

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 Background

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the two Class I Railroads operating in Colorado, the BNSF Railway (BNSF) and the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) (hereinafter jointly referred to as the Railroads), have completed several reviews and studies since 1979 investigating the potential for public-private partnerships that would culminate in the relocation of a significant portion of through freight rail traffic away from the congested Front Range onto a bypass route in the Eastern Plains of Colorado.

In 2002, the two Railroads proposed a long-term plan to ease traffic congestion and improve passenger and freight mobility along the Front Range. The proposed project would consolidate certain freight lines and operations, relocate freight terminals and yards, construct a freight bypass route through eastern Colorado and remove through-freight trains from the congested Front Range, while still maintaining local freight service and competitive options to Colorado rail customers.

As a major public partner in this proposed transportation partnership, CDOT agreed to conduct a study of the public benefits of the proposed rail relocation project to determine whether there would be sufficient benefits accruing to the citizens of Colorado to warrant the investment of public dollars in the project. Under a public-private partnership basis, in 2003, CDOT, in cooperation with the Railroads, initiated the Public Benefits and Costs Study (Public Benefits Study).

The Public Benefits Study measured the benefits and economic impacts of the proposed project, estimated construction costs, and assessed broad funding and financing options. The Public Benefits Study concluded that the citizens of Colorado would accrue more than sufficient benefits to warrant the investment of public dollars in the proposed relocation project.

Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study (R2C2)

CDOT, in 2006 determined that a next phase of work should move forward and in 2007, initiated the Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study.

In order to analyze the possible rail bypass project costs and also to determine the railroad operations savings and costs associated with such potential bypass routes, two “Study Alignments” were identified for analysis in the Rail Relocation Implementation Study. These two hypothetical alignments were identified for three purposes: 1) to determine order of magnitude construction costs of a potential “bypass route”, 2) compare order of magnitude railroad operational savings operating on a new bypass route as opposed to operating on the Joint Line (the existing rail route from Denver to Pueblo), and 3) identify environmental resources that may be encountered in eastern Colorado if a rail bypass project were to be constructed. More detail regarding these two “Study Alignments” is included in Chapter 3 – Bypass Alternatives. (The Bypass route evaluated in the Public Benefits Study is similar to the Study Alignment A discussed in this study.)

Study Purpose

The purpose of R2C2 was to:

- ✦ determine what steps will have to be carried out to form a public-private partnership;
- ✦ better define and finalize the scope and costs of any potential project;
- ✦ determine how costs should be shared based on both public and private benefits and related factors;

- ✦ investigate what sources of funding are available;
- ✦ determine how to finance a project;
- ✦ develop strategies for carrying out the necessary environmental requirements; and
- ✦ make recommendations for 'Next Steps'.

2.0 Project Coordination

Executive Oversight Team (EOT)

The Executive Oversight Team (EOT) was created to provide policy guidance to and serve as a forum for making recommendations to the CDOT Project Manager. In addition, the EOT reviewed and approved relevant deliverables created throughout the course of R2C2. The EOT consisted of representatives from CDOT, the Railroads and the Regional Transportation District (RTD).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee was formed to provide CDOT and the Consultant Project Team with technical guidance and support in the review of technical aspects of the work. The TAC membership organizations are shown in **Table ES -1**.

Railroad Coordination

CDOT's Project Manager, along with members of the Consultant Project Team began the railroad coordination process by holding meetings with management of each of the Railroads at their headquarters, BNSF in Fort Worth and UP in Omaha, in June and July of 2007. These meetings were held to identify the objectives of the Railroads, to obtain information on the Railroads' view of future freight markets and to discuss elements of R2C2 which would allow the Railroads to achieve their objectives within their identified corporate constraints.

3.0 Bypass Study Alignments

It should be noted that these study alignments, developed with the established design criteria, were prepared to identify a general location of the alignments and to estimate their associated "ballpark" costs for feasibility and modeling purposes only. They were not intended to represent an exact, final alignment and, as such, one must be careful in reviewing these alignments. For example, in laying out the general alignments, consideration was given to minimizing impact on existing buildings and other features. However, sufficient detailed engineering was not

