

Meeting Notes

Technical Advisory Committee

Colorado Rail Relocation Implementation Study

CDOT – November 17, 2008

Tammy Lang, CDOT's Project Manager for the Rail Relocation Implementation Study (R2C2) opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m. Tammy welcomed those in attendance to the sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and asked those in attendance to make self introductions. A list of meeting attendees is included at the end of these meeting minutes. BNSF Railway's Colleen Deines was not in attendance but participated via conference call.

Tammy next introduced PB's Project Manager Randy Grauberger. He asked if there were any additions or corrections to the September 11 minutes. There were none suggested. However, Randy indicated that at the November 3 Executive Oversight Team (EOT) meeting, BNSF asked for a clarification of language in the September 11 TAC minutes. The discussion in question related to the possibility of improvements to the Boise subdivision instead of continuing the existing one-way operation on two separate rail lines south to Amarillo TX. Considering the estimated \$300 million in added capital costs, it was agreed that further analysis would only consider the continuance of the one way operation and the TAC minutes should be revised to confirm that decision. Randy asked if there were any additional comments on this topic. There were none. Therefore, Randy noted that the minutes of this meeting would reflect that change to the September 11 meeting minutes.

Tammy next distributed and discussed the *Summary of Open House Comments*. She indicated that the comments and questions in italics were those from the Fall Open Houses. She indicated that Randy and members of the Project team would be developing answers to the questions. She noted that many of these 'answers' were already listed in the previously developed "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) that were posted on the R2C2 web-site.

Tammy highlighted the various elements of stakeholder input and public involvement that the project has undertaken: Six TAC meetings, 12 Open Houses (5 in the Spring and 7 in the Fall, 20 miscellaneous presentations by Randy and Tammy to various organizations in eastern Colorado and along the Front Range. She then showed two slides that were used in the Open Houses that depicted 'Public Issues and Concerns' heard at the meetings.

Randy next introduced Cassie Gouger, the Rail Design Lead for the project team. Cassie discussed the revised cost estimates for Alignments A and B with specific breakouts and handouts for the improvements at Beshoar Junction and the Union Pacific's Limon Sub-

division siding extensions. She noted that the costs were still in the \$800 million range for Alignment A and \$1.2 billion range for Alignment B. She indicated that some of the active crossing protection had been eliminated by assuming some local roadway improvements to avoid skewed crossings.

In a response to a question from Paul Smith, Cassie noted that there were 18 sidings on Alignment A and 16 sidings on Alignment B. She clarified the types of turnouts at the various locations and confirmed the railroads' previous approval of these types of turnouts. She also confirmed that the estimate for Alignment A included a grade separation structure in Limon at SH 71 and two other additional grade separation structures on the existing UP segment.

Jack Tone next discussed the latest RTC modeling updates. He noted that additional trains had been identified to be eligible to be re-routed off of the Joint Line onto an eastern Colorado rail bypass. Jack suggested that the approximate total train count on the bypass will be in the 20 – 22 trains per day range and that approximately 10 – 12 trains per day will remain on the Joint Line. Jack also noted that the issue related to additional miles shown on the earlier model runs for 'UP locals' had been resolved.

UP's Grant Janke asked a question related to the apparent inconsistency related to BNSF empty coal train miles and fuel usage for the BNSF coal empties on Alignments A and B compared with the base operations. Jack said he would investigate this issue.

Nick Amrhein next discussed the latest (3rd Draft) version of the Benefits Analysis Update. He highlighted four key changes to the document: 1) Maintenance of way costs (see bottom of page 10); 2) UP efficiency gains were removed since they were minimal, 3) A statement that there will be no inclusion of the rail passenger service related benefits and costs in the R2C2 Study since those are being evaluated in the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) Passenger Rail Feasibility Study to be completed in the summer of 2009; and 4) Air quality analysis, which was not a part of the previous study, was completed.

