

Project Director's Report

by Randy Grauberger

For August 28 – September 24, 2020

Key SW Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Staff Activities

- Finalize and distribute August 28th Commission meeting draft minutes and September 25th agenda packet.
- Meeting with FRA to discuss FRA comments on Draft Statement of Work, schedule and budget on 2019 CRISI grant. Working with CDOT Procurement staff to prepare for upcoming Request for Proposals for the Alternatives Analysis effort for the SW Chief Thru-Car Service. Obligation of Grant agreement expected in October.
- **Rail Commission staff notified that 2020 CRISI Grant application had been approved.** This \$548,000 federal Grant, and the \$137,000 in non –federal matching funds, will complete preliminary Rail Passenger Service Development Planning and Rail Simulation Modeling. These are critical steps prior to the FRPR Project entering into NEPA.
- Call with CDOT Budget Analyst revealed that an extra \$100,000 was provided to the Rail Commission from the Legislature in May. More details to be determined
- Round 4 of Segment Stakeholder Coalition meetings. Very strong stakeholder turnout and considerable input and continued support for moving the FRPR project forward.
- Meeting with Joint Budget Committee staff to present Rail Commission status update and FY 2022 Rail Commission Budget request.
- Meetings and PowerPoints with DRCOG Board Workshop, Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC), ColoRail Annual Meeting, City of Louisville, Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), and North Area Transportation Alliance (NATA) to discuss status of Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) project.
- Listened to Ray Lang's National Webinar discussing Amtrak's proposed Network Modernization Program that could provide significant federal funding to Colorado's Front Range Corridor. Ray mentioned the Colorado Front Range before mentioning any other corridors in the US. Ray suggested that "the Colorado Rail Commission is a great Commission that is very far along and in position to tap onto these funds very early".
- Meeting with Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway to discuss possible use of Joint Corridor operations and analysis/optimization of Alternative 3 (BNSF Alignment) from Pueblo to Fort Collins. Received input from both railroads that we should model reduced number of train operations based on preliminary ridership data. Also staff asked the Railroads for their review / comments on FRA's suggested edits to the Draft Statement of Work for the SW Chief Thru-car Study.
- Participated in TIGER 9 and CRISI PTC implementation calls with funding partners. Met with CDOT staff to finalize language in the Sub-agreement between the Rail Commission and CDOT regarding the 2018 CRISI Grant related to PTC implementation.
- Ran new FRPR ridership runs reducing fares to 17 cents/mile instead of previous runs at 32 cents/mile. Generated about 50% more ridership. 17 cents/mile is close to median fares across the US for similar passenger rail service and also Bustang's fares are generally based on 17 cents/mile.
- Spoke with California High Speed Rail Commission staff to set up presentation to SW Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission at the meeting on December 4.
- Participated in a zoom call with the States for Passenger Rail Coalition on September 23.

Upcoming meetings / presentations

- October 14 – 9 a.m. Presentation to PPACG Board
- October 14 – Afternoon Presentation to CDOT Transportation Commission Workshop
- October 23rd - Rail Commission meeting
- November 10th – Class I Railroad meeting
- December 4th - November/December Rail Commission meeting.
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SW Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Financial Report

As of September 24th, 2020

Income

Senate Bill 1, July 2018	\$2,500,000
Senate Bill 19 – 125	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
	\$2,600,000

Expenses (commitments)

2 years of Salaries/Benefits for Project Dir. and Comm. Liaison (est.)	\$500,000
HDR Contract for Service Development Plan / Pre-NEPA	\$1,500,000
Pledged Match for 2018 CRISI grant for PTC	\$100,000
WSP contract to write 2019 CRISI App. for Thru-car Study	\$24,465
October 2019 “Survey for Front Range Passenger Rail”	\$24,500
Pledged Match for Potential 2019 CRISI Grant App. (Thru Car Study)	\$159,000
Membership to “States for Passenger Rail Coalition”	\$5,416
Pledged Match for 2020 CRISI Grant application (RTC modeling & complete SDP)	\$25,000
<i>Proposed funds for licenses for Project website and Project database mgmt. from HDR</i>	<i>\$651 (estimated)</i>
	\$2,339,032
Available	\$220,968

Update on HDR Contract (\$1,500,000)

Invoiced through July (no invoice received yet for August)	\$1,121,365.67
Estimated CDOT staff dollar commitment through August	\$ 305,000

At the projected “burn” rate, it is estimated that the HDR contract funds will be fully spent in late-October.

Meeting with JBC staff on September 23 to discuss FY 22 Rail Commission funding request:

- \$500,000 for 2 year staffing needs
- \$250,000 for Grant Match, surveys, States for Passenger rail membership, etc.
- \$10 million NEPA