

**PRIORITIZATION OF RAILROAD CORRIDORS FOR  
PRESERVATION**

**PREPARED BY THE COLORADO  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Transportation Legislative Review Committee (TLRC) with the Colorado Department of Transportation's report on rail abandonments and recommendations relative to possible rail line acquisitions. This is the fifteenth report submitted by the Executive Director of the Department to the TLRC on rail abandonment pursuant to 43-1-1303 (3) C.R.S.

During the last year there have been no new abandonment actions. However, during the past year there have been some other activities and initiatives by the Department and others that could potentially impact rail abandonments and rail acquisition in the future.

**Part I** provides **Background Information** on past and ongoing activities.

**Part II** describes **New Initiatives and Activities** which have been undertaken over the past year.

**Part III** lists the **Recommendations** of the Department.

## **Part I    Background**

### **(A)    Rail System in Colorado**

The Colorado rail system currently includes both a freight rail network and a limited passenger rail network. The role of the railroads and rail transportation in the state is to provide efficient transportation choices for the movement of goods and people while connecting effectively to the other transportation modes. The rail system in the state is an interconnected component of much larger regional, national and global multimodal transportation systems and economies.

Currently 14 privately owned freight railroads operate in Colorado. These railroads own more than 2,800 miles of track in the state and currently operate on 2,684 miles of those tracks. This represents about 1.9 percent of the nation's 140,000 miles of network trackage. There are two Class I railroads in Colorado, the BNSF and the UP. Combined they operate over 80 percent of the miles of track and carry the majority of freight in the state. The freight rail network in the Front Range is currently near capacity and is forecast to be over capacity by 2035.

In addition, there are 12 short line railroads in Colorado comprising 20 percent of track miles in the state. They primarily provide localized service with connections to the Class I railroads. They principally serve the agricultural industry and are very valuable assets to both local and statewide economies.

The passenger rail system in Colorado is presently very limited. Passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak with two routes that pass through the state. The Amtrak routes use existing freight tracks and are at risk of needing to find new corridors to use if freight railroad infrastructure is not maintained/upgraded in the future. These routes are:

- The California Zephyr runs daily between Chicago and San Francisco. Colorado stops include: Fort Morgan, Denver, Fraser/Winter Park, Granby, Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction.
- The Southwest Chief runs daily between Chicago and Los Angeles. Colorado stops include: Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad. This route is outside the study area for the Interregional Connectivity Study.

Colorado had two additional Amtrak routes that were discontinued in 1997 due to reductions in federal funds. These two trains were the Pioneer, operating between Denver and Seattle and the Desert Wind, operating between Denver and Los Angeles by way of Salt Lake City and Las Vegas.

**(B) Past Legislative actions**

In 1997, the General Assembly enacted Senate Bill (SB) 37, concerning the disposition of abandoned railroad rights-of-way in Colorado. According to this legislation and resulting state statute (CRS Title 43, Part 13 – Acquisition of Abandoned Railroad Rights-of-Way), an existing rail line, railroad right-of-way or an abandoned railroad right-of-way is eligible for acquisition by the Department, if the Executive Director determines it serves one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) Preservation of the rail line for freight or passenger service;
- (2) Maintenance of a rail corridor for future transportation purposes or interim recreational purposes;
- (3) Access to surrounding state manufacturing facilities, agricultural areas or other locales that may be adversely affected by the loss of rail service or loss of railroad corridor; or
- (4) Any public use of the rail line or railroad right-of-way that is compatible with the future use as a railroad or other transportation system.

The legislation also requires the Colorado Transportation Commission to review any property determined to be eligible for acquisition and approve the acquisition before the Executive Director submits the prioritized list of rail lines or rights-of-way to be acquired to the Transportation Legislation Review Committee (TLRC) (43-1-1303)(2)).

43-1-1308 C.R.S., states that “the members of the TLRC shall make a written report setting forth its recommendations, findings, and comments as to each recommendation for the acquisition of railroad rights-of-way and their uses and submit the report to the General Assembly.”

