

Project	Front Range Passenger Rail Service Development Plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
Subject	North Segment Coalition Meeting
Meeting Date	Tuesday, April 28, 2020
Time	2:00pm to 4:30pm
Location	Zoom Meeting
Attendees	North Segment Coalition Members

Name	Organization
Daniel Estes	CDR
Jeffrey Range	CDR
Randy Grauberger	Rail Commission – Project Director
Carla Perez	HDR
Aaron Fodge	CDOT
Allison Baxter	City of Greeley
Bill Becker	Loveland Chamber of Commerce
Becky Karasko	NFRMPO – Rail Commissioner
Chris Boespflug	CDOT
Colleen Whitlow	Town of Mead Mayor
Drew Brooks	City of Fort Collins - Transfort
Evan Pinkham	Weld County
David May	Fort Collins Chamber
James Usher	CDOT
Jeffrey Dawson	State of Colorado
Jennifer Webster	Catalyst Public Affairs
Karen Schneiders	CDOT
Lisa Streisfeld	CDOT
Many Whorton	Peak Consulting
Marian Duran	City of Greeley
Mark Peterson	Larimer County
Matt Thompson	Town of Firestone
Paul Hornbeck	City of Windsor
Pete Rickershauser	BNSF – Rail Commissioner
Phylis Kane	ColoRail
Erik Sabina	CDOT
Katie Guthrie	City of Loveland
Scott Ballstadt	Town of Windsor
David Singer	CDOT
Suzette Mallette	NFRMPO
Sophie Shulman	CDOT

Spencer Dodge	Rail Commission – Commission Liaison
Tammy Herreid	SCMN and NATA
Tara Bettale	HDR
Tim Hoover	CDOT
Walter Weart	Interested Public
Will Karspeck	Town of Berthoud
David Krutsinger	CDOT
Rick Klein	City of La Junta – Rail Commissioner
Phil Greenwald	Longmont Area Chamber of Commerce
Heather Paddock	CDOT Region 4 RTD

MEETING SUMMARY

The following summary was written based on the presentation and discussions that took place during the meeting. Attachments to this summary include the meeting agenda and presentation slides.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Jeffrey Range, Project Team, opened the meeting and discussed the agenda and proposed outcomes for the meeting, which included a description of the Front Range Passenger Rail Project (FRPR), the project status, Level 1 evaluation, Level 2 alternatives & evaluation, public involvement, and next steps. Participants introduced themselves.

Randy Grauberger, Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission (SWC & FRPR Commission) Project Director, welcomed the Coalition members to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. Randy then discussed how the team is working through COVID-19 while remaining committed to safety, quality and communication.

Carla Perez, Project Team, provided a legislative update and project status. Below are questions asked about legislation by the group:

- Question: Are the legislators just meeting once? Or staying in session?
 - **Answer:** The legislature is scheduled to reconvene on May 18th and are constitutionally mandated to pass a balanced budget before they adjourn.
- Question: How much of the projected \$3B cut will impact CDOT's transportation budget?
 - **Answer:** A good portion of CDOT's budget is protected through the Highway User Trust Fund (HUTF), but the fund is seeing a decrease as gas tax revenues decline, both at the federal and state Level.
 - The SB-267 Certificates of Participation (COPs) established in 2017 give some funding to transportation, too – CDOT is waiting for the next economic forecast coming on May 12 to understand how big the impact is and whether or not the FY20 COPs will be issued.

LEVEL 1 EVALUATION RESULTS

Mandy Whorton, Project Team, discussed the Level 1 evaluation, including the evaluation process, vision statement, range of alternatives considered, fatal flaw evaluation, and the results.

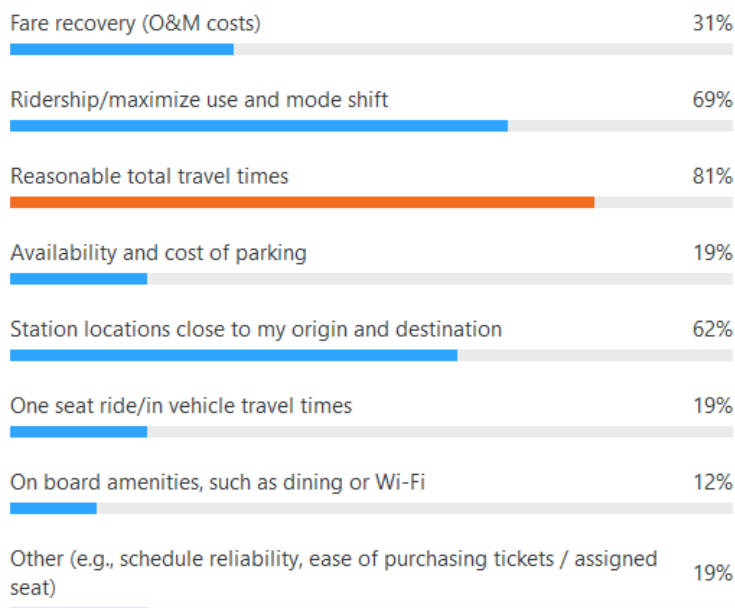
Below are key questions/points made during the group discussion.

