

Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

Draft Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 28th, 2020

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Berthoud Town Hall

807 Mountain Avenue, Berthoud, CO, 80513

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	Phone
Terry Hart	Pueblo Area Council of Governments	Pueblo County	Phone
Becky Karasko	North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization	NFRMPO	Yes
Rick Klein	Resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, or Pueblo Counties	City of La Junta	Yes
Sal Pace	Passenger Rail Advocate	Resident of Pueblo	Phone
Pete Rickershauser	Class 1 Railroad Representative	BNSF Railway	Yes
Nathan Anderson	Class 1 Railroad Representative	Union Pacific	Yes
Phil Rico	South Central Council of Governments	Mayor of Trinidad	Phone
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	No
Dale Steenbergen*	Cheyenne, Wyoming	Chamber of Commerce	Yes

*Non-Voting Members

Others On Phone: Rob Eaton (Amtrak), John Liosatos (PPACG)

Others: Randy Grauberger (SWC & FRPRC), Spencer Dodge (SWC & FRPRC), Carla Perez (HDR, Inc), Jeffrey Range (CDR Associates), David Singer (CDOT), Tom Mason (Cheyenne MPO), Dan Kline (WYDOT), Jennifer Webster (Catalyst Public Affairs), Jeff Dawson (CDOT), Will Karspeck (Town of Berthoud), Maureen Dower (Town of Berthoud), Doug Rex (DRCOG), Mickey Conway (LiUNA), Jeff Hindman (Town of Berthoud), Rob Colosimo (HNTB), Joe Pimentel (LiUNA), Brian Hartman (CDOT), Michael Meyer (Quandel Consultants), Gary Barber (Front Range Dual-Service Rail Park)

A. Call to Order and Introductions – Jacob Riger

Jacob Riger called the meeting to order at 10:02am and asked all in attendance and on the phone to introduce themselves. Jacob began the meeting by thanking the Town of Berthoud, Mayor Will Karspeck, and Maureen Dower for hosting the Commission meeting. Mayor Karspeck thanked the Commission for coming to Berthoud, mentioning the town began with rail and they are excited for that to come back. Berthoud is the fastest growing town in the area and they would love to take a train to Denver.

B. Review/Approval of January 24th Draft Meeting Minutes – Jacob Riger

Jacob asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the draft January 24th Commission Meeting Minutes. There were no comments or questions. Pete Rickershauser made a motion to approve the minutes, Rick Klein seconded that 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 provided the Commission with a monthly Project Director's Report and reviewed several highlights. Randy, Sal Pace, Jacob Riger, and Spencer Dodge met with Governor Jared Polis and CDOT Executive Director Shoshana Lew on January 27th. This provided a good opportunity to get the Governor's perspective and he indicated that he was very supportive. Governor Polis suggested that he would like to see the Front Range Passenger Rail project at a point that it is ready to work with the legislature to put a referred measure on the ballot in 2021. If the project is not ready in 2021, the Governor would rather wait for the 2022 election.

A meeting with Amtrak, BNSF Railway, KDOT, NMDOT, CDOT and the Commission has been scheduled for March 9th at the Transportation Technology Center, Inc. outside of Pueblo, CO. This meeting was convened to begin coordination on developing a Long Range Plan for the Southwest Chief.

Commission staff have been continuing to hold stakeholder interviews. Interviewees include: AARP Colorado, the Town of Berthoud, the City of Castle Rock, Colorado State University, and the North Front Range MPO.

The Commission sat down for lunch with the Colorado Transportation Commission on February 20th to acquaint the two Commissions and update the Transportation Commission on the Rail Commission's work. Both Commissions would like to continue meeting intermittently; possibly every 6 months.

Randy also provided the Commission with a budget status summary. Of the original \$2.5m, \$192,035 remains uncommitted.

Randy asked if there were any questions. There were none, but Rick Klein did thank Randy for his great work.

E. Southwest Chief

TIGER IX

David Krutsinger reported that the TIGER IX grant that was awarded in 2018 has been proceeding through environmental clearances. The grant appears to be on the verge of environmental approval in the next few weeks, barring any further comments from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This process has set the basis for all the necessary agreements between the FRA and Colfax County.

2018 CRISI Grant

This grant included \$9m in local matches and \$9m in federal funds for the purpose of the installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) from La Junta, CO to Dodge City, KS as required by Amtrak. In November, environmental clearances were achieved. Currently, terms and conditions between CDOT and FRA, and CDOT and local partners, are being finalized; David hopes this can be completed in the April timeframe.