Paul Smith asked that a definition of the "RIMS II data" be included in the Chapter. Nick described the data and indicated that a definition in the document would be added.

It was suggested that there were two statements on pages 7 and 10 that seemed to conflict in regard to maintenance of way costs. Jack Tone indicated this would be corrected.

Steve Rudy asked if the motor vehicle related costs were more affected by the "exposure factor" or by number of rail/highway at-grade crossings. Randy stated that the exposure factor is the more critical factor and this would be clarified in the report. Steve suggested that the differences between 'benefits' and 'costs' in this section need to be clarified as well.

Randy added that he had recently met with TAC member Tim Larsen of the Colorado Department of Agriculture regarding Exhibit 9 (Grain Benefit Calculation Summary).

Tim had recommended that the data related to “corn” in that Exhibit be removed since corn isn’t exported out of the state. Tim also would prefer that the analysis related to wheat utilize a ‘five-year average wheat crop’ for the state since the crop size is so variable from year to year.

Colleen Deines next asked if CDOT is aware of how the RMRA Consultants are classifying and analyzing the rail passenger benefits and costs. Tammy Lang noted that she is attempting to set up a meeting between CDOT, the RMRA Consultants and Randy and Jack to discuss this topic. She anticipates such a meeting in early December. Colleen suggested that some detailed information related to the benefits and costs to be examined in the RMRA analysis be included in the Appendix of the R2C2 Final Report. Tammy noted she would ask the RMRA consultants to draft such language for inclusion in the R2C2 Appendices.

CDOT’s Scott McDaniel asked that the Public Involvement Section contain the comments received at the Open Houses related to the request by some individuals to have the proposed rail alignment follow ‘section lines’ wherever possible. Joe Kiely reminded the TAC that this comment isn’t necessarily shared by all in eastern Colorado; it seems to come from only those individuals that would benefit from such routing of the bypass.

Cassie Gouger once again stated that design criteria (no more than 0.8 percent grade and maximum 3 degree curvature) requested by the railroads led to the selection of the two “study” Alignments A and B.

Tom Mauser asked if there is a minimum required distance that the rail bypass could be built from a county road. The railroads noted that they must be a minimum of 50 feet from a commuter rail line but didn’t know if there was such a minimum for a county road. (Normally a rail line would be offset a greater distance from a parallel road to allow for safe vehicle storage at at-grade crossings.)

Cecelia O’Connor next discussed a handout on the update of environmental issues related to Alignments A and B. The CARR group’s Becky Thompson suggested that the discussion of homes affected by the proposed alignment B should state there are 3 homes in Lincoln County within 100 feet of Alignment B. The handout indicated there was only one home within 100 feet of all of Alignment B.

Tim Larsen recommended that language in the Final Report be strengthened to reflect that Alignments A and B are “Study Alignments”. These alignments are **not** final or preferred alignments of a possible eastern Colorado rail bypass.

Randy Grauberger discussed a handout labeled “Next Steps”. This document was used as a handout at the fall open houses to clarify that R2C2 is an early step in a long process that could eventually culminate in the construction of a rail bypass. He noted Union Pacific’s Joe Bateman, at the November 3rd EOT meeting, suggested that the phrase “Establish Funding Sources” be added to the box that states “Form Public Private Partnership & Financial Plan”. It was also decided that the next to the last step labeled

“Bypass Route Selection” should be changed to “Route Selection Process”. A bullet will be added at the bottom of that step which states “Select Final Bypass Alignment”.

There was some discussion of what role the Citizen’s Advisory Board (CAB) might play if CDOT was no longer involved in the development of an eastern rail bypass. It was suggested that the CAB could continue to serve the same purpose whether or not CDOT was involved. Randy noted that there would likely be some continued CDOT involvement in tracking a future rail bypass project even though CDOT may not be a partner in the project. This would possibly occur relative to the long range transportation planning efforts on the Eastern Plains at the Transportation Planning Region (TPR) level.