- Bustang was looking at operating on US 85 corridor so could that be a feeder service to FRPR? There have been local efforts to provide Greeley/Evans service, including a potential PnR near La Salle
- Fort Collins. The approach to downtown Fort Collins on the I-25 alignment has potential to be refined during the Level 2 evaluation to use the portion of the UP corridor from Centerra into Fort Collins.
- The I-25 corridor is not as direct to Longmont, Loveland and Fort Collins based on existing population centers but growth is moving east toward the I-25 corridor by 2045
- The maps show lots of growth moving toward I-25 both east and west in 2045, however, we need to keep in mind, we'll be asking voter approval sooner than later

LEVEL 2 EVALUATION

Mandy Whorton, Project Team, continued the discussion about the Level 2 evaluation process, including alternatives that were carried forward, criteria, Level 2 alternatives, North segment, and considerations for refinements. Attendees were asked to rate their top three most important operating characteristics; Results are below:

1. Rate the top three most important operating characteristics for FRPR. (Multiple choice)



Below are key points that were discussed with the group.

- Should the evaluation criteria include 2045 Population Served AND 2045 employment? (yes)
- Economic options for station areas – TOD considerations – Consider to add station areas, TOD, economic opportunities under “Economic Considerations”
- Are you looking at the Type of rail service yet? 90 and 125 mph service; serving very different type of service – if you’re comparing a service that stops more frequently than an express service, that impacts a lot.
- Another criteria: distance of route - shorter routes should be preferred, all other variables being equal or close to equal
- Would you consider an additional evaluation criteria of "people throughput" when comparing the movement of people on I-25 versus this rail service?
- With TOD planned next to the planned 1st & Main station in Longmont, the distance to the station will be very short! Will TOD be a major consideration along the I-25 corridor? What we assume around station area development does change the projection – we are aware that land use has an effect on ridership and will look in to that. The land use data set in the travel model presently takes the data set from the MPO models – need a longer conversation about what updates might have happened while we’ve been modeling – how will any updates get modeled in to Level 2
- Station location development – see RTD A Line as an example similar to Loveland; if we used I-25 and there is a station in the US 34 area, we’d pull even more development to that area
- If we don’t have reasonable travel time, you won’t have ridership. If you don’t have ridership, none of the other things matter. That’s the first domino
- For transit riders, need to consider extra access time, too – so train time needs to be reasonable – average maximum commute time is typically 45 mins Need to be better than bus travel time
- Availability and cost of parking – that’s at the station they are on-boarding – should it be total trip cost (i.e. if you drive, you have high parking cost if your destination is Denver)
- One-seat ride low, and reasonable travel time high – is that an assumption a transfer is okay as long as the total travel time is okay?
- One-seat is important still, though
- It also depends on the trip type (kids, luggage, etc)
- A train has far more capacity than a bus - which means you eventually reach the point where you can't run enough busses to handle the ridership in a corridor.
- Reasonable total travel time carries over not only to the user and their quality of life, but businesses/employer cost. Not sure if you've talked about the Value of Travel Time, which refers to the cost of time spent on transport and the benefits from reduced travel time costs. It factors in costs to businesses for the time their employees spend on travel (if employers pay for it), and costs to consumers of personal (unpaid) time spent on travel.

SOLO WORK

Attendees were asked to fill out a Survey Monkey questionnaire. The results are below.

1. What is the primary benefit or use for FRPR in Northern Colorado? Commuting (home to job); Business (travel for work); Leisure (personal travel not related to work)

- Part of the answer could be what is the purpose of the system - what is the system supposed to accomplish? Take vehicles off the roadways, with all the benefits that drives. If that is the case, what is the primary target market? I think the answer is to attract the most riders to take the most vehicles off the highways. If that is the case, I think the answer is commuters to create a base load. Business travel would be #2, if that is the second big group of travelers in the region/corridor. Leisure travel would be #3, but those trips - with the exception of travelers to/from major recreation or sports centers - would be more sporadic.
- I think commuting and business travel would be primary. Leisure travel would depend on the ultimate destination and facilities available. Think of a vacation trip and the need to rent a car or other factors. such as local transportation
- The expansion of I-25 will induce demand for commuters between Denver and Northern Colorado. We have no plan to expand I-25 again. Rail will provide vital connections for employees in both regions as I-25 congests again with induced demand. 2. Work Day Trips between Regions - Rail should help make synergies between our regions instead of the current impediment of I-25 that currently exists. We don't want I-25 to be the reason the economic activity avoid Northern Colorado.
- All of the above! I can see a number of people using this service to access job centers south of this area. There will also be that lesser demand for service to DIA/DEN airport for both work and leisure, and finally the need to access entertainment venues both on the north and central (and south) end of this full corridor. To pick one, primary use would probably be commuting to job centers.
- Commuting
- Ideally it would provide the most benefit for commuters to improve air quality and reducing the need for large highway expansion projects. However depending on the alignment, travel time, number of transfers, and station locations it could provide more benefits to tourism and personal/business travel.
- I would imagine that the primary use would be Commuting. A key secondary use (though a much lower percentage of total trips and ridership) would likely be leisure travel.
- The primary use would be for leisure travel. It would be impossible to serve a large amount of commuters given the dispersed nature of the region.
- All of the above and having an option to driving as long as you can get to your final destination easily
- Commuting - home to job
- Commuting
- Commuting
- Business (travel for work) followed by Leisure
- Commuting and business (they are very similar and one-in-the-same in numerous cases) due to the extreme lack of transit service north of 120th Avenue.
- Leisure
- Ranked in order: Commuting, Leisure, Business

- Commuting/business
- Commuting, then Leisure, then Business

2. How fast is it reasonable for passenger rail to traverse established communities, particularly between Berthoud and Fort Collins on the BNSF freight corridor?

- I hope you are not planning for a Front Range HSR station in Berthoud! But, to answer the question, Berthoud-Fort Collins looks to be 20 miles apart on highways and streets through the center of Loveland. I expect the point-to-point drive time would generally be about 30 minutes. I'd suggest 15-20 minutes maximum would be ideal; recognize the constraint is at Fort Collins where BNSF occupies the Mason Street Corridor with a 20 MPH speed restriction. That would have to be addressed between the rail service provider and the community. I think a maximum hour 15-20 minutes Denver-Fort Collins should be the target, keeping stations at a minimum and maximizing speeds between stations.
- Current passenger train speeds are about 70 MPH which would cover the intermediate distance between stations quickly and would be very competitive with highway. Higher speeds would significantly raise the cost of the infrastructure and while impressive, is it worth the higher cost?
- I believe the I-25 expansion will induce demand for more commuters and increase travel times. So, the BNSF has to be on par with 6 lanes of traffic moving north and south between Denver in a congested scenario. A reasonable trip time is 25 minutes if someone does the driving for me and I can relax on a frequent rail connection. I don't believe you would be able to make Fort Collins to Berthoud on I-25 in 25 minutes in a congested scenario (BNSF also connects our downtowns instead of I-25 Park and Rides. That time from I-25 to downtown Loveland, Berthoud, and Fort Collins needs to be considered, too)
- I don't fully understand this question. Is the question--how long should it take for a train to travel from Berthoud to Ft. Collins? 20 to 30 minutes?? Or is the question, how long should the train take through each community? It should take 5 - 10 minutes to "traverse" each community I would think. With smaller car sets, I don't think the community will have an issue with trains through the community, though speed will certainly be an issue through established communities--very slow compared to new, more direct rail corridors.
- About 25 to 30 Minutes
- Depends on the size of the community but I'd say three stops max per community.
- Trains will obviously be slowing down coming into stations, but having seen successful passenger train services in other parts of the country, express trains could go through the communities at higher speeds than autos traverse adjacent city streets. The "look" of those corridors will be different, and more vibrant, than they are today!
- Can't answer this question without knowing what the travel times are between other destinations. Slower speeds from Fort Collins to Berthoud would be fine if faster speeds between Berthoud and Denver make up for the slower segment.
- I don't know, but would guess an average speed to be between 40 and 50
- As a Fort Collins resident, travel time between FC and Denver should not be 'much' longer than by bus/auto. Not sure how that affects the number of stops and traverses in other towns, but I think ridership from the 'way' north would be affected.
- It has to be faster than cars, so I think you are talking about 80-90 mph, perhaps faster taking into consideration stops.