2019 CRISI Grant

In October 2019, the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission submitted an application for a CRISI grant to assist in funding a feasibility study for a Southwest Chief thru-car service to Pueblo and Colorado Springs. The Commission was notified on February 27th that its grant application was successful. Jacob Riger congratulated all of those involved with submitting the application. Randy had already thanked CDOT and the Transportation Commission for providing matching funds as well as assisting Spencer Dodge in the actual submittal of the grant. WSP was also thanked for their assistance in putting the grant application together. Moving forward, Spencer and Randy will work with FRA and David Krutsinger to determine next steps. Pete Rickershauser asked what the immediate next step is. David K answered that, because this is for a planning study, environmental clearance steps will not be necessary, and we should be able to go straight to the agreement-writing process. FRA staff will send Terms and Conditions to the Commission and then an agreement from all local partners will be needed. Sal Pace also thanked Senator Michael Bennet and Senator Cory Gardner for their support and efforts in securing this grant.

F. Front Range Passenger Rail

January Segment Coalition Input Review

Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates, provided a review of the input received during the last round of Segment Stakeholder Coalition meetings. At the last Commission meeting a quick review was given. However, that was done the same week that meetings were held and there has now been more time to analyze the inputs received.

The first round of Coalition meetings were in November. The next round of meetings are likely to be held in April. The timing on these next meetings is based on technical work; the goal is to allow the Project Development team to continue work on the evaluation process and alternatives development and take results of that work to stakeholders for input.

There were three objectives during these Coalition meetings. 1) Provide an update on proposed activities for 2020, 2) Gather stakeholders' input on specific issues, and 3) Update stakeholders' on how their previous input has been utilized and incorporated into the work that has been done.

Corridor context and potential alignments are key to understand in order to provide input. The potential alignment of the future passenger rail system has been discussed in many of the Coalition meetings and Stakeholder Interviews. At the Segment Coalition meetings, the project team wanted to "zoom out" and discuss the project in terms of corridors. Those corridors include major highway rights-of-way, freight rail rights-of-way and greenfield options. Mandy Whorton provided stakeholders with an update on the pros and cons of each one, and explained that it would likely end up being some kind of hybrid between those corridors. Mandy then walked through the context and considerations of each corridor. Following this overview, stakeholders participated in an exercise to gather input through group discussions.

The project team also provided stakeholders with a Communications packet that included key messages and draft communications language.

As a result of stakeholder engagement efforts, the project team has a good sense of what is important to stakeholders and input was sought to see what stakeholders want the project team to do with that

information; how do we find opportunities, how do we avoid challenges, how do we find solutions to both. Examples of considerations that the project team needs help with were provided for each segment. At the meetings, there were maps on the wall, both corridor-wide and segments, as well as a list of considerations. A questionnaire was also distributed.

Stakeholder Interviews Report

Jeffrey continued his presentation by sharing information on the input from Stakeholder Interviews that has been received. This input includes challenges, outstanding questions, barriers to making passenger rail a reality, opportunities, and solutions. The most cited themes from group discussions were given as well as other commonly mentioned themes.

The biggest challenges are alignment and first/final mile issues. Jeffrey provided the opportunities, such as building diverse coalitions, to get beyond governance challenges. Pete Rickershauser commented that he did not see on the lists, particularly in the South and for Pueblo, four processes that are related and ongoing. Those include the Front Range Passenger Rail project, the City and County of Pueblo's Station Area Plan, the re-route of the Southwest Chief from La Junta to Pueblo, and the CRISI Grant thru-car study. Pete stated that all of these efforts should be coordinating and interconnecting with each other, along with coordination with Amtrak. Jeffrey responded that one of the goals, and advantages, of building such wide-ranging stakeholder coalitions is to coordinate these kinds of efforts.

Phil Rico asked why the project team hasn't been in contact with Action 22 and why there haven't been any interviews or outreach with Walsenburg and Trinidad. Phil continued and asked if there would be any community meetings in Trinidad. Randy Grauberger stated that Rick Klein is the Action 22 Vice Chair, and that Spencer Dodge gave a presentation to PRO 15. Randy or Spencer will reach out to Action 22. Jeffrey responded that there have been no planned community meetings at this point in the process. Feedback from stakeholders has indicated that there needs to be more technical information available before public meetings begin.

Jeffrey continued his presentation and discussed stakeholder interviews. Jeffrey provided a list of the interviews broken out by segments. The project team has completed 24 interviews, with one more scheduled and several more scoped. One note was that the biggest concern across these interviews is the cost of a Front Range Passenger Rail system. Jeffrey finished his presentation by discussing how all of the stakeholder engagement is being used. There are five key areas of implementing stakeholder engagement: 1) Vision Statement, Purpose, Goals and Objectives, 2) Evaluation Criteria, 3) Social-Political Risk Assessment, 4) Key Messaging, and 5) Engagement Plan.

Rick Klein discussed the original Vision Statement and mentioned that originally it discussed "major population centers" instead of specifically mentioning Pueblo to Fort Collins. Jim Souby agreed with Rick and added that the broader picture is more attractive to many individuals that will be asked for support.

