

Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

Draft Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 24th, 2020

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

CDOT Headquarters

2829 West Howard Place, Denver, CO, 80204

Call in 1-877-820-7831 passcode 418377#

COMMISSION MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Member Name	Member Role	Organization	Attendance
Jill Gaebler – Chair	Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments	City of Colorado Springs	Yes
Terry Hart	Pueblo Area Council of Governments	Pueblo County	Yes
Becky Karasko	North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization	NFRMPO	No
Rick Klein	Resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, or Pueblo Counties	City of La Junta	Yes
Sal Pace	Passenger Rail Advocate	Resident of Pueblo	Yes
Pete Rickershauser	Class 1 Railroad Representative	BNSF Railway	Yes
Nathan Anderson	Class 1 Railroad Representative	Union Pacific	Phone
Phil Rico	South Central Council of Governments	Mayor of Trinidad	Yes
Jacob Riger – Vice Chair	Denver Regional Council of Governments	DRCOG	Yes
Jim Souby	Passenger Rail Advocate	ColoRail	Yes
Bill Van Meter	Regional Transportation District	RTD	Yes
David Krutsinger*	Colorado Department of Transportation	CDOT	Yes
Ray Lang*	Amtrak	Amtrak	Yes
Dale Steenbergen*	Cheyenne, Wyoming	Chamber of Commerce	Yes

*Non-Voting Members

Others On Phone: Bill Craven (NMDOT), Rob Eaton (Amtrak), Chelsea Gaylord (City of Colorado Springs)

Others: Sophie Shulman (CDOT), Randy Grauberger (SWC&FRPRC), Spencer Dodge (SWC&FRPRC), David Singer (CDOT), Carla Perez (HDR, Inc.), Jeffrey Range (CDR Assoc.), Jennifer Webster (Catalyst Public Affairs), Miller Hudson (Public), Doug Rex (DRCOG), John Liosatos (PPACG), Joe Pimentel (LiUNA), Matt Blake (Public), Dan Kline (WYDOT), Tom Mason (WYDOT), Mike Meyer (Quandel Consulting), Brian Hartman (CDOT), Stephen Fotiadis (Cheyenne Chamber)

A. Call to Order and Introductions – Jill Gaebler

Jill Gaebler called the meeting to order at 9:34 and asked all in attendance and on the phone to introduce themselves.

B. Review/Approval of December 13th Draft Meeting Minutes – Jill Gaebler

Jill Gaebler asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the draft December 13th Commission Meeting Minutes. There were no comments or questions. Rick Klein made a motion to approve the minutes, Pete Rickershauser seconded the motion, and the Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

C. Public Comment Period – Public

No public comments.

D. Project Director's Report – Randy Grauberger

Randy Grauberger reviewed some of the highlights from his Project Director's Report. The project team held the second round of Segment Coalition meetings. These were held in Loveland (North Segment), Pueblo (South Segment) and Denver (Central Segment). Meeting notes from these events are being compiled and will be distributed. Randy mentioned that several Commissioners had attended coalition meetings; Commissioner attendance has been well-received from stakeholders.

Commission staff has met with CDOT executives and the consultant project team regarding project and Commission funding. In July, 2018, the Commission received an initial \$2.5m to fund staff for a two-year period (\$500,000), project consultants (\$1.5m), and grant funding matches and operating expenses (\$500,000). CDOT executives have been engaged regarding gap funding for the Commission in the event no further money is obtained from the legislature.

Randy had the opportunity to represent the Commission in Pueblo at an event hosted by Build Together, a national organization promoting the rebuilding of America's infrastructure. Commission staff submitted a letter to Amtrak in regard to a meeting between Kansas DOT, New Mexico DOT, BNSF Railway, and Amtrak to develop a long-range business plan for the Southwest Chief, as Amtrak has required be developed on several occasions to justify continued operation of the train long-term. The Commission has offered repeatedly to host this meeting. Commission staff are continuing to hold stakeholder interviews throughout the Front Range. Staff met with the US Air Force Academy (USAFA); one of the better interviews held. USAFA staff are joining the South Segment and another meeting with USAFA leadership will be held in the summer. At the meeting, it was learned that I-25 is located on USAFA property, and that the USAFA owns property on the east side of I-25 as part of the Academy. Randy participated in the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) conference call and received an invoice for the Commission's membership. The invoice received was valued at \$5,416 instead of the initial ask for \$5,000. Randy is inquiring about this discrepancy. SPRC's annual meeting will be held on February 18th and the group would like Randy to present.

The Governor's Transportation Funding Discussion meeting, scheduled for January 27, has been rescheduled for February 10th.