43-1-1301(3) C.R.S., stipulates that the “Executive Director shall submit a prioritized list with recommendations to the TLRC concerning the railroad rights-of-way or rail lines to be acquired by the state and their proposed use.”

During the 1998 Legislative Session, HB-98-1395 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. That bill allocated \$10.4 million to the State Rail Bank Fund to purchase the NA Towner rail line from Union Pacific (UP) Railroad to subsequently lease or sell the line to a

short line operator. The line was purchased from the UP in July 1998 and subsequently advertised for sale. Since that time the State has leased the line to short line operators. In October of 2011 the lease/purchase agreement with Victoria & Southern (V&S) was finalized, and ownership was transferred to V&S (See item G. below.)

In 2009, legislation created the Division of Transit and Rail. The legislation gives DTR the responsibility for planning, development, operation, and integration of transit and rail into the statewide transportation system. In addition, the legislation requires the Division, in coordination with transit and rail providers, to plan, promote and implement investments in transit and rail services statewide. Furthermore, the Division has specific duties to promote, plan, design, build, finance, operate, maintain and contract for transit services, including, but not limited to, bus, passenger rail, and advanced guideway system services.

In addition, the legislation created a Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) to advise the Transportation Commission and the Executive Director regarding the initial focus of the division and to recommend a long-term advisory structure, including the advisory structure's Division's purpose and role, in support of the transit and rail-related functions of the department. A permanent advisory structure has been created and the TRAC meets monthly.

#### (C) **Past Transportation Commission Actions**

The Transportation Commission believes that certain significant rail corridors represent an irreplaceable state transportation resource and that it is critical to preserve them. That is because once they are lost; the cost of recreating equivalent corridors in the future will be prohibitive.

In June 2000 the Colorado Transportation Commission approved a **Rail Corridor Preservation Policy**, which states the following reasons why rail transportation is important to Colorado:

- Preserving rail corridors for future use may save money, since the cost to preserve a corridor for future transportation purposes is often far less than having to purchase an equivalent corridor in the future.
- Rail transportation may be needed in certain corridors to supplement the highway system and to provide adequate mobility and travel capacity.
- Rail transportation can be a cost-effective and environmentally preferable mode of transportation in certain situations.
- Preserving existing freight rail service by preventing a railroad from being abandoned can reduce the maintenance costs on state highways, since the transfer of displaced rail freight to trucks will increase deterioration of the state highway system.
- Freight rail service can serve as an economic lifeline to the economic health of a community when there are no other modes that adequately and economically serve the needs of the community.

The Rail Corridor Preservation Policy identified the following criteria to be used to prioritize corridors for funding:

- Magnitude of negative impacts upon adjacent highways.

- Immediacy of the possible abandonment of the rail line.
- Immediacy of possible encroachment on an existing rail corridor that may jeopardize the implementation of passenger rail service in the corridor.
- Estimated cost to acquire the rail corridor.
- Opportunity for public-private partnerships.

In order to facilitate a more comprehensive examination of which rail corridors are of interest to the State, the Transportation Commission directed CDOT staff to identify State Significant Rail Corridors. In November 2000, CDOT prepared a list of **State Significant Rail Corridors**, which were adopted by the Transportation Commission as part of the Statewide Transportation Plan. The criteria used to identify these State Significant Rail Corridors included existing and potential future demand for passenger and freight services and local/regional support for the preservation of the corridor.

This original list is over 10 years old. The Division of Transit and Rail may explore rescinding the list and using its final State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (see Part II A below) as a mechanism to identify rail corridors for preservation. The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan identifies the Towner Line and the Tennessee Pass Line as two rail corridors for preservation.

In March 2012, the Transportation Commission approved the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. The Plan serves as a framework for future freight and passenger rail planning in Colorado. In October 2012, the Federal Railroad Administration approved the plan and Colorado is eligible for federal funding for passenger rail investments. The Plan will be integrated into the Statewide Transportation Plan.