Phil Rico asked everyone to be aware that the New Elk Coal Mine, west of Trinidad, will be opening up and that will lead to higher freight rail traffic volumes on the BNSF lines in the Trinidad area.

Executive Oversight Committee

Carla Perez, HDR Inc., suggested the project is at the stage to possibly establish an Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) for the purpose of coordinating and communicating between the Commission and CDOT. The vision for this group is to come together as needed to resolve issues. For example, conversations between CDOT, RTD, and the Commission will need to be held around the topic of Burnham Yard redevelopment at an executive level. Another example is general planning, such as the Statewide plan, regional plans, the 10-year plan, and RTD's plans. Suggested makeup of this group to include the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission along with Randy Grauberger, CDOT's Executive Director and the Director of Innovative Mobility, and a representative from the Transportation Commission. This group would help to inform project development and stakeholder coordination. There is no timeframe on

convening this group for the first time. However, sooner is preferred to coordinate plans and make sure things are running smoothly.

Rick Klein stated his support for creating the EOC and reiterated that the sooner it convenes, the better. Randy stated that in the HDR proposal, this group was referred to as the Project Leadership Team (PLT). The project team believed that a PLT sounded more like a stakeholder engagement related group and changed the group to be more executive focused. The project team will distribute a memo describing the EOC to be discussed at the March Commission meeting.

Carla also took a moment to revisit the revised Vision Statement and stated that there was concern with being specific on locations, as that is limiting. In the second sentence of that statement, Commissioners were advised to note the language on the system being a “backbone” for future expansion. Randy mentioned that it should also discuss transit options in the State and Region. Pete recommended one additional amendment to address Phil’s concerns; if ‘major population centers’ was removed it would reduce limitations. David Singer, CDOT, responded to this discussion and explained that the project team, in thinking about ridership and travel time, needs to include major population centers as the appropriate starting point for Front Range Passenger Rail.

Legislative Update

Jacob Riger began this discussion by stating the purpose of this agenda item was to discuss the process for compiling Commission comments on the Draft bill. Jacob first thanked Senate President Leroy Garcia for reaching out to the Commission and working with the Commission. Originally, a deadline had been set for the Commission to provide comments on draft legislation by the middle of the week. Randy spoke with the President Garcia’s office and they gave the Commission a 10-day extension, until Monday, March 9th. This Commission meeting, however, is not the forum to discuss the substance of the bill or the substance of specific comments. The purpose of the discussion today is to decide on a process for gathering, compiling, and submitting comments on the draft legislation.

Randy Grauberger thanked President Garcia and his staff for providing the additional time to comment on the legislation. It appeared that the Senator’s office was under the impression that the Commission had received the draft bill well before this week. However, when that was clarified, the Senator’s staff stated that they wanted the Commission to be able to provide their majority position and report back on that. They stated that they would appreciate a consolidation of comments from the entire Commission. Randy proposed that the Commission would categorize the draft bill comments into eight “buckets” or themes (for example, board composition, powers/duties, etc.). Spencer Dodge has already begun taking individual comments and putting those into a single document. Randy suggested that Commissioners sit down early in the week of March 2nd to develop a document to provide comments to Senator Garcia. Commissioners were asked to submit any additional comments to Spencer by Monday morning. Spencer will then compile those comments by Tuesday for a meeting to agree on consolidation of the Commission’s thoughts.

Jacob Riger reiterated the plan for reporting comments. That plan being: 1) provide any additional comments to Spencer by Monday morning, March 2nd, 2) Spencer will consolidate those comments and redistribute to Commissioners on Monday, 3) the Commission will sit down to finalize that document, 4) Spencer will redistribute the document to the Commission for a final fatal flaw review and then 5) Spencer will send that document to President Garcia’s office by the end of the week, before the March 9th deadline.

Pete Rickershauser asked what exactly Spencer would be producing. The idea is to not put together a document with specific amendment language, but a compilation of comments and reactions from the Commission. Sal Pace reminded the group that even after the bill is introduced there will still be multiple opportunities to amend the bill. Jim Souby followed that with support for Sal’s comment. Phil Rico asked Rick Klein if it made sense for them to get together and submit joint comments. Rick will get with Phil to do just that. Jill Gaebler commented that she supported the direction the Commission was taking.

A meeting was proposed for Tuesday, at 3:00 at CDOT, scheduled for two hours. Spencer will send a calendar invite to Commissioners and provide a conference call option.

Sal Pace mentioned he had approached the Joint Budget Committee for additional funding for the Commission. Phil Rico advised he was scheduled to meet with Senator Garcia on Monday, March 2nd, and would mention both Commission discussions on the proposed bill and the Commission's funding needs.