Pete Rickershauser asked for an update on the federal agency coordination meeting held on January 13th. Randy was not in attendance for this meeting, but Commission staff, CDOT staff, and the consultant team all reported that this was a productive meeting. A status report on the project, specifics on criteria and evaluation categories were provided to federal agencies. They commented on the latest version of the project vision and suggested that this stay as a Vision and become a foundation for future purpose and need.

Phil Rico commented that the Commission Charter that is being signed at this meeting is specific on the Commission's charge, the Commission needs to keep their eyes on the original mission.

E. Southwest Chief

2018 CRISI Grant

David Krutsinger, CDOT, discussed the 2018 CRISI grant. The grant is nearing full authorization; this is expected in March. The pre-award authorization is going through the approval process now. The entire team will be able to start final design on the project but it is important for the group to have clarity on the risks and what is needed to be ordered and delivered. David suggested that the Commission come to terms and conditions on the funds that they are providing.

Pete Rickershauser asked if the terms and conditions were for Positive Train Control (PTC). David replied that this was correct, the Commission committed \$100,000 and now is the time to put that into writing. For example, is the Commission going to write a check for the full amount or is the Commission going to lay out specifically the terms the Commission expects to be met? Additionally, a question on who the grantee for the CRISI grant is was asked; CDOT is the official grantee. Rick Klein stated that he is good with giving the project team the check and letting them satisfy the conditions of the grant. Randy Grauberger stated that he and Spencer Dodge are happy to work with the Southwest Chief sub-committee to work on a document. Rick made a motion for Randy/Spencer to meet with David and the SWC sub-committee and develop a document laying out performance measures and stipulations. This motion was not seconded, but Randy and Spencer were advised to carry this action out.

ACTION: Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene the Southwest Chief sub-committee in order to discuss CRISI grant terms/stipulations.

TIGER IX Grant

Categorical Exclusion documentation was submitted in December, revisions to this documentation were requested from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). CDOT and KDOT environmental staff may need to be contacted in regards to some of the FRA questions. Environmental approval is needed before contracting and BNSF pre-award authority is given.

2019 CRISI Grant Application

Randy gave an update to the Commission on the application submitted in October 2019 for a CRISI grant to fund the feasibility study to look at thru-car service from La Junta to Pueblo/Colorado Springs. WSP staff informed Randy that it will be late February at the earliest before those grants are announced. SPRC believes that it could be early March. Sal Pace has not heard anything different but did recommend that the Commission, particularly the Southwest Chief sub-committee, gather together on a call and mobilize efforts to ask for support from the federal delegation of elected officials. Commission staff will work to convene this call.

ACTION: Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene the Southwest Chief sub-committee in order to discuss engaging with the federal delegation in support of the 2019 CRISI grant.

Amtrak Southwest Chief Long Range Plan

Ray Lang, Amtrak, thanked Randy for his letter and persistence. Ray reported that he had socialized the idea of a meeting with senior management and that they are happy to come to Colorado. A date and location is needed. On March 9th, there is a meeting at the AAR facility and this might provide a good time for management to participate in two meetings in one trip. March 9th is an all-day conference, Randy

has been asked to give a presentation and so that day is likely booked. Commission staff are happy to create a Doodle Poll and distribute that to participants. Ray stated that he wants to consider the 8th, the 10th, or a completely different day.

ACTION: Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene Southwest Chief sub-committee members, Amtrak, NMDOT, and KDOT to coordinate on a Southwest Chief Long Range Plan.

Jim Souby asked Ray about a larger contribution that Amtrak has made to the Southwest Chief, closer to \$100m. Ray is not aware of that larger contribution, just the original \$50m, which is not enough to satisfy all of the PTC and other work required by BNSF on this route. Amtrak's strategy is to "leverage" the \$50 million Federal earmark to obtain additional funding needed.

Pete Rickershauser suggested to the SWC sub-committee that they develop an agenda for the meeting with Amtrak officials. BNSF staff need to have a specific plan on what the meeting looks like and what outcomes are wanted. Spencer will distribute a Doodle Poll for a conference call to discuss this with the SWC sub-committee.

ACTION: Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene the Southwest Chief sub-committee in order to discuss an agenda for the March Southwest Chief Long Range Planning meeting.

Jim mentioned that he reviewed the new website, www.frontrangepassengerrail.com, and couldn't find a single mention of the Southwest Chief. The Southwest Chief is half of the legislative mandate for the Commission and Jim believes the SWC should have an equal billing as the FRPR website. Jim asked Randy if he had plans to add that to the website. Randy responded that the Commission website still exists. The new website is strictly about the Front Range Passenger Rail project. Everything related to the Southwest Chief and the Commission can still be found on the Commission website. Terry Hart asked if the two websites are linked. There is a link to the Commission website on the FRPR website, but there is not a link to the new FRPR website from the Commission website. That is expected to be done in the near future.