**(D) Abandonment Activity**

On May 6, 2008 Great Western Railway (GRW) filed to abandon the Welty Branch, a 6.2 mile line, in Weld County, Colorado, with the Surface Transportation Board. No significant action has occurred in this process since March of 2009. GRW has been granted the authority to consummate the abandonment but states it is continuing to explore alternatives to abandonment. Authority to consummate the abandonment will expire May 6, 2013. GRW may apply for an extension if no action is taken prior to this date.

**(E) Potential Rail Lines for Acquisition**

When a rail line is not economically viable to operate, the result is often either (1) the sale of the line, usually from the two Class I national railroads (UP and/or Burlington Northern (BN)), to small, regional railroad companies; or, (2) a formal request for abandonment to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) by the owner of the rail line. Rather than abandon a line, a larger railroad company will usually solicit bidders for the purchase of the line by a short line operator or regional railroad in an effort to maintain rail service along the line. These smaller railroad companies usually have lower operating costs and do not need the same volume of business on the line as the larger railroads to be profitable.

The ability to respond quickly to a potential abandonment can be an important factor in ensuring corridor preservation: once a Request to Abandon has been formally filed with the STB, abandonment can take place in as little as 90 days.

The issue of rail lines being abandoned is of statewide importance due to the impact these abandonments may have on the remainder of the transportation system. As lines are lost, the freight that was being moved by rail must then be moved by truck, causing additional deterioration of the local roadways and/or state highways. In addition, some businesses cannot survive without access to a rail line, thereby causing these businesses to either relocate to another area in the state or to move out of state. Also, once a railroad corridor is abandoned, it is unlikely it will be returned to rail service or be available for any transportation purpose, especially if the rail tracks are salvaged and the Right-of Way (ROW) is sold or reverts to adjoining property owners.

The Department will continue to monitor short line railroads in the State to ascertain their current financial status and to examine the prospects for their continued survival because they continue to be an important part of Colorado's future.

There are two lines that continue to be considered at risk of future abandonment. Both are identified as Rail Corridors of State Significance and are owned by Union Pacific and shown below:

❑ **Tennessee Pass Line (UP)**

The Tennessee Pass line runs from near Gypsum, through Minturn, over Tennessee Pass and along the Arkansas River to Pueblo. The Tennessee Pass line has been identified as significant to CDOT because of its potential to carry both passengers and freight, and because it is the only existing trans-mountain alternative in Colorado to the Moffat Tunnel line, which often runs near capacity. The Tennessee Pass Line may be able to be used as an alternate route as trans-mountain rail demand grows due to increased development on the Western Slope or if the Moffat Tunnel were damaged or closed for any reason. Such an event would have a significant impact on Colorado, particularly on the Western Slope, since the railroads would be forced to move freight through Wyoming. No freight has been shipped on the Tennessee Pass Line since 1996, but in recent (2011) conversations with the UP, there was no indication they will abandon this line in the near future.

❑ **Fort Collins Branch Line (UP)**

The Fort Collins Branch line is a line that runs southeast from Fort Collins to Milliken and Dent, then east to La Salle. It is identified as a Rail Corridor of State Significance since it connects Greeley and Fort Collins to the North I-25 corridor, and was identified as part of the preferred alternative in the North Front Range Transportation Alternatives Feasibility Study (NFR-TAFS). This line does not appear to be at risk of abandonment at this time. However, it should be noted this branch line was not included in the Preferred Alternative of the North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement. The North I-25 EIS does, though, recommend a new commuter rail line connecting the commuter rail line in Longmont and the north end of the RTD/FasTracks North Metro.

CDOT will continue to monitor the two remaining Rail Corridors of State Significance with regard to possible abandonment actions. These items will remain on the priority list for continued monitoring by the Department.

**(F) State Rail Bank Fund Activities**

There were no expenditures from the State Rail Bank Fund in FY 2012. If monies are not available from the Fund, CDOT has no resources readily available to preserve a Rail Corridor of State Significance if a rail company owning it chose to initiate abandonment of that line. Absent available cash in the Fund, the department would likely be unable to request and obtain funding from the state Legislature to preserve such a corridor in a timely fashion, should abandonment occur when the Legislature is out of session. As noted earlier, abandonment can occur with as little as 90 days' notice.