G. Other Items

Amtrak Update

Rob Eaton provided an update for the Commission. There were three items that were discussed. First, Ray Lang has been working with Randy on a Southwest Chief Long Range Plan Coordination meeting. Larry Chesler from Amtrak will be attending that meeting. On Tuesday, March 10th Rob is meeting with the Pueblo Station Area Plan consultants to discuss the five sites they are considering. Finally, Rob congratulated the team on the successful CRISI grant for the Southwest Chief Thru-Car Feasibility study. This will be a topic of conversation at the March 9th Southwest Chief long range planning meeting.

Jim Souby mentioned that it would be useful to learn about any operational findings that Amtrak had when they brought the Amtrak exhibit train into Pueblo. An actual passenger train pulled into Pueblo and that functionality of that operation into and out of Pueblo Union Station should be looked at. Rob stated that he will work with the Amtrak's Transportation Department for information about those Exhibit Train movements into Pueblo.

CDOT/Commission MOU Update

Randy provided the Commission with a quick update on this document. The Commission provided comments and a version of the document was finalized. That version went to the Attorney General's office and came back as an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA). This change is more about semantics than anything. This was then run through the CDOT contracts department. The IAA is now almost ready for signatures.

Transportation Commission Lunch Recap

This lunch was suggested by Transportation Commission Chair Bill Thiebaut. Randy thought that the meeting went very well and wanted to hear from other attending Commissioners.

Bill Van Meter began by saying how impressed he was with how many Transportation Commissioners, even those from outside the Front Range region, stayed after a long day of meetings for this lunch. The Transportation Commission was very interested in details and were very supportive. Jill Gaebler echoed Bill's comments. She stated further that the Transportation Commission was extremely engaged, seemed to genuinely care, and support the Rail Commission's mission. Jim Souby thought the meeting was very valuable. He added that he talked at length with Grand Junction's Commissioner and she was very interested in Front Range Rail. Jacob Riger thought the meeting was really collaborative and shared his appreciation for Randy and Spencer's work, along with CDOT's efforts. Randy finished by saying that this Transportation Commission seems to be very interested in multi-modal options and indicated that they wanted to continue meeting regularly, perhaps on an every-six-month basis.

I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition Discussion

In January, a representative from the I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition presented to the Commission. At the end, they suggested that they would like the Commission to consider allowing the I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition to join the SW Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission as a non-voting member, similar to how Dale Steenbergen had been added as a non-voting Commissioner. Randy

stated he believes that there would be value in the Coalition being a non-voting member for the purposes of future legislative support.

Rick Klein stated that he would like to delay a decision on this for a month. Rick is thinking about the Vision Statement and is concerned with “spidering” of the Commission’s mission. Pete stated that he believes there could be synergies between the FRPR project and the I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition’s mission. At a minimum, he believes the Commission should stay aware of the I-70 Coalition’s activities. Bill Van Meter agreed with Rick’s thoughts; Wyoming and Cheyenne are a direct extension and makes sense. However, he needs time to process including voices in other corridors that are not the Front Range. Jim Souby shared that view, but also stated that Pete’s point was well-taken. The Commission reached a consensus on being thoughtful on this matter, taking another month to consider and revisiting it at a later Commission meeting.

H. Confirm Next/Future Meetings

The April 24 meeting is scheduled to be held in Pueblo, but a specific location hasn’t been set. The Pueblo Station Area Plan consultant team is anticipating holding a public meeting on Thursday, April 23 and wanted to “piggyback” with the Commission.

I. Adjourn

Jacob Riger adjourned the meeting at 11:47am.

Action Items

Date Assigned	Task	Assignee	Deadline	Completed
02/28/20	1) Commissioners will provide any additional comments to Spencer by Monday morning, 2) Spencer will consolidate those comments and redistribute to Commissioners on Monday, 3) the Commission will sit down to finalize that document, 4) Spencer will redistribute the document to the Commission for a final fatal flaw review and then 5) Spencer will send that document to President Garcia's office by the end of the week, before the March 9 th deadline	Commissioners, Spencer Dodge	03/09/20	Completed
02/28/20	Consultant project team will distribute a memo describing the EOC to be discussed at the March Commission meeting	Consultant Team	03/27/20	Ongoing
02/28/20	Spencer and Randy will work with FRA and David Krutsinger to determine next steps for the awarded CRISI grant	Spencer Dodge, Randy Grauberger	05/30/20	Ongoing
01/24/20	The Commission will discuss the addition of the I-70 Coalition during the February	Commission	02/28/20	Ongoing

	Commission meeting.			
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	Completed
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	Completed
12/13/19	Reconvene the Southwest Chief sub-committee	Randy Grauberger	01/24/2020	Completed
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	Randy Grauberger, Steve Long	11/08/2019	Completed

	on an extension of the current study to include Front Range Passenger Rail Service to include Cheyenne, Wyoming.			
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
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	Consultant Team	9/4/2019	Completed

	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.			
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