- Only as fast as the communities would tolerate.
- 20 minutes
- 30-35 minutes
- 50mph or greater
- Time is important. Want no more than 1 mile per minute (60 mph) if traveling more than 10 miles.
- 90 mph?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION POINTS

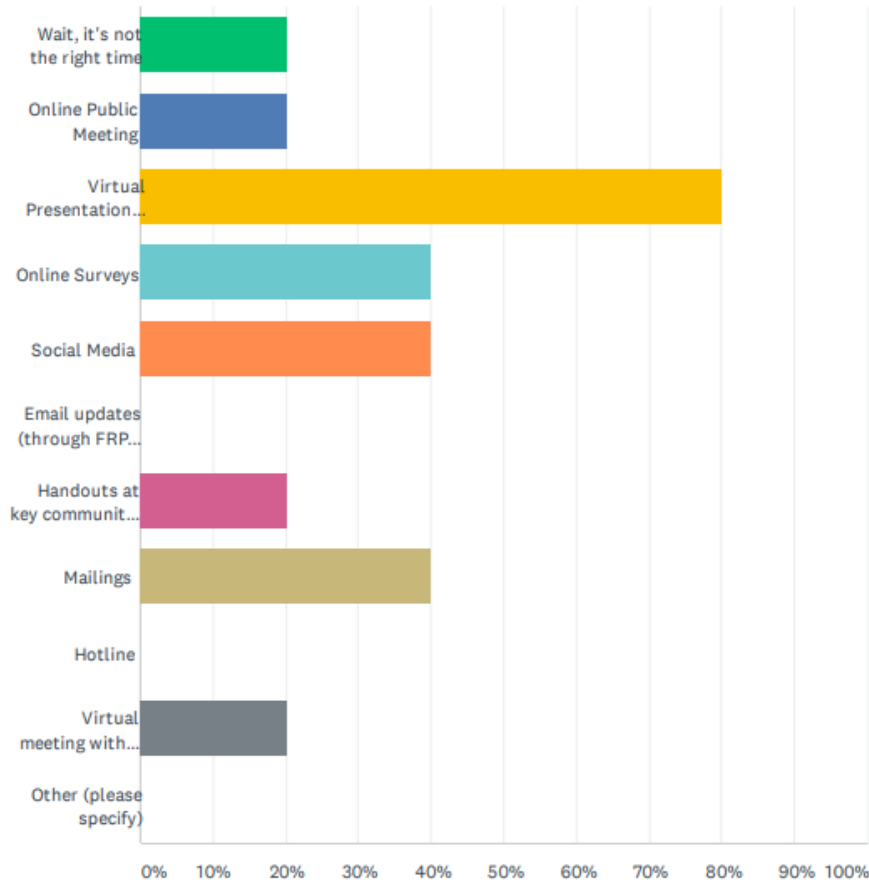
- The 'fastness' will all depend on the community (i.e. Berthoud will want appropriate speeds, like Fort Collins, but Loveland might be okay with quicker speeds)
 - We should ask the communities – Online meeting question?
 - I'm happier with a higher speed through town. A survey might help, but mitigating access to the rail such as a quiet zone would help
 - Travel time on BNSF needs to be compared to that of I-25 from Fort Collins to Berthoud – but if we select BNSF, what's that time like to downtown
 - Trains could go faster with crossing improvements- crossing arms, etc.
- Consider crossing safety fodder from RTD
 - RTD handling of grade crossings on the A Line, particularly the amount of time gates are down before and after a train passes, noise, and synchronization with adjacent street stoplights has hardly been optimum or state-of-the-art. We should ensure survey participants understand there are better models for handling grade crossings to minimize motor traffic delay and train noise, and not base their responses on any personal experiences along RTD's A-Line.
 - Quiet Zones would be recommended for at-grade crossings. Also, people would need to understand the difference in slow speed, mile-long freight trains vs higher speed and shorter passenger trains, which would create much less waiting at-grade crossings.
 - We will also have a better range to consider as ridership modeling evolves - we know speed matters but impacts do also, and there will be a tradeoff.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The meeting exceeded the allotted time and therefore was not able to cover the public engagement portion of the presentation. Feedback on future public involvement techniques was solicited from a follow-up survey. Below are the results.

Q1 Given COVID-19, how should we best proceed in your community with Public Involvement? Select 1-4

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Wait, it's not the right time	20.00%	1
Online Public Meeting	20.00%	1
Virtual Presentations to Local Organizations	80.00%	4
Online Surveys	40.00%	2
Social Media	40.00%	2
Email updates (through FRPR or through local organizations)	0.00%	0
Handouts at key community locations	20.00%	1
Mailings	40.00%	2
Hotline	0.00%	0
Virtual meeting with local organizations	20.00%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

What specific tools is your organization willing to use to help the FRPR team push out public involvement opportunities (social media channels, e-newsletters, website posting, etc) during this time (be specific and we'll reach out to partner on cross-promotion of project input opportunities?)

- CSU would need to be formally requested to send information to all employees and students. We could use our online newsletter and possibly social media if FRPR had a call to action (survey) to distribute.
- Because this project does not directly affect the City of Greeley, I do not think general public engagement is necessary. However I think it would be necessary to engage councils and commissions on project components and progress updates.
- social media, website
- As the local TMA, we have a broad reach to the surrounding communities. We can post on our social media platforms, post on our website and include a section in our monthly newsletter that go out via email and is posted to our website. We can also email it to our NATA members.