matter expertise for the duration of the CRISI grant consultant contracts (estimated Summer 2022):

Program Manager: a Full-time position to oversee CDOT staff and Rail Commission liaison, manage work assignments, track progress, in coordination with the Rail Commission and Consultant Project Managers.

Pre-NEPA Manager: Quarter-time position to align the SDP with environmental study requirements, establish programmatic agreements, agency coordination, document mitigation strategies, affected environment, and analysis needed for the next phase.

Engineering: Two part-time positions, individuals previously agreed upon by Rail Commission staff, to support overall engineering and the preliminary SDP (e.g. engineering oversight and support for analysis of rail operations, conceptual design, cost estimating, refining and analysis alternatives).

Modeling: Strategic and focused travel demand modeling and coding to run multiple scenarios in support of the CRISI grants.

Interns: One graduate level intern to provide overall support for the team on administrative, GIS, mapping and communication tasks. Current nine-month term to expire at the end of April 2021.

Communications and Ancillary Support: Support the FRPR Team on a regular, but less than full-time basis. These staff will provide communications and outreach, website support, meeting facilitation, government affairs and GIS mapping.

Other commitments will be as needed based on program requirements; CDOT staff will work on other activities concurrently. CDOT staff will be directed by the Program Manager.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CDOT staff will continue to provide technical expertise and strategic support to complement the consultant teams.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Rail Commission liaison will continue to play a significant role in engaging with the public, directing the consultants supporting the CRISI grants, and working closely with the Program Manager to meet the strategic goals of the Rail Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, CDOT and the Rail Commission will work in close collaboration to make strategic decisions on how this overall effort advances the Rail Commission’s primary purpose and core mission and further agree to form an Executive Oversight Committee to ensure regular communication and coordination.

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JAMES SOUBY
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