Table ES -1 Technical Advisory Committee

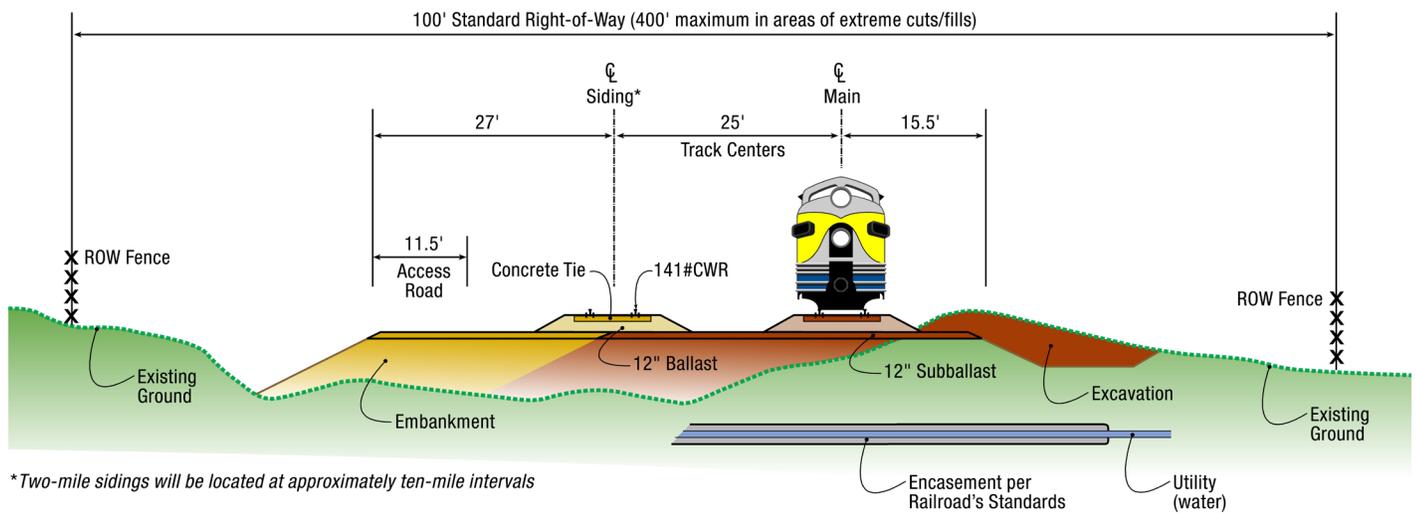
Railroads
✦ BNSF Railway
✦ Union Pacific Railroad
✦ Victoria and Southern Railroad
Industry/Other
✦ Coal Industry – Rio Tinto Energy
✦ Smith Railway Consulting
Colorado Department of Transportation
✦ Regions 1, 2, 4, and 6
✦ Intermodal Programs Unit
✦ Mobility Analysis Unit
State Departments
✦ Colorado Department of Agriculture
✦ Colorado Department of Local Affairs
✦ Colorado Public Utilities Commission
Regional Authorities
✦ Regional Transportation District
✦ Denver Regional Council of Governments
✦ Action 22
✦ Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee
Local Governments
✦ Town of Limon/ Ports to Plains
✦ City and County of Denver
✦ Rocky Mountain Rail Authority/City of Castle Rock

conducted to ensure that all impacts would be avoided. Further review has subsequently been completed which suggests that many of these potential impacts could, in fact, be avoided.

The traffic on a bypass route would consist of existing BNSF and UP trains that currently do not serve customers along the existing route from Denver to Pueblo. The majority of rerouted trains to the bypass would consist of BNSF coal trains. Currently the loaded BNSF coal trains that originate in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming travel from Brush through Denver towards Pueblo, then to Las Animas. From Las Animas, the trains travel south to Texas through Boise City, Oklahoma. The empty trains have a different return route from Texas. They travel back to Pueblo through Trinidad. See **Figure ES – 2** which shows the conceptual study alignments that were used for this study. If a bypass alignment is built, the coal trains, and any other through freight traffic, would travel over the bypass routes which connect into the existing rail network near Las Animas. Instead of the empties traveling north from Trinidad to Pueblo, they would travel along BNSF’s existing track from Trinidad to Las Animas on their Raton Subdivision. A new connection was included to allow continuous movement through Trinidad. This new connection will be referred to as the Beshoar Connection.

Figure ES-1 shows the typical section used for the proposed design of the bypass study alignments.

Figure ES -1 Typical Section (need to reference in text)



Study Alignment Development

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative, or Base Case, consists of the existing routes that the Railroads use from Brush to Denver south through Pueblo and then into Texas. A more detailed discussion of existing use of these routes can be found in **Chapter 4.0 - Railroad Operations Analysis**.

