



June 5, 2019

Mr. Ray Lang
National Railroad Passenger Corporation - Amtrak
Union Station
500 West Jackson Boulevard, 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60661

Dear Commissioner Lang:

The Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission (the Commission) wants to continue a partnership with Amtrak, BNSF Railway, and the Union Pacific Railroad with a goal to provide thru-car service to Pueblo, and potentially to Colorado Springs, connecting with the existing Southwest Chief service at La Junta, CO.

To this end, a working group of Commissioners along with Rob Eaton representing Amtrak and Randy Grauberger, Commission Project Director, met on May 9, 2019 to discuss necessary steps to get this project underway once again; moving toward concluding necessary agreements and, ultimately, starting this service. Basis for this discussion were past documents provided by Amtrak, and BNSF Railway via Amtrak, concerning Amtrak's studies and proposals establishing the feasibility of a thru-car service between a connection with the Southwest Chief at La Junta, CO and Pueblo, CO.

At the May 9th meeting, Rob Eaton volunteered that, based on present Southwest Chief schedules through La Junta, and operating the thru-car service with priority and speeds up to 79 MPH between La Junta and Pueblo, there should be enough time to permit the proposed thru-car service to serve both Colorado Springs and Pueblo, with the thru-car connecting train turning at Colorado Springs instead of Pueblo.

Action items to advance developing a proposal for operation of the thru-car service between La Junta and Colorado Springs via Pueblo were discussed by the group, along with entity "owning" development of information and proposals for Commission review, as follows:

1. The City of Pueblo and Pueblo County are to take the lead in developing their station area plan for Pueblo Union Station to permit the proposed service to serve Pueblo, in conjunction with Amtrak and the serving freight railroads, BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad, as applicable.
2. Amtrak is to take the lead in developing a final operating plan for the proposed La Junta-Pueblo-Colorado Springs service, including a proposed schedule, operating plan, and power and equipment plan for the through-car service. Amtrak will also provide an updated revenue forecast of its 2016 ridership/revenue forecast for the service to Pueblo and a new ridership/revenue forecast for the proposed service to Colorado Springs. Finally, Amtrak is also to advise the City and County of Pueblo, BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad, as applicable, what facilities are needed to establish the proposed operations at La Junta, Pueblo and Colorado Springs.
3. Amtrak had previously provided to the Commission, in early 2017, a BNSF internal memo dated December 20, 2016 entitled "New La Junta-Pueblo Amtrak Service Capacity Analysis" providing two operating scenarios for the La Junta-Pueblo thru-car service. Scenario 1 in the memo provided required upgrades to BNSF's Pueblo Subdivision to permit operation of the thru-car service at 79 MPH with passenger train priority. Discussion at the May 9, 2019 meeting stated that BNSF should be requested to provide capital cost estimates to permit Scenario 1 operations as proposed. The group acknowledged that Positive Train Control (PTC) will need to be installed on this route to meet Amtrak and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirements. Further, the group acknowledged that similar information and costs need to be developed for the Pueblo-Colorado Springs segment of the route. The working group recommended that request for this information be sent by the Commission directly to BNSF Railway.

At the May 10, 2019 full Commission meeting, the Commissioners authorized and directed that the dialogue relating to establishing Pueblo thru-car service as proposed by Amtrak be restarted, and review begun to consider extending the service to Colorado Springs.

Subsequent conversations with BNSF Railway determined that, inasmuch as the proposed service is to be provided by Amtrak, and BNSF's contract to operate the Southwest Chief and the proposed thru-car service would be with Amtrak, the Commission's request in #3 above should be directed to Amtrak as part of Amtrak's overall development of the proposed service plan. BNSF Railway will respond to Amtrak based on Amtrak's requests for information from BNSF, as occurred in 2016 for the La Junta-Pueblo thru-car service proposal.

Please consider this as the Commission's formal request to Amtrak to develop a complete proposal including all the elements above assigned to Amtrak for Commission review to operate a thru-car service connecting with the Southwest Chief at La Junta, serving Pueblo and Colorado

Springs. Should you have any questions, please contact Randy Grauberger, Commission Project Director, at 303-512-4005.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Gaebler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jill Gaebler, Chair

Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission