

Meeting Notes
Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
Steering Committee

Denver, CO – April 20, 2011

Meeting Attendees

CDOT

Mark Imhoff	Director – Div. of Transit and Rail
Bob Wilson	Public Relations Office

Steering Committee Members (or representatives)

Sarod Dhuru	BNSF Railway
Cathy Norris	BNSF Railway
Dick Hartman	Union Pacific Railroad
Mike Ogborn	OmniTRAX, Inc
Henry Stoppolecamp	Regional Transportation District (RTD)
Gary Beedy	Lincoln County/Colorado Counties, Inc.
Tim Larsen	Colo. Dept. of Agriculture
Ann Rajewski	Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA)
Vince Rogalski	Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)
Cathy Shull	Progressive 15
Mehdi Baziar	Rail Plan Project Manager
Wendy Wallach	Rail Plan Deputy Project Manager
Sandi Kohrs	Statewide Planning Manager

Consultant Project Team

Larry Warner	Parsons-Brinkerhoff (PB) Project Manager
Randy Grauberger	PB Deputy Project Manager
Roger Sherman	CRL Associates
Bob Felsburg	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU)
Evan Kirby	FHU
Matt McDole	LS Gallegos

1. CDOT Project Manager Mehdi Baziar called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Steering Committee for the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan (SFPRP). Mehdi asked everyone to make a self introduction.
2. Following introductions, PB's Randy Grauberger provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting a brief history of rail planning in the United States and in Colorado. The presentation also provided details related to the twelve tasks in the SFPRP Scope of Work of PB's contract with CDOT.

3. BNSF indicated that they had coordinated with UP related to the data request by CDOT for the SFPRP. The railroads would request that, wherever possible, data provided to CDOT for the Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study (R2C2) and other recent studies in Colorado be utilized so that the effort to accumulate the requested data isn't duplicative of previous work. Randy noted that CDOT had provided the Consultant Project Team with electronic files of numerous rail studies recently completed in the state for the purpose of completing Task 2 (Summary of State and Local Rail Programs). These studies would be used when appropriate to obtain data for the SFPRP.
4. Railroads also suggested that CDOT coordinate with the coal industry for the study. CDOT agreed to schedule a meeting with a representative of the coal industry in the near future. The railroads could help facilitate such a meeting if necessary.
5. Roger Sherman, CRL Associates, next discussed the Outreach Plan and the schedule for obtaining stakeholder input into the SFPRP. A copy of the Outreach Plan and schedule had previously been provided to the Steering Committee members, and both had been revised based on comments received. Roger noted that key next steps would be to develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for placing on the CDOT Rail Plan website and also to begin planning for the four "Working Group Sessions" that will be held around the state (late summer) to receive input from the attendees on various elements of the SFPRP. There were no additional comments on the Outreach Plan and schedule at this time.
6. Cathy Shull, Progressive 15, asked that copies of the Stakeholder Group membership list be e-mailed to each of the Steering Committee members so that they could make recommendations for additional stakeholders. NOTE: The list was emailed by Mehdi on 4/20/2011.
7. PB's Larry Warner and FHU's Bob Felsburg led the discussion related to Development of a Draft "Vision for Rail in Colorado". The Committee had previously been provided with a copy of the Vision developed by the Transit and Rail Advisory Committee as well as a compilation of Vision statements included in state rail plans from the states of Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, and Washington.
8. Henry Stoppolecamp, RTD, noted that there was a great variety in the various state visions and that Colorado should focus on issues relevant to Colorado. BNSF's Sarod Dhuru noted that he liked the detail included in the New York Vision. Tim Larsen, Dept. of Agriculture, liked the short, concise Pennsylvania Vision but he didn't like the reference to 2035. He stressed that putting such a future date in the Vision suggests there isn't much urgency in dealing with the various rail related issues; safety, economic development, etc. and implies that the existing rail system is inadequate.
9. Larry Warner next asked for specific comments on the state visions. BNSF and RTD representatives liked the last 4 bullets on the Georgia Vision noting that they "covered what Colorado is looking for; they are just in a different format."