One concept that deserves consideration is placement by the Legislature of significant funds in the Rail Account of the State Infrastructure Bank, which the Transportation Commission could draw upon should a Rail Corridor of State Significance need to be acquired. CDOT would then pursue repayment to the Rail Account of the State Infrastructure Bank for any acquisition expense from the Legislature during the following Legislative session. This would enable the Transportation Commission to be more responsive to any abandonment that may occur.

It should also be noted that while no expenditures are proposed from the State Rail Bank Fund, CDOT's State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (see discussion below in **II (A)**) can aid the Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) to prioritize and pursue funding in a rail projects in the future.

**(G) Status of Towner Line**

During the 1998 Legislative Session, HB-98-1395 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, allocating \$10.4 million to the State Rail Bank to purchase the Towner Rail Line, which runs from NA Junction to Towner, from the UP and to subsequently lease or sell the line to a short line operator. The line was purchased from the UP in July 1998 and subsequently advertised for sale. In March 2000, CDOT leased the Towner Line to the Colorado Kansas and Pacific Railway Company (CKP) for five years with an option to buy. CKP operated rail service on the line from April 2000 until June 2004.

In 2005 CDOT signed a lease-purchase agreement with Victoria & Southern Railway (V&S) Details of the purchase agreement specify that V&S Railway would operate the line for six years in adherence with State and Federal regulations. The lease specifies that CDOT has the first right to repurchase should V&S Railway be unwilling or unable to continue to operate the line post-purchase agreement.

In January 2006, the V&S (operating as VST) began rehabilitation and improvements of the Line which included: track repair, track replacement, repair of active crossing equipment, and returning the track to Class II operating standards. The first train returning the Line to moving grain was conducted in September 2006. In April 2008, the Line experienced the loss of two bridges and roadbed damage due to fires in the Ordway area. The VST repaired the Line, and was able to provide full service. The two locomotives used on the line were moved to Mississippi for other V&S operations. V&S has a standing agreement with WATCO, an independent rail operator, to transport freight along the line when required under the VST name.

V&S exercised its right to purchase the line on October 4, 2011. On this date, V&S presented CDOT with certified funds of \$9,356,000. This money was deposited into the State Rail Bank. These funds were transferred by the legislature into the general fund.

On December 1, 2011, CDOT received formal notice of intent from V&S to abandon 79.5 miles of the Towner Line, from N.A. Junction to Eads, Colorado. As required by 43-1 Part 13, CDOT notified the legislature of the availability of the line. The legislature chose not to exercise the State's right of first refusal. On June 8, 2012, V&S filed a Discontinuance of Service Exemption with the STB. The board approved the petition on June 20 2012, with an effective date of July 28, 2012. Consummation of the abandonment has not occurred.

CDOT will continue to monitor the abandonment of the western portion of the line.

## **Part II New Initiatives and Activities**

Since its creation in 2009, the Division of Transit and Rail has undertaken several initiatives. These include the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, the Interregional Connectivity Study, the Advanced Guideway Feasibility Study, A Framework for Transit and Rail Performance Measures, Transit Guiding Principles, and a Statewide Transit Plan.

### **(A) The State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan**

The Federal Railroad Administration awarded a \$400,000 PRIIA grant to CDOT to develop a state rail plan. The grant required a \$400,000 match from CDOT. CDOT completed the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan in March 2012. The Federal Railroad Administration approved the plan in the beginning of October 2012.

The SFPRP provides direction on how to integrate passenger and freight rail elements into the larger statewide multi-modal transportation framework. It also provides important guidance to the Division of Transit and Rail. The Plan enables Colorado to be eligible for future rail infrastructure investment funds, as states must have a state rail plan in order to qualify for such funds.

**(B) Denver Union Station**

CDOT continues to participate as a partner in the development of Denver Union Station (DUS). The City and County of Denver, RTD, DRCOG and CDOT jointly purchased the 19.5-acre Denver Union Station (DUS) site and agreed to fund the development of a master plan, a rezoning of the property, and an Environmental Impact Statement. The master plan and zoning application were completed, the EIS was completed and a Record of Decision was signed by the Federal Transit Administration on October 17, 2008.