Study Alignment A

Study Alignment A traverses from Brush along BNSF’s Brush Subdivision to Omar, then along a new route south to the existing UP Limon Subdivision between Byers and Peoria. From this point the route uses the existing UP Limon Subdivision for approximately 87 miles to Aroya, where it then traverses on a new route south until it ties into BNSF’s La Junta Subdivision just east of Las Animas.

Study Alignment B

Study Alignment B, was developed based upon discussions with the BNSF on ideal operating grades and track curvature. This route is all new construction from Brush to Las Animas, starting just east of Brush along the BNSF’s Akron Subdivision, then traversing south near Limon; it then ties into existing BNSF’s La Junta Subdivision in Las Animas, prior to the Boise City Subdivision connection at the same location as Study Alignment A.

Capacity

The conceptual alignments from Brush to Las Animas were conceived to be single track with two-mile long sidings at approximately ten-mile intervals based on input from BNSF and UP. For Study Alignment A the sidings along the existing UP portion, between Peoria and Aroya, were extended to allow for similar operations as the newly built segments.

The design speed for the new alignments would be a maximum speed of 60 MPH, maintaining a maximum grade of 0.8 percent and maximum horizontal curvature of 3 degrees.

Cost Estimates

Quantities

The cost estimates only include construction and existing line improvements necessary from Omar to Las Animas for Study Alignment A, from Brush to Las Animas for Study Alignment B and the Beshoar Connection for both alignments.

Unit Costs

The unit costs used were initially developed based on the Consultant Project Team’s experience and were then validated with CDOT unit bid prices where applicable. **Figure ES - 2** shows the conceptual study alignments that were developed for this study.

Summary of Costs of Alternative Study Alignments

The overall costs of the conceptual alignments developed in this study are detailed below in **Table ES -2**.

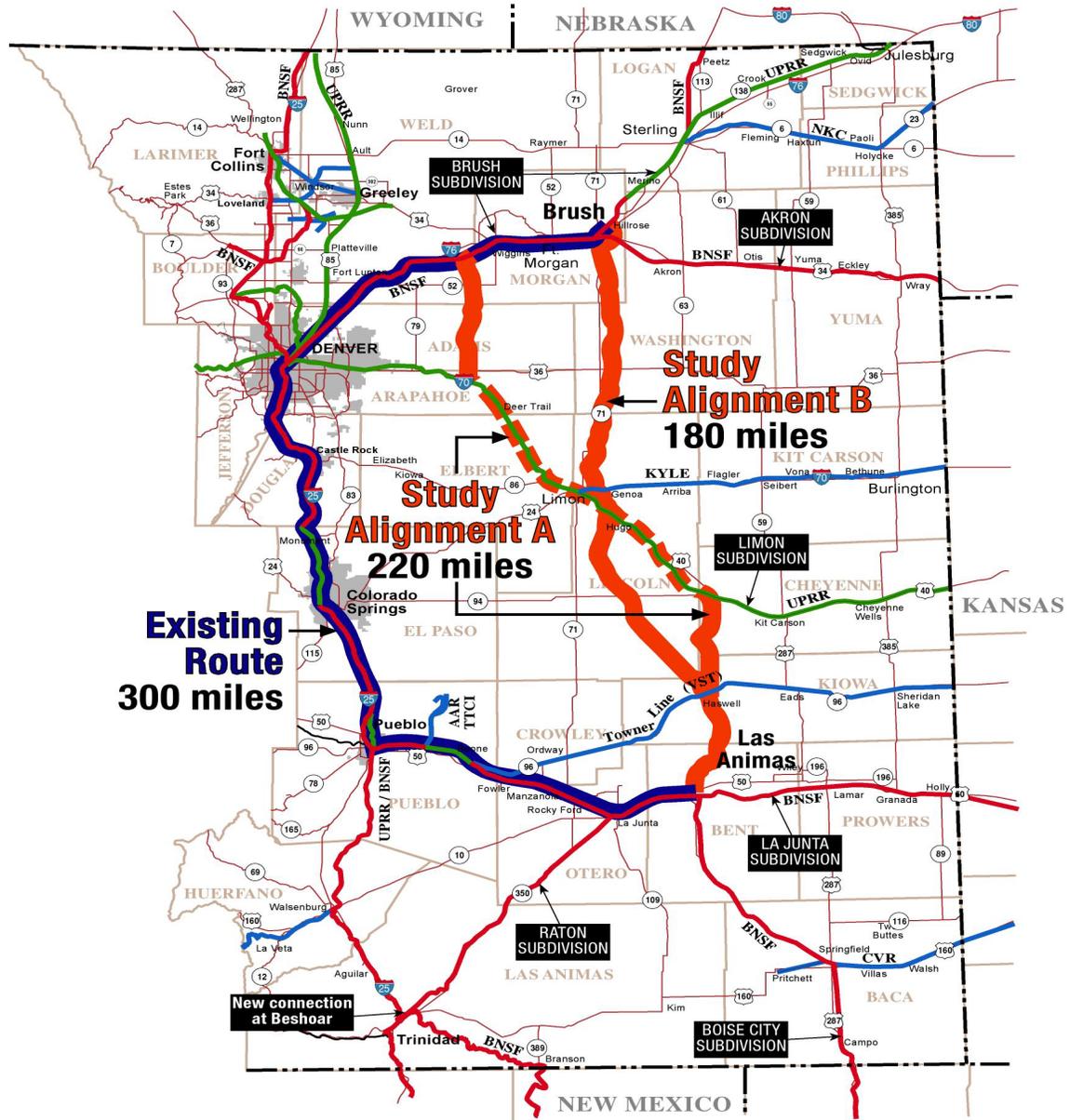
Table ES – 2 Conceptual Study Alignment Costs

Cost Category	Study Alignment A* (\$Millions)	Study Alignment B* (\$Millions)
1. Right of Way	\$7	\$12
2. Grading	\$142	\$317
3. Utilities/Grade Separations	\$74	\$60
4. Rail Crossings/Drainage Structures	\$22	\$31
5. Trackwork	\$145	\$232
6. Fences and Signs	\$6	\$10
7. Signal and Communications	\$131	\$123
8. At-grade Crossings	\$3	\$7
9. Other Cost Items	\$267	\$396
Total	\$797	\$1,188

*Beshoar Connection costs included.

Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study

Figure ES – 2 Conceptual Study Alignments



LEGEND	
	= Existing BNSF Tracks
	= Existing UP Tracks
	= Existing Short Line Tracks
	= Existing Route
	= New Construction
	= Upgrade Existing Route



4.0 Rail Operations Analysis

Introduction

As part of the R2C2 scope, a detailed analysis of existing railroad operations and potential operations on alternative routes was performed. To determine the impacts of diverting BNSF and UP trains from the current Front Range “Joint Line” between Denver and Pueblo, the entire operation, both current and proposed, was coded into the Berkeley Simulation Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) simulation model. Many of the Class I railroads, including UP and BNSF use the RTC model to simulate operating impacts of changes to their track, signals and network. Operating and engineering data, provided by planning personnel from the Railroads, detailing railroad infrastructure, train operations, operating practices and constraints, were entered into the model. Conceptual engineering and operational data for Study Alignments A and B were added to complete the evaluation network. The results of these simulations were incorporated into the economic analysis that is part of **Chapter 5.0 – Benefits Analysis**.

Base Case

The Base Case simulation is intended to provide the benchmark against which the two study alignments have been compared. The development of the Base Case has provided a clear picture of the current railroad operations.

Study Alignments A and B

Two conceptual alternatives were modeled. Both alignments would provide significant operational benefits in the RTC model. In comparison to the existing traffic using the Joint Line (30 to 31 trains per day), approximately 13 trains would remain on the Joint Line serving local industries and shippers.

Under either alternative, the UP and BNSF trains remaining on the Joint Line would operate with fewer conflicts due to delays following the heavily loaded unit coal trains and delays in sidings waiting for meets. Diversion of the through trains to either of the bypass alignments would also reduce conflicts in the Denver yard facilities for both UP and BNSF operations.

Performance Results and Comparison

The RTC simulations were used to model potential operational benefits that would result from the rerouting of the through rail traffic to either Study Alignment A or B and could provide the opportunity for:

- ✦ shorter, more direct routes for rail traffic between Wyoming and Texas;
- ✦ reduced train activity in the urban areas of Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo which could reduce:
 - ☐ noise;
 - ☐ rail crossing delays for the remaining rail operations; and
 - ☐ emissions – both locomotive and vehicular
- ✦ reduced operating costs;
- ✦ reduced crew and fuel expense;
- ✦ improved equipment utilization;

- ✦ increased velocity; and
- ✦ greater rail capacity in and out of Denver available for future traffic growth and possible rail passenger use

Estimated BNSF operational savings are driven almost entirely by more favorable routing of unit coal trains off the Joint Line and onto either of the two Study Alignment bypasses. Improvements are achieved in both runtime and fuel consumption for either Study Alignment A or B compared to the Base Case of existing operations.