10. Larry Warner suggested that the Arizona vision seemed to be more of a general statement than a “Vision”. BNSF suggested that the Colorado Vision should reference “land use planning”. Larry Warner said that his previous CDOT experience made him somewhat leery of using “land use planning” in a state document such as the SFPRP due to the sensitivity that local governments have about this issue. However, members felt that the importance of coordinating land use planning should be emphasized.

11. Several Committee members liked elements of the Kansas Vision. CDOT’s Sandi Kohrs liked the “balance” in the Kansas Vision. Also, the reference to the importance of funding to achieve the Vision and the use of public/private partnerships was noted.

12. Throughout this discussion, key elements considered by the group to be important to Colorado for inclusion in the Colorado Rail Vision were recorded on a white board. Then, after the Committee reached consensus to utilize the Kansas Rail Vision as a template, the many key elements recorded on the white board were used as a checklist to develop a Vision applicable to Colorado. The outcome of this exercise was the following Draft Rail Vision for Colorado:

“The Colorado rail system will improve the movement of freight and passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. In addition, the system will contribute to a balanced transportation network, coordinated land use planning, economic growth, a better environment and energy efficiency. Rail infrastructure and service will expand to provide increased transportation capacity, cost effectiveness, accessibility and intermodal connectivity to meet freight and passenger market demands through investments which include public-private partnerships.”

The Steering Committee will be asked to adopt a Final Rail Vision for Colorado at their July meeting.

13. Evan Kirby, FHU, next provided a presentation on the status of the data collection activities for the SFPRP. Evan showed the Committee a copy of the state rail map that has been developed and will serve as the base map for all of the maps to be generated during the development of the SFPRP. Evan also presented, as an example of how graphics can be used to effectively portray more complex data bases, a map depicting coal movement within the state utilizing varying colors and bandwidths to show tonnages and origin (in-state or out-of-state) of coal moving in and through Colorado by rail. A copy of the data request forms recently submitted to the Class I and short line railroads was also shown. Tim Larsen stressed the importance of the SFPRP showing those freight movements that not only have an origin or destination in the state, but also those freight movements that move “through” the state; i.e. no origin or destination within Colorado. Tim also noted that ethanol production in the state had increased freight traffic in Colorado in recent years. New freight data should reflect this , as well as new pending activities that could influence freight rail traffic.

14. Evan also showed several maps that are in other state rail plans that are good examples of using GIS as more than just a “mapping tool” in the development of state rail plans.

15. Mehdi Baziar next discussed the status of the effort to complete Task 1 “Summary of Best State Rail Planning Practices” and Task 2 “State and Local Rail Programs”. Drafts of both of these tasks are being revised by the consultant team based on CDOT comments and are to be submitted to CDOT by the end of April. Shortly thereafter, copies of Task 1 and 2 will be provided to the Steering Committee for comments.

16. Future dates and times for Steering Committee meetings were discussed. Morning meetings were preferred. In order to set the specific meeting dates of the Steering Committee scheduled for July and November, Mehdi will send an e-mail to all SC members as to availability in July and November before the future meeting dates are finalized.

17. Henry Stoppolecamp indicated to the Steering Committee members that there is rail related training (*Introduction to Practical Railway Engineering*, June 13 – 15) available through the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA). The training will be held in Greenwood Village. (see AREMA.com for details on this training) Henry also noted that, upon request, he occasionally provides training (what Henry referred to as “Railroad 201”) at no charge. He offered to provide this training session for the Steering Committee if desired.

18. The group liked rail map and would like to have access to it electronically. Mehdi said he would notify Committee members when he places a copy of the map on CDOT’s FTP site. The group also requested that copies of the Steering Committee membership list be forwarded to all members of the Steering Committee. Both requests were completed on 4/20/2011.

19. Tim then asked about the status of the R2C2 study CDOT completed in 2009. Mehdi indicated that the follow-on study to evaluate additional benefits and impacts of rail relocation to eastern Colorado communities, farmers, and ranchers had been “put on hold” until the completion of the SFPRP. Mark Imhoff, CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail Director indicated that CDOT’s current position related to rail relocation is that CDOT will not take the lead on future efforts to relocate the railroads off of the Front Range. However, if someone else, communities or the railroads, came forward with such a proposal, CDOT could facilitate a discussion.

There being no further business, Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.