The Denver Union Station Project Authority (DUSPA) is the non-profit, public benefit entity formed by the city in July 2008 along with its public partners. DUSPA is responsible for the financing, acquiring, owning, equipping, designing, constructing, renovating, operating and maintaining the Denver Union Station redevelopment project.

Federal loans will constitute approximately 58 percent of all funding sources for the project; under the financing plan, an RTD bond as well as tax increment revenues pledged to DUSPA will be used to repay the debt. The remainder of the project funding comes from the RTD FasTracks tax initiative, SAFETEA-LU, the Senate Bill 1 Strategic Transit Program, and the master developer. RTD will assist with the construction management of the transportation improvements and will own and operate the facilities after the construction period.

The total cost of the project is \$489M. The project now is approximately 71% complete as of October 2012, with an expected completion date of Spring 2014.

**(C) Rail Relocation Discussions**

Over a number of years, CDOT, UP, BNSF and RTD had been discussing possible rail infrastructure relocation and freight line consolidation. These exchanges focused on the development of a long-term plan to ease traffic congestion and improve freight and passenger mobility along the Front Range without impacting the competitive balance between the railroads or economic health of businesses within the state. This is a list of prior studies which have been summarized in previous reports to the TLRC:

- 2003 Railroad discussions, resulting in recommendation to do a study.
- 2005 Public Benefits Study concluded eastern Colorado plains facilities were of interest
- 2007 Rail Relocation for Colorado Communities (R2C2) Study advanced the development of eastern plains concepts. Those concepts met with public opposition and identified a need for more detailed evaluation of benefits and impacts of a new rail line.

In May, 2010 CDOT made the decision to suspend the on-going analysis as the Department was establishing the new Division of Transit and Rail and had received a grant from the FRA to conduct a State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP).

In June 2012, CDOT issued a letter to note that the SFPRP gave a low-priority ranking to the development of an eastern plains freight railroad bypass by CDOT, and designating the project

inactive. If a future rail relocation effort is initiated by another party, *Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study* findings would require re-evaluation and CDOT would work to ensure all applicable state and federal regulations are adhered to, including, but not limited to, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**(D) Colorado Interregional Connectivity Study**

CDOT was also awarded FRA funds for conducting an Interregional Connectivity Study. The FRA awarded \$1 million for this study, with a required \$1 million match from CDOT. An additional match of \$500,000 was transferred to the study from the Advanced Guideway System budget (see Section E below) to produce ridership estimates for both studies.

This study is the result of findings from the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) High Speed Rail Feasibility Study, which indicated that good connections in Denver, particularly with RTD's FasTracks rail lines, are crucial to the success of any potential future high speed rail line. The RMRA study indicated that a very limited number of stations should be located in the Denver metropolitan region and that those stations would ideally also serve Regional Transit District (RTD) FasTracks stations. The study also pointed out that alignment choices were limited in the Denver area due to existing rail traffic and an already heavily built environment. The RTD is currently engaged in various stages of planning for the locations of stations and alignments for its FasTracks rail system expansion. This study, the Colorado Interregional Connectivity Study, is examining the feasibility of also using those stations and alignments for HSR, based on available and potential HSR alignments and ridership.

CH2M Hill was selected as the project consultant team in the fall of 2011, and after contracting and negotiations, the project was given notice-to-proceed (NTP) in April 2012. The initial study purpose, goals, and critical success factors were defined at the internal project kickoff and chartering meeting in May 2012 and were subsequently reviewed at the first Project Leadership Team (PLT) Meeting in June 2012, which was attended by the project's 60+ stakeholders. Since then, the following actions have been taken:

- The Project Management Plan, including the Document Control and Quality Management Plan actions, was submitted to the FRA.
- Project website went live.
- PLT meeting #2 was held in July. The purpose statement was reviewed/ refined and alternative alignments were created following a discussion of screening criteria.
- The first round of public meetings (in Fort Collins, Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo) was conducted in mid-July to present possible alignments and gather feedback.

