

## Meeting Notes

BNSF Railway – Fort Worth, TX - May 5, 2011

1 – 4 p.m.

### Meeting Attendees

#### BNSF Railway

Aaron Hegeman -	Group Director, Public Private Partnerships
Jim Nadalini -	Director- MidCon Corridor, Public Private Partnerships
Sarod Dhuru -	Manager, Public Funding

#### CDOT Project Team

Mehdi Baziar -	CDOT Project Manager
Wendy Wallach -	CDOT Deputy Project Manager
Randy Grauberger -	Parsons Brinckerhoff Deputy Project Manager

Following introductions, Randy Grauberger provided a brief description of the February 24<sup>th</sup> “Railroad Kick-off” meeting in Denver, attended by BNSF’s Jim Nadalini. At that meeting, the Class I railroads each suggested face-to-face meeting with individual railroads in Fort Worth and Omaha between the railroads, CDOT and the consultant team to discuss information related to the data requests and other information specific to each railroad.

Sarod Dhuru stated that he was in the process of compiling the data requested by CDOT and that there did not appear to be any elements of the data that BNSF would be unable to provide. Much of the data would be provided on Excel spreadsheets and PDF maps, and not in GIS format. GIS information requires data sharing agreements which BNSF is not prepared to do at this time. He indicated that a disk will be provided the week of 5/9/2011.

Aaron Hegeman next distributed copies of several materials/brochures that described the following:

- An overview of the BNSF’s profile for the state of Colorado. This document included several of the items that were requested on the CDOT data request forms.
- Descriptions of each of the BNSF’s three “Corridors of Commerce”; the TransCon Corridor, the MidCon Corridor, and the Great Northern Corridor.
- A brochure describing BNSF’s Public Private Partnerships principles
- A brochure entitled “A Brief Introduction to BNSF Railway Company”

1. Aaron asked about the status of the effort to create a Vision for Rail in Colorado. Randy noted that at the Steering Committee meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>, a Draft Vision had been developed by the Committee. Randy provided a copy of the Draft Vision to the BNSF. He indicated that the Stakeholder Group met on May 4 and didn't have any substantive changes to the Draft Vision. Mehdi Baziar suggested that the Steering Committee was expected to adopt the Vision at its July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Aaron commented that the Draft Vision specifically mentioned "public-private partnerships". He suggested that BNSF would like to see the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP) contain an outcome based analysis of what may come out of a public-private partnership. Wendy Wallach suggested "outcome oriented instead of project oriented". BNSF noted the vision should provide a framework for what the State Rail Plan aims to accomplish and how it can benefit the state. Goals and objectives could be measured by employing performance metrics. Some examples given were benefits associated with eliminated grade crossing delays, benefits associated with additional passenger capacity from removing freight trains, public benefits of reduced air pollution and noise, etc. Thresholds and performance measures could be employed to identify and prioritize projects that comply with the overall vision.

2. The group discussed the types of benefits that were considered to be a part of the proposed Eastern Plains Rail Bypass. Aaron asked what the Bypass was supposed to accomplish and Randy said that the previous CDOR Executive Director stated that CDOT's involvement related to investigating the feasibility of acquiring additional capacity to move people in the I-25 corridor. (relocating the "through" rail freight traffic to a rail alignment east of the metropolitan areas of the Front Range by instituting rail passenger service on the existing north/south front range rail lines between Denver and Pueblo). However, since the Rail Relocation Study was completed in 2009, the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority's High Speed Rail Feasibility Study recommended a Greenfield alignment for passenger rail between Denver and Colorado Springs instead of using existing tracks.

Wendy stated that CDOT's current administration's policy in regard to the eastern bypass was that "if a railroad or communities came to CDOT with a proposal for such a project, that CDOT would partner with them. However, CDOT would not be "taking the lead" on such a project to relocate the railroads off of the Front Range.

3. BNSF also indicated they would be interested in knowing the state's goals surrounding rail operations, passenger rail capacity, noise, safety, fuel consumption, etc. BNSF asked if there would be any benefit to a bypass related to grade crossing improvements and a savings in not needing to build grade separations. Mehdi described CDOT's Section 130 (federal grade crossing improvement funding) program and the limited funding for that program.

Randy suggested the State Rail Plan will include an analysis of these at-grade rail highway crossings in the state that might warrant grade separation at some point in the future. Many of the crossings identified having an exposure factor of 75,000 or greater in the original 1979 Colorado State Rail Plan have been built. However, with the population of Colorado continuing to grow along with the projected doubling of freight traffic in the future, additional grade separations are likely to be warranted. BNSF

encouraged the SFPRP to include this type of analysis because BNSF has partnered with other states for TIGER grant applications for such projects.

BNSF requested CDOT provide future CDOT highway projects in CDOT's Long Range Plans that may affect rail lines or require underpasses or overpasses. One example was a \$1.2 billion project in Council Bluffs where FHWA funding was utilized that involved rail infrastructure relocation that benefited both the state and the railroad. Randy stated that a similar project occurred in Oklahoma City when the relocation of I-40 was combined with railroad relocation that benefited both the state and railroads.

4. Randy Grauberger asked BNSF if there were any long range plans for the railroad in Colorado. Jim Nadalini described BNSF's "Corridors of Commerce". These major corridors are receiving emphasis for capital funding within BNSF. Aaron stated that BNSF's capital funding program for 2011 is 3.5 billion. Of that amount, \$300 million will be spent by BNSF making safety improvements related to an unfunded federal mandate: Positive Train Control (PTC). At this time, there are no major plans for Colorado but Colorado does receive some benefits from the "Corridors of Commerce".

Randy said that the consultant team would be initiating conversations with the State's short line railroads regarding the required data requests for the SFPRP. Aaron indicated that the BNSF's short Line contact is Mark Schmidt. Randy mentioned that the Cimarron valley railroad in extreme Southeast Colorado had recently suffered \$5 million in structure damage from a large prairie fire and that all of their traffic could NOT connect to the BNSF at Springfield since the switch with BNSF east of Springfield had been removed by BNSF.

Sarod noted Mark Schmidt would be contacted about this situation.

5. Randy Asked if there were any current plans to relocate BNSF's intermodal facility from its current location in North Denver. He was aware that BVNSF had looked at location in recent years in the Commerce City and Hudson areas. Aaron said he wasn't aware of any plans but would check on this possibility. He wanted to know how many lifts took place at the BNSF and UP intermodal facilities in the Denver area. Randy said he didn't know, but that this information would be included in the SFPRP. Aaron asked if the state had done any studies to see what the benefit to the state would be from relocating either or both of the intermodal facilities. Mehdi stated that there had been a recent study completed evaluating the feasibility of relocating UP's intermodal facility to a location between Brighton and Fort Lupton. It was not know if the study was done by the railroad or the communities.

BNSF suggested the rail Plan address supply and demand for railroad services, identify where resources are limited and consider the future increasing demand for freight transportation. In addition, look at public benefits associated with rail including livability, economic development, and affordability. The BNSF asked if the State Office of Economic Development was on the Steering Committee and suggested that it may be a good addition. CDOT agreed and invitation should be extended.

6. In closing, it was determined that BNSF would:

- Complete its effort to finalize the data being requested by CDOT

- Determine the potential to re-install the switch with Cimarron Valley Railroad east of Springfield
- Determine if there any plans to double track or extend sidings between Palmer Lake and Fountain
- Check on the status of relocating BNSF's north Denver intermodal facility

CDOT agreed to extend an invitation to the State Office of Economic Development to be a member of the Steering Committee.

PB would discuss at a Project team meeting on May 13 the possibility of utilizing "outcome oriented analysis" as suggested by BNSF.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 p.m.