Tammy Lang reported that the Senate Bill 1 funding previously proposed for the effort to combine the results of the R2C2 and RMRA Rail Passenger studies now seems unlikely. The request for funding was ranked 14th overall and it appears there may only be Senate Bill 1 funding for the top three or four applications.

She also mentioned that CDOT is proposing to coordinate with the Colorado Department of Economic Development and possibly Colorado State University to oversee a consultant study to evaluate the impacts and benefits of an eastern Colorado rail bypass on the communities and citizens of eastern Colorado. No funding source has yet been identified for this project.

Jack Tone noted that there are several potential federal funding sources for efforts such as these that CDOT could also investigate including two recent FRA awards for rail studies, one for \$1 million for Phoenix-Tucson rail service planning and another for \$62,500 for Ohio rail planning and alternatives analysis.

Randy next discussed the schedule for finalizing the R2C2 report. PB’s contract with CDOT expires on January 31. The following schedule was agreed to:

November 24	Draft chapters provided to Randy by project team members
December 1	Copy of 1 st Draft provided to TAC and EOT members
December 12	Comments on 1 st Draft submitted to Randy
December 19	2 nd Draft to TAC, EOT and CARR for comments
January 5	Final comments submitted to Randy
January 20	Final R2C2 Report to reproduction
January 27	Final EOT meeting to discuss next steps

Under the ‘Member Related Issues’ agenda item Paul Smith asked for some additional explanation as to why the one-way operation on the Boise City sub was going to continue to be proposed instead of making CTC and siding improvements. Jack Tone said the reason was that the cost of the improvements would be approximately \$300 million and only minimal benefits would accrue to the railroads because of the reduced velocity of their trains if the one-way operation was discontinued.

Steve Rudy asked that the Quality of Life portion of the Benefits Analysis chapter be revised to have a balanced discussion of the positive quality of life benefits along the Front Range from a bypass project along with the negative issues affecting the Eastern Plains from such a bypass as brought up by the CARR group and others at the Open Houses.

Steve Ramsey asked if Federal Railroad Administration software, Gradedec, should be considered for some of the analysis on grade crossings in the Study. It was decided that such detailed level of analysis is premature for this preliminary study; but would be appropriate if a preferred alignment is established.

Becky Thompson stated that she appreciated the Project Team's efforts to listen to the issues being raised by CARR at the Open Houses and for including CARR's key issues in the Open House presentations. Randy also thanked Becky for the diligence of the CARR organization in attending all of the Open Houses.

It was agreed that there would be no further formal meetings of the TAC. If there was a need to have some detailed discussions of TAC members related to the Draft Final Report; such would be done by conference call.

Tammy thanked all of the TAC members for their participation over the course of the study and for their assistance in the development of R2C2.

Randy asked if any of the TAC members had additional comments they wanted to make. There were none, so the meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

Meeting Attendees

TAC Members:

Grant Janke	UP Railroad
Dick Hartman	UP Railroad
Colleen Deines	BNSF Railway (via conference call)
Steve Rudy	DRCOG
Joe Kiely	Town of Limon/Ports to Plains
Pete Graham	CDOT Region 4
Mehdi Baziar	CDOT Mobility Section
Tim Larsen	Colo. Dept. of Agriculture
Mike Ramsey	Federal Railroad Administration
Paul Smith	Smith Consulting
Scott McDaniel	CDOT Region 1
Ron Davis	Action 22
Tammy Lang	CDOT Project Manager
Tom Mauser	CDOT Intermodal Planning
Randy Grauberger	Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) Project Manager

Other Meeting Attendees:

Jack Tone	PB – Implementation Team Lead
Cecelia Joy O’Connor	PB – Environmental Lead
Nick Amrhein	PB Strategic Consulting
Cassie Gouger	FHU – Rail Engineering Lead
Jerry Albin	FHU – Consultant Team
Gary Blundell	BNSF Railway
Jack Moy	BNSF Railway
Becky Thompson	CARR