UP model results are almost unchanged for all trains. This result reflects that there are not a significant number of UP reroutes. Beneficial results for UP are primarily due to RTC estimating reduced congestion on the Joint Line and in the Denver terminal area.

Figure ES – 3 details the changes in train counts on each of the network component links for the Base Case and the two Study Alignments.

5.0 Benefits Analysis

Introduction

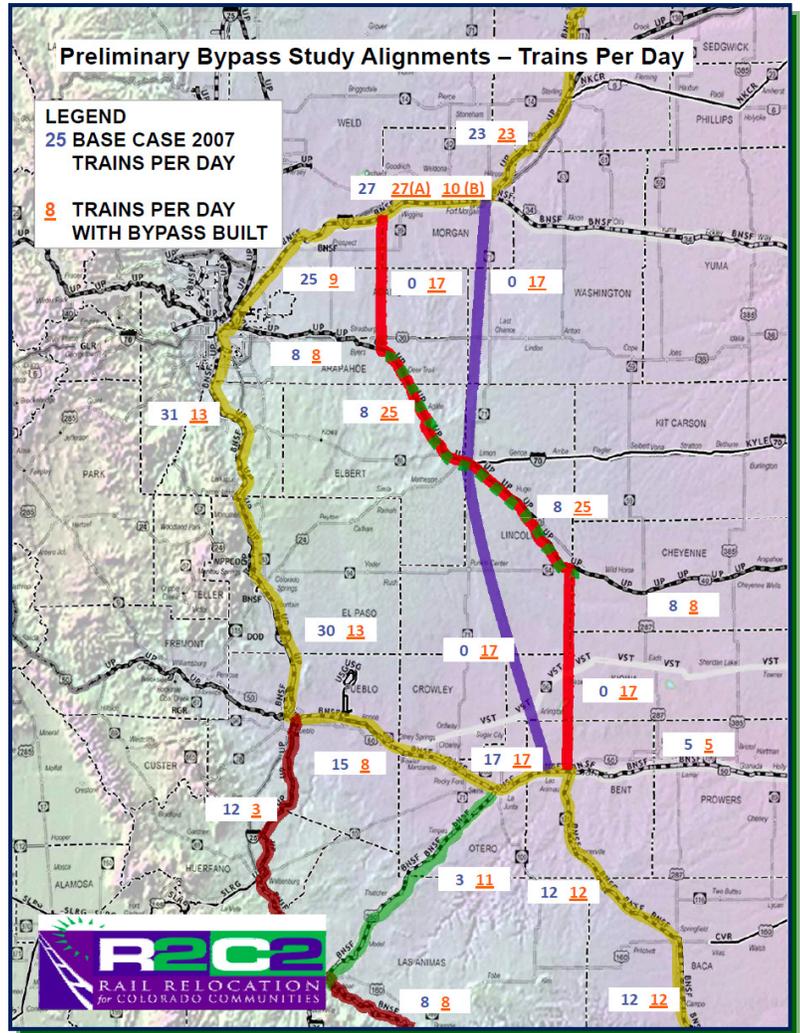
The Benefits Analysis presents the data, methods, and assumptions used to update the benefit calculations for the R2C2 Study. These items were originally calculated in May 2005¹, and related to the alignment that was defined at that time. For this update, two Study Alignments (A and B), are now considered. Benefit categories included are:

- ✦ transportation benefits;
- ✦ economic development and land use benefits;
- ✦ environmental benefits;
- ✦ safety and security benefits; and
- ✦ quality of life benefits

A detailed discussion of analysis of the above benefit categories is in **Chapter 5.0 – Benefits Analysis**.

Passenger rail benefits are not included in the R2C2 Study. A comprehensive assessment of both the costs and benefits associated with possible passenger rail service on the existing freight rail right of way is currently being

Figure ES - 3 Trains Per Day



¹ The primary reference document from the previous “Public Benefits” study is Technical Memorandum No. 5, May 18, 2005.

conducted as part of the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Passenger Feasibility Study. CDOT intends to add the benefits and costs estimated in that study to the findings of the R2C2 Study at a later date.

Benefits are presented as potential variations from the existing rail network configuration (benefits accruing from train traffic moving to either of the Study Alignments are calculated in light of operations remaining on the Joint Line). Based on the most recent RTC modeling results, the calculations presented in this chapter assume that an average of 17 trains per day are re-routed from the Joint Line to the bypass alignment.

Summary Results

Table ES – 3 summarizes the benefits. A more detailed summarization of the various types of benefits is shown at the conclusion of **Chapter 5.0 – Benefits Analysis**. Because a potentially major source of public benefit associated with introduction of passenger rail service in the existing corridor has not been fully assessed, these results remain preliminary and only partially complete. For comparison purposes, the estimated costs of Study Alignments A and B as shown in **Chapter 3.0 – Bypass Alignments** are \$797 million for Study Alignment A and \$1.188 billion for Study Alignment B.

Table ES – 3 Benefit Summary (millions, 2008 \$s) Discounted Present Value

Benefit items	Study Alignment		Sector Classification
	A	B	
Transportation Benefit	244.3	383.9	
Economic Development Benefits (total excludes tax revenues to eliminate double counting)	560.8	839.0	
Environmental Benefits	166.0	266.1	
TOTAL	971.2	1,489.1	
Summary – Distribution of Benefits by Beneficiary Group			
Private business benefits	165.5	261.1	
Public benefits ²	684.9	1,034.5	
Public sector benefits (reduced government expenditures or increased government tax revenues) ³	120.9	193.4	

6.0 Environmental Issues Scan

Environmental Analysis

An environmental issues scan was conducted in order to understand the presence or absence of key resources that occur along Study Alignments A and B. The analysis accomplished for this study is not intended to predetermine any outcome of any environmental process that would be required at some future time to fulfill federal, state and/or local responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, or other regulatory requirements. See **Section 6.13** about NEPA activities that would take place if a bypass project were to go forward.

² includes employment and earnings benefits from construction; excludes tax revenue impacts where double counting would occur

³ excludes tax revenue impacts where double counting would occur

Only existing data from readily available resources has been utilized, and no data already reported in the Public Benefits Study has been recapped in this Study. Detailed discussions related to the analysis of these various study elements are included in **Chapter 6.0 – Environmental Issues Scan**.

Future NEPA Documentation Requirements

Before a bypass route could be built, certain environmental regulatory requirements would need to be met. The primary requirement would be compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Compliance with NEPA would occur irrespective of the project participants (i.e., whether or not CDOT concluded its participation in the bypass effort).

NEPA serves to ensure that federal agencies use a systematic and interdisciplinary approach to decision making when its actions may affect the quality of the human environment. In order to achieve this objective, NEPA regulations require that certain processes occur, including agency and public participation. While the ultimate decision regarding the NEPA action rests with the lead federal agency, other agencies and the public are to be engaged at key milestones.

The Right of Way Acquisition Process

In order to construct a freight bypass rail line, property would have to be acquired from private landowners. Acquisition of property is normally one of the very last processes to occur prior to actual construction. Prior to the decision to build a new bypass rail line, a determination would be required as to which agency or railroad is to become the new owner of all or part of the bypass rail line.

Generally, the acquisition of private property by the railroad entity or CDOT would not occur until a preferred alternative has been selected in compliance with the NEPA.

7.0 Funding and Financing

Introduction

Much work remains to identify viable funding for the project. The TAC and EOT have provided significant input regarding the project's funding and financing options and have educated stakeholders, thereby setting the stage for partnerships to form so that the project could be moved forward under a structure that leverages the strengths of both the private and public participants.

Funding

Private railroad capital budgets would be expected to be used as a part of the private share of any partnership to build a bypass. A detailed discussion of eight different federal funding programs that might be used in a project such as the railroad bypass being evaluated in this Study is contained in **Chapter 7.0 – Funding and Financing**.

CDOT Funding Capacity

Like many states, the federal funding received by CDOT for transportation projects is not meeting its needs, such that new capital investment is expected to be very limited in the near term, especially given rapidly escalating costs to maintain existing infrastructure. These issues are being exacerbated by the current economic environment, which has indirectly caused traditional revenue sources for transportation projects to diminish.