ACTION: Commission staff will ensure that links between both Commission and project websites exist.

F. Front Range Passenger Rail

Segment Coalition Summaries

Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates, provided a quick recap on the Segment Coalition meetings that were held earlier in the week. Project staff convened the three segments with attendance of about 20 people at each. The South Segment Coalition was the least attended and consultant staff are thinking about how participation can be encouraged. Transit agencies, airports, CDOT, municipalities, counties, and others were all represented. The objectives for these meetings included updating Coalition members on the 2020 work plan and receiving input from individuals on system and segment considerations. Coalition members were engaged on the opportunities and challenges that are present with FRPR; particularly, how can we maximize opportunities and overcome challenges.

Some of the input that was heard were concerns on first and final mile challenges and connectivity to local systems. It was suggested that the vision be changed from "Along the I-25 corridor..." to "Along the Front Range corridor...". There was interest in how we are connecting segment solutions to the full corridor coalition discussions. Other topics discussed included the interoperability of the system for flexibility in the future and the ease of riders, leveraging local transit/transportation updates, and communities updating and improving infrastructure and the integration of these into the system.

Phil Rico stated that he heard there were issues in the North Segment Coalition. Additionally, he warned the project team to be careful using Front Range Corridor instead of the I-25 Corridor. There is concern

that the Front Range corridor is interpreted by some to mean the region north of Colorado Springs, ignoring the southern section. The project team reiterated that this change was only being implemented in the project vision, not the project name.

The concerns from the north segment were interpreted to mean that the north region didn't want to be connected to Denver and the rest of the state. Randy Grauberger clarified that the concerns from those in the north were more related to fears of becoming "bedroom communities" and the potential for difficulties in finding labor.

Dale Steenbergen mentioned that the Cheyenne Chamber is working on holding meetings between Fort Collins, Wellington, Greeley and other northern communities. There is a need to better understand workforce flows in this area, this includes sharing data and information between Greeley and Fort Collins.

Randy stated that, following meeting with Fort Collins Chamber staff, there is support for FRPR but their first priority is to get I-25 done. They've created a process for local communities to contribute a lot of money to I-25 improvements and so until that highway corridor is done, they won't be the strongest advocates. Sal Pace said Wyoming communities need to be communicating their issues and opportunities with North Front Range communities.

David Krutsinger stated that, in the Central Segment Coalition, there was a discussion on layered rail service. The example given in the meeting was on the west coast where the Surfliner, NTA, and other lines were all on the same tracks. As the project team looks to the future and the creation of a business plan that is something that should be looked at. Ray Lang suggested that there are locations on the east coast where there are as many as four different lines on the same tracks.

Sal Pace asked about the discussion with military installations, particularly how they want to be involved. Security issues might mean that the USAFA does not want a station while Fort Carson may want a station to mobilize troops. USAFA expressed in their meeting with project staff that FRPR would be important to them and they would benefit. Staff asked about the abandoned former Santa Fe Railroad right of way that is now the Santa Fe Trail. This trail is very popular and runs right beside the on-base airfield. A rail line in that location would be problematic; however, they did suggest an idea to "cut and cover" and run the train under the airfield. USAFA Right of Way extends much further east than originally anticipated. There is almost 700 feet east of I-25 that is not being developed. Protecting their airfield is the USAFA's main priority. Jim Souby talked with Fort Carson last year and they were interested in FRPR. They discussed possibilities for stations, particularly around Fountain. Fort Carson really stressed that the Commission and project team discuss these stations in terms of readiness. That argument is important in Washington. Jill Gaebler mentioned that Fort Carson is working with the City of Colorado Springs to build an industrial railyard into Fort Carson. Colorado Springs is concerned with potentially losing Fort Carson because of the Army's need to get to the coasts in a short period of time.

Project Development

David Singer presented an update on the project development. The first step in this process is to talk with stakeholders. Then, a comparative evaluation based on federal agency input and their approved process. Following the comparative evaluation, the project team should be confident on the range of alternatives with and stakeholder buy-in before beginning the official NEPA process.