CDOT and the PLT have partnered closely with the RTD in conducting the study and reviewing preliminary recommendations for High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) alignments, technologies and station locations in the Denver Metropolitan Region that will maximize ridership for the proposed RTD FasTracks system and future High Speed Rail service. The Level 1 Evaluation Report has been completed, summarizing findings of the stakeholders and public meetings, and the initial evaluation process.

The Study has now moved into its second phase of conceptual scenario/alternative development and evaluation, requiring basic engineering of alignments, travel modeling, and application of evaluation methodologies. Possible alignments being assessed include use of existing freight rail tracks along some portions of Colorado's Front Range, CDOT right-of-way in other portions, and some portions of new or "greenfield" rights-of-way. Methodology manuals have been completed for evaluation of capital costs, operating costs, environmental and financial assessments, to guide and frame future evaluation and decision-making. In the next few months, smaller-group meetings will be held in the 4 MPO areas between Ft. Collins and Pueblo to refine and receive input on the Level 2 Evaluation. The travel demand forecasting model should be completed and the third PLT meeting will be held. The next round of public meetings is planned for early 2013.

**(E) Advanced Guideway System Feasibility Study**

The I-70 AGS Feasibility Study is a 2011 Statewide FASTER Transit Grant to Region 1 that is being managed by DTR. This study is a result of CDOT's and FHWA's selection of the I-70 Mountain Corridor Preferred Alternative, which specifies that in order to best meet the purpose and need of a transportation improvement program for the Mountain Corridor, a multi-modal solution is needed, including implementation of an Advanced Guideway System (AGS).

The study began in April 2012 and is projected to continue through September 2013. The I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision commits CDOT to determine the feasibility of such a system for the Corridor prior to implementation. The detailed alignment, station locations, and technology of the AGS have not been selected, but the technology must meet certain operating characteristics as outlined in the FPEIS. The proposed system will begin at C-470 in Jefferson County and continue west to the vicinity of the Eagle County Regional Airport in Colorado, a distance of approximately 120 miles.

There are currently few, if any, transit systems in the world that meet the operating characteristics defined in the FPEIS with the grade, curvature and climate constraints that exist in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Therefore, a traditional analysis of existing systems and technologies would not answer the critical feasibility questions for the corridor. In addition, the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Study (RMRA, March 2010) included a technology review and will be used as input for our study effort.

This study further advances the development of the project definition and in assessing the feasibility of proposed alignments and technologies along the Corridor. These locations will be recommended based on their ability to provide a cost-effective, safe high-speed transit system that meets the criteria outlined in the FPEIS and to be subsequently defined in collaboration with the manufacturing industry and with stakeholders. The primary consideration of the study is technology and alignments to determine feasibility of an AGS along the I-70 Mountain Corridor. This consideration is being completed with significant input from technology and finance industries.

The study has reviewed the unique corridor conditions, and will consider suitable technologies and associated alignments. The study has reviewed and evaluated capital and operating costs, and recommended a project implementation approach, including a business plan approach and operational structures and project financing strategies. Possible station locations are being identified and station components reviewed in the context of community plans. The Request for Statements of Technology Information (RFSOTI) was released in September 2012 and responses are due October 10<sup>th</sup>. Evaluation of SOTI will be complete in November 2012. Project analysis is being coordinated with the Interregional Connectivity Study that runs concurrently and interfaces directly with this study. A subsequent Request for Statements of Financial Information (RFSOFI) will be released in the first half of 2013.

**(F) Amtrak Examination of Service in Colorado**

Amtrak is engaged in a number of activities in Colorado. Following is a summary:

1. Congress required Amtrak to perform a feasibility study to explore restoration of the Pioneer Line from Denver to Seattle, a service that was abandoned in 1997. Amtrak submitted its study to Congress in October 2009, outlining the feasibility of restoring the Pioneer, or portions of it. The study assessed the ridership, revenue, and mobility implications resulting from various scheduling options and the associated capital and operating requirements. The study included a projected timeline and estimated costs associated with restoring the service. Amtrak provided opportunities to the state DOTs along the route to submit comments.