Project Financing

It is likely that some portion of the Project will be financed, though a specific structure has yet to be established. When choosing a financing structure for the R2C2 project, it is important to first distinguish whether financing will be provided by public or private sources. Tax exempt public financing vehicles, such as municipal bonds and federal loan programs, can make capital investment for infrastructure projects significantly cheaper than they would otherwise be if obtained using private financing. Private sources would primarily include construction loans and taxable bonds issued by private corporations or equity/bank debt structures used through public-private partnerships. Federal programs such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program (described in more detail in **Chapter 7.0 – Funding and Financing**) make it possible for certain private entities to gain access to tax exempt debt, giving them similar advantages to public agencies for accessing the capital markets for project financing.

Partnering Opportunities

Chapter 7.0 – Funding and Financing of the Final Report provides an overview of research performed to identify potential partners that could financially participate in the R2C2 project.

The potential partners encompass both public and private entities including utilities, the coal mining industry, Class I and Short Line railroads, railroad investors, local transportation authorities, and federal, State and local governments. These stakeholders are defined and discussed in the context of a public-private partnership (Partnership) for a Bypass project with varying levels of participation.

Included as part of the discussion is the possibility of a second project that is separate from a Bypass project – the potential conversion of the Joint Line (the existing rail line between Denver and Pueblo) to commuter rail. CDOT has indicated that obtaining right of way in the I-25 corridor to operate commuter or intercity passenger rail is a priority, and that the Joint Line is a logical location for such passenger rail to be located. Such intercity passenger rail service is the subject of a separate, parallel study being conducted by the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority.

8.0 Public Outreach Program

Project Logo

In order to implement a successful public involvement and community outreach program, the Consultant Project Team created the R2C2 logo for the study to distinguish this Study from other endeavors such as the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority Study and the Prairie Falcon Parkway Express or “Super Slab”. R2C2 (Rail Relocation for Colorado Communities) was used in all communications with identified stakeholders. The logo was also used on subsequent news releases, letterhead, the project website and all other project communications, including the Final Report.



Open Houses & Other Meetings

The Consultant Project Team held several Open Houses throughout the study to introduce the R2C2 study to the public. Five public Open Houses geographically dispersed throughout the study area were held in the spring of 2008. The Open Houses were advertised through a mass email to over 400 stakeholders, including elected and appointed officials, rail groups and others in the study area. The team also issued a news release one week in advance of the Open Houses to local media outlets including Spanish media outlets. The Spring

Open Houses focused primarily on introducing the hundreds of attendees to the Public Benefits Study results and the scope or purpose of R2C2.

The second round of Open Houses presented study updates based on comments and concerns heard during the first round of Open Houses and also discussed the anticipated study conclusions and next steps in the process.

In addition to the formal Open Houses and elected officials briefings, the Consultant Project Team met with various other stakeholders throughout the study area including representatives from transportation planning regions, agricultural, business and transit groups. The team also met with the Board of Directors of a citizens group that was formed in response to R2C2 known as C.A.R.R. – Citizens Against Rail Relocation, to better understand and address their concerns.

Website Development & Other Information Tools

The Consultant Project Team maintained a website devoted to providing information on R2C2. The website, www.dot.state.co.us/railroadstudy/default.asp includes the Final Report, study maps, the public involvement program including dates of Open Houses, comment cards, Open House presentations, frequently asked questions and answers, news releases and articles, a summary of comments and questions received during the Spring and Autumn Open Houses, and a list of Consultant Project Team members. These items are also included on the website as **Appendix 8**.

9.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

Project Findings

Either of the alignments studied could result in diversion of a majority of the freight traffic that currently uses the Joint Line. The Joint Line would still be required to serve rail freight customers in Front Range communities including major power plants.

The existing routing for unit coal trains between Wyoming and Texas passes through Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo and is approximately 300 miles long between Brush and Las Animas. Study Alignment A would be about 220 miles long between the same two common points. Study Alignment A would have a lower capital cost (\$800M in 2008 dollars) than Study Alignment B and by utilizing a portion of the existing UP Limon Subdivision would require acquisition of fewer miles of new right of way. Study Alignment B however would have a shorter overall routing (178 miles) and thus greater reductions in fuel consumed, diesel emissions, and rail operating costs. Study Alignment B would be more costly in terms of capital investment (\$1.2B in 2008 dollars) and would require purchase of more acres of land for the new right of way. Study Alignment B would primarily serve the north-south coal traffic of BNSF in addition to some unit grain trains and the increasing ethanol unit train market. By avoiding the use of UP trackage, Study Alignment B has the advantages of fewer train conflicts, and single dispatching control, thus higher potential operating efficiency. Study Alignment B, however, would not provide an attractive routing for much of UP's traffic.