Corridor Considerations are impactful factors found throughout the corridor. These are consistent with other passenger rail projects. David then showed the four major evaluation categories; these assist in examining alternatives in a balanced, objective way. David asked for comments on the criteria presented. There were no comments. Randy mentioned that at the Central Segment Coalition meeting there was a lot of discussion around RTD. There is a category of criteria that includes the ability to interconnect with other modes and transit; this is where RTD comes in. It was suggested to include RTD in the Interaction with Freight Operations category.

David Singer presented several maps to discuss the potential alignments. David asked Commissioners to look at the corridors and not focus on the towns listed or their font size. Phil took issue with these maps as it appears to show everything stopping in Pueblo. Phil would like for them to show the state all the way to the border and call it a potential. Sal Pace agreed with Phil, stating that it's not about the potential but about the connectivity with Southwest Chief. This topic is as much a political issue as anything. For the Commission's success, connecting FRPR with the rerouted Southwest Chief needs to be mentioned often. Jim agreed with this. Randy pointed out that the project team heard a lot of this same discussion during the Segment Coalition meetings; however, there was not yet time to make changes before the Commission meeting.

Rick Klein asked if, with Southwest Chief subcommittee members, a new map with the thru-car proposal can be made. Rick also mentioned that he was very impressed with Randy and Spencer and the consultant team in the handling of the Segment Coalition meetings.

Pete Rickershauser discussed concerns with first and final mile connectivity and suggested a new map that shows First and Final mile connectivity. This map would easily include Trinidad and the southern portion of the state.

Terry Hart reiterated the importance of connectivity with the California Zephyr and Southwest Chief. One of the reasons for doing FRPR is to connect with the Zephyr and Southwest Chief. Randy stated that the map included in the Commission's PowerPoints that he and Spencer give throughout the state includes a map showing the two Amtrak routes as well as the potential reroute and thru-car service. This map should be included in future FRPR presentations.

Pete Rickershauser mentioned that at the three coalition meetings there were excellent collateral materials. He thought those were very well done. Those are being updated and will be distributed to Commissioners and Segment Stakeholders soon.

Legislative Session

In the December meeting, the Commission discussed a possible option for governance. The Commission mentioned preference for one option and Sal Pace provided another option. After the first of the year, CDOT executive management informed Commission staff that the governor didn't want to move forward with a bill in 2020. Commission staff is now hearing that there may be a legislative bill being introduced but they don't know what that will be. Sal Pace stated that there is talk at the Capital about running a FRPR bill. He believes it will be driven by legislators. Randy and Jill both received calls from a legislator and Sal mentioned that the approach will be for legislators to reach out to the Commission. Jill Gaebler added that Commission leadership has a meeting with the governor and he has been made aware of this potential bill.

G. Other Items

Commission Staffing and Operating Funds

Randy is reviewing invoices from the consultant team that will be able to provide more information on the consultant "burn rate" to determine how long existing funds will last.

Sal Pace believes that staffing and operating funds are a separate conversation from legislation. Whether legislation passes or not, the Commission should continue to seek out appropriations. In the typical Joint Budget Committee (JBC) process, the executive makes their request in the fall. The Commission was not included in the CDOT budget in the Fall, and so the Commission is now outside of the regular process. Representative Daneya Esgar is key in this process as well as the five other members of the JBC. Sal suggested developing a plan to sit down with each of these individuals. This will ultimately make it easier if the Commission approached Representative Esgar for appropriations. These discussions should occur over the next 4-5 weeks.

Transportation Commission Dinner

Carla Perez, Jennifer Webster, and Randy had lunch with Transportation Commission (TC) Chair Bill Thiebaut. Commissioner Thiebaut suggested that the Transportation Commission and SWC & FRPR Commission get together to talk about items and opportunities of mutual interest. The TC meets the third Wednesday-Thursday of the month. Herman Stockinger, CDOT, suggested either a lunch or dinner at a restaurant off-site or a catered meal at CDOT. A meeting off-site is generally more difficult due to noise. Jim Souby suggested a lunch meeting catered to CDOT as he has attended meetings at another location and it is difficult to hold conversations. Terry Hart agreed with this. Jim Souby also made the point that caution around public disclosures is necessary. A lunch meeting at CDOT is now being scheduled during the February Commission meetings. These dates are February 19th or 20th. Jacob Riger, Jill Gaebler, and Pete Rickershauser would not be able to attend on the 19th.

Commission Charter Signing/Elections

The Commission Charter, Version 1.3.1, was signed at this meeting. Rick Klein made a motion to keep Jill Gaebler and Jacob Riger in their roles as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Sal Pace seconded this motion, no other nominations were made, and the Commission unanimously approved this motion.