The study reached no conclusions about whether the Pioneer Line should be restored. Rather, Amtrak indicated it cannot restore the Line within its current budget, leaving it to Congress to decide whether to provide funding for the Line. It is possible that states along the line would be asked to contribute to the cost of operating the service. There are no changes to these conclusions as of October 2012.

2. The Amtrak station in Trinidad was demolished as part of the rebuilding of the I-25 viaduct through the city. CDOT, Amtrak, South Central Council of Governments, Greyhound and the BNSF Railroad have been working together to replace the station with a multimodal station that will serve both Amtrak and Greyhound riders, as well as local transit riders.

3. Amtrak and the BNSF have expressed concern to the states of Kansas, New Mexico and Colorado about the future of the Amtrak Southwest Chief line, which traverses southern Colorado, including stops in Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad. BNSF traffic has decreased significantly on portions of the line through the three states. BNSF has stated that there is not a business reason for the line to be maintained at a higher level, and that if faster passenger service is desired it is the responsibility of Amtrak, state governments, or the U.S. government to pay for the difference in track maintenance levels. BNSF has offered a re-route solution which would remove the Southwest Chief service from Colorado if no action is taken prior to the end of 2013. Southwest Chief service would still operate through Kansas and New Mexico. "Action" to keep the Southwest Chief in Colorado is now estimated to cost \$100 Million across segments of track in three states (KS, CO, and NM), plus an on-going commitment of \$10 Million per year for

maintenance, divided among the three states. The three State DOTs have signed a joint letter supporting the line on the existing tracks, but indicating no funding resources.

### **(G) A Framework for Transit and Rail Performance Measures**

Working with the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC), DTR established a framework for transit and rail performance measures. Seven categories were identified that provide a broad basis for a performance-based planning process and serve as the primary tenets of the performance measures framework. The categories are: accessibility, mobility, safety, economic development, environmental and resource conservation, efficiency, and system preservation and expansion. Within each category values were identified to provide a general statement of a desired state or ideal function of a transportation system. Candidate performance measures were identified for each value, by mode (freight and passenger). These are high level and focus on those measures that would be most useful in establishing the existing condition of the transit and rail systems at a statewide level and in assessing improvement in the state over time.

### **(H) Transit Guiding Principles**

DTR in partnership with the TRAC has been working on developing guiding principles that are specific to the role of transit and rail in the overall statewide multimodal transportation system. These principles will help guide the development of the Statewide Transit Plan and are consistent with CDOT's broader operating principles, performance areas, and state and federal planning regulations. They represent the transit element of the statewide transportation system and support CDOT's Vision and Mission.

### **(I) Statewide Transit Plan**

In September 2012, DTR released a Request for Proposals for consultant services to develop CDOT's first Statewide Transit Plan. The Plan is required by state statute and will "identify local, interregional, and statewide transit and passenger rail needs and priorities." The Plan will create a vision for transit in Colorado and provide strategic direction, policies, goals, objectives and strategies for meeting identified statewide transit needs. The Statewide Transit Plan will integrate the local transit and coordinated human services plan for the 15 Colorado Transportation Planning Regions, the passenger rail elements of the State Rail Plan, and results of other DTR studies. The Statewide Transit Plan will then be integrated into the long-range Statewide Transportation Plan.

## **Part III Recommendations**

There are no major rail lines in Colorado which have been abandoned in the past year that impact the state's transportation system, nor are there any which are considered to be at high risk of abandonment at the current time. Consequently, at this time the Department is not recommending to the TLRC that any railroad rights-of-way or rail lines be acquired by the State. However, the Department is recommending the following actions:

The **first priority** is to monitor the status of the Tennessee Pass line. While there is no indication that the UP will abandon this line in the near future, the line has not been used for over fifteen years. If this line is abandoned, the State should purchase it to preserve it for freight service in the future.

The **second priority** is to monitor the status of the Fort Collins Branch line. While this line does not appear to be at risk of abandonment at this time, it is identified as a Rail Corridor of State Significance since it connects Greeley and Fort Collins to the North I 25 corridor.