Recommendations

The potential for diverting the majority of heavy freight traffic from the Front Range communities and thereby possibly opening up the Joint Line for intercity passenger rail service results in a strong recommendation for further study. With valuable input from the proposed Citizens Advisory Group composed of members from both Front Range and eastern Colorado communities, further study is needed to combine the findings of R2C2 and the I-25 portions of the RMRA study. More detailed engineering of alignments is needed to define and

minimize potential community impacts. Additional environmental analyses are also needed to progress the initial environmental scan done in R2C2.

In the event that “Next Steps” lead to further study and analysis of a proposed north-south railroad bypass, all key variables such as trains per day using the bypass, diesel fuel and gasoline costs, cost of capital, wages, current construction related unit costs, trackage rights assumptions, etc. will need to be updated in the models and templates utilized in this study. The various chapters of the Final Report list the numerous assumptions and methodologies that were used in the R2C2 Study and those would necessarily need to be reviewed and updated to provide a current and accurate analysis at the time future steps are taken.

The following is a list of recommendations for CDOT’s further consideration:

- ✦ Create a Citizens Advisory Group that will provide a basis for the involvement of citizens with CDOT in future efforts relating to a potential relocation of through rail freight to eastern Colorado.
- ✦ Provide a detailed evaluation of the benefits and impacts of a potential new eastern Colorado rail bypass line to the agriculture industry and communities of eastern Colorado.
- ✦ At the completion of both studies, combine the results of R2C2 and portions of the RMRA’s I-25 corridor passenger rail feasibility study to determine the consolidated benefits and costs to the State of both freight and passenger operations. Continue to identify funding sources to combine the findings of the R2C2 and RMRA studies.
- ✦ Continue conversations with both Railroads and the public to explore possible options that may lead to the implementation of a bypass under a public-private partnership. Utilizing the results of the cost and rail operations analysis of the Study Alignments A and B, pursue with both Railroads possible options that may lead to the future implementation of a bypass. Such options could include either of the Study Alignments A or B, combinations of those two alignments, or different alignments that may emerge in ongoing discussions.
- ✦ Continue to support federal and state initiatives that could provide potential funding and financing programs that could be utilized in the implementation of a new rail bypass. Take steps necessary to keep possible partners in a public-private partnership well positioned to take advantage of future funding sources.
- ✦ Provide R2C2 study results to other private parties that have expressed interest in participating in a partnership that might lead to the potential implementation of a through rail freight bypass in eastern Colorado.

Next Steps

The following figure (**Figure ES - 4**) shows the numerous additional studies and the multiple decision points which must be navigated in going forward. These steps flow from the recommendations stated above. As **Figure ES – 4** shows, at any point during the process, CDOT’s involvement and participation in the process could be concluded. And, while the private sector could continue the process, similar steps as shown on the figure would be required.

One of the first steps would be the establishment of a Citizens Advisory Group to work with CDOT as the process continues. CDOT is currently evaluating potential organizational structures for such a group.

The public outreach of R2C2 also revealed the need for a more detailed evaluation of the benefits and impacts of a new rail line to the agriculture industry and communities of eastern Colorado. These benefits and impacts were not addressed in the Public Benefits Study or the R2C2 Study and CDOT has made a commitment to perform such a detailed analysis.



Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study

Combining the findings of the R2C2 Study with the I-25 corridor elements of the separate RMRA study will assist CDOT in determining if it would be feasible for the State or another entity to obtain ownership of all or portions of the Joint Line right of way, or operating rights in the I-25 corridor in order to facilitate commuter or intercity passenger rail.

Subsequently, a next key step would be creating the detailed agreements related to forming possible public-private partnerships, identifying potential funding sources, and developing a financial plan. Additionally, it would be important to determine whether intergovernmental agreements would be necessary and develop a plan for their creation.

Following completion of that key step, the environmental documentation, (i.e., Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment) would take place. By law, it is after this step that a final route selection process would occur as federal statutes mandate alternatives be assessed for environmental impact prior to environmental clearance of a final route.

Only after all of these steps have been completed would design, right of way acquisition, mitigation of various issues, and bypass construction be able to occur.

Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study

Figure ES – 4 Next Steps