I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition Presentation

Greg Hall, Town of Vail, presented on behalf of the I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition. The I-70 Coalition wants to be sure that the Commission is connecting with their coalition and they are intrigued as to how they can work directly together. Particularly, they support enabling legislation language that allows another corridor to be included and not dependent on going back to the legislature.

Rick Klein asked why the interchange at E-470 and I-70 was chosen to terminate the AGS alignment. Greg responded that the programmatic study stopped there. With regard to the AGS, connecting back to DIA was critical for their ridership. Using RTD was slower by the time it went to Denver Union Station and the airport.

Sal Pace asked if there was consensus among I-70 Coalition for a strategy or path to completing their project. Greg explained that, as different things happen, like the Olympics, those legacies after a project like that are considered. Funding comes and goes on the federal level. Capital costs are the major concern as operating costs are more easily covered. Sal Pace asked what the next steps for the Coalition are. Greg Hall responded that there is a 2020 project reassessment being undertaken to look at changes such as in technologies, looking forward to a 2025 date on whether and how to move forward. Jacob Riger thanked Greg for coming and presenting and expressed the belief that it is important to work together. The SWC & FRPR Commission wants to work together collaboratively with the I-70 Coalition.

Greg Hall asked if it was possible for the I-70 Coalition to sit as a non-voting member on the SWC & FRPR Commission to stay informed. He clarified that they didn't want to be a part of the process but want to be informed. This topic will be discussed during the February Commission meeting.

ACTION: The Commission will discuss the addition of the I-70 Coalition during the February Commission meeting.

H. Confirm Next/Future Meetings

The next Commission meeting will be on February 28th in Berthoud. The March Commission meeting will be on March 27th at CDOT Headquarters.

I. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

Action Items

Date Assigned	Task	Assignee	Deadline	Completed
01/24/20	The Commission will discuss the addition of the I-70 Coalition during the February Commission meeting.	Commission	02/28/20	Ongoing
01/24/20	Commission staff will ensure that links between both Commission and project websites exist.	Spencer Dodge	02/28/20	Ongoing
01/24/20	Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene Southwest Chief sub-committee members, Amtrak, NMDOT, and KDOT to coordinate on a Southwest Chief Long Range Plan.	Spencer Dodge	02/10/20	Ongoing
01/24/20	Spencer Dodge will distribute a Doodle Poll to convene the Southwest Chief sub-committee in order to discuss CRISI grant terms/stipulations, engagement with federal delegation, and agenda setting for the March SWC meeting	Spencer Dodge	02/05/20	Ongoing
12/13/19	Reconvene the Southwest Chief sub-committee	Randy Grauberger	01/24/2020	Ongoing
11/08/2019	Adjust the Version Date on Commission Charter V1.2.9 to reflect the last updated changes.	Spencer Dodge	12/13/2019	Completed

11/08/2019	Randy Grauberger will reach out to Margaret Bowes regarding I-70 coordination.	Randy Grauberger	12/13/2019	Completed
10/11/2019	Randy Grauberger will work with Steve Long to develop a "ballpark" estimate on an extension of the current study to include Front Range Passenger Rail Service to include Cheyenne, Wyoming.	Randy Grauberger, Steve Long	11/08/2019	Completed
10/11/2019	Include joining the States for Passenger Rail Coalition on the November 8th Commission Meeting Agenda.	Commission Staff	11/8/2019	Completed
09/13/2019	Commission staff will work with a Commission sub-committee to get a consultant under contract for a public survey.	Jim Souby, Jill Gaebler, Sal Pace, Randy Grauberger, Spencer Dodge	10/11/2019	Completed
09/13/2019	Commissioners are asked to send contact information to consultants for individuals that they speak with in regards to Front Range Passenger Rail.	All Commissioners	Ongoing	Ongoing
8/9/2019	Commissioners are to review the draft Commission Charter and provide comments/edits to Spencer Dodge. Special notice should be applied to the reference section.	All Commissioners; Spencer Dodge	8/23/2019	Completed; to be approved for signatures at January 2020 meeting

8/9/2019	Commissioners are to provide comments and edits to Spencer Dodge on promotional materials (one pager and tri-fold brochure).	All Commissioners; Spencer Dodge	8/23/2019	Completed
8/9/2019	Consultants will provide the Commission with a simplified version of the Stakeholder Engagement and Public Involvement plan; including how much involvement will occur with the general public, the time frame and schedule, and a list of possible stakeholders.	Consultant Team	9/4/2019	Completed
8/9/2019	Commission staff will monitor anticipated CRISI grant opportunities, and when available, prepare recommendations as to what purposes and projects the Commission should apply for funding.	Commission Staff	<i>When Appropriate</i>	Completed