

**SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION**

North Area Transportation Alliance
October 24th, 2019

The central panel features a logo for the Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission. The logo depicts a stylized blue and white mountain range above a blue train with a red and yellow circular emblem on its side. Below the logo, the text "SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Underneath this, the text "North Area Transportation Alliance" and "October 24th, 2019" is displayed in a smaller, regular font. The background of this panel is a faded, light-colored image of a train station platform.



SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION

Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

- Legislature's Senate Bill 17 – 153 created the Commission (effective July 1, 2017); replaced the previous Southwest Chief Commission which had existed since 2014
- Housed under CDOT; similar to HPTE and Bridge Enterprise in terms of independence reporting to a Board/Commission other than the Transportation Commission
- 11 voting Commissioners
 - Five appointed by the Governor: two Class I railroad representatives (BNSF and UP), two advocates for passenger rail, one resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers or Pueblo counties that advocates for passenger rail.
 - One each from the four Front Range MPOs and one from South Central Council of Governments
 - One from RTD
- 3 non-voting members
 - CDOT
 - Amtrak
 - Cheyenne, Wyoming



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Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

Project Role	Current Commissioner	Organization	Notes
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Salvatore Pace	Resident of Pueblo County	Appointment expires 7/1/2021
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Jim Souby	ColoRail	Appointment expires 7/1/2020
Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative	Nathan Anderson	Union Pacific Railroad	Appointment expires 7/1/2021
Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative	Peter Rickershauser	BNSF Railway	Appointment expires 7/1/2020
Resident of Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, or Pueblo County	Richard Klein	City of La Junta	Appointment expires 7/1/2020
North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) Representative	Becky Karasko	NFRMPO	
Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Representative	Jacob Riger	DRCOG	
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Representative	Jill Gaebler	Colorado Springs City Council	
Pueblo Area Council of Governments Representative	Terry Hart	Pueblo County	
South Central Area Council of Governments Representative	Phil Rico	City of Trinidad	
Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) Representative	Bill Van Meter	RTD	
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Representative	David Krutsinger	CDOT Division of Transit and Rail	Non-voting Member
Amtrak Representative	Robert Eaton	Amtrak	Non-voting Member
Cheyenne, Wyoming Representative	Dale Steenbergen	Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce	Non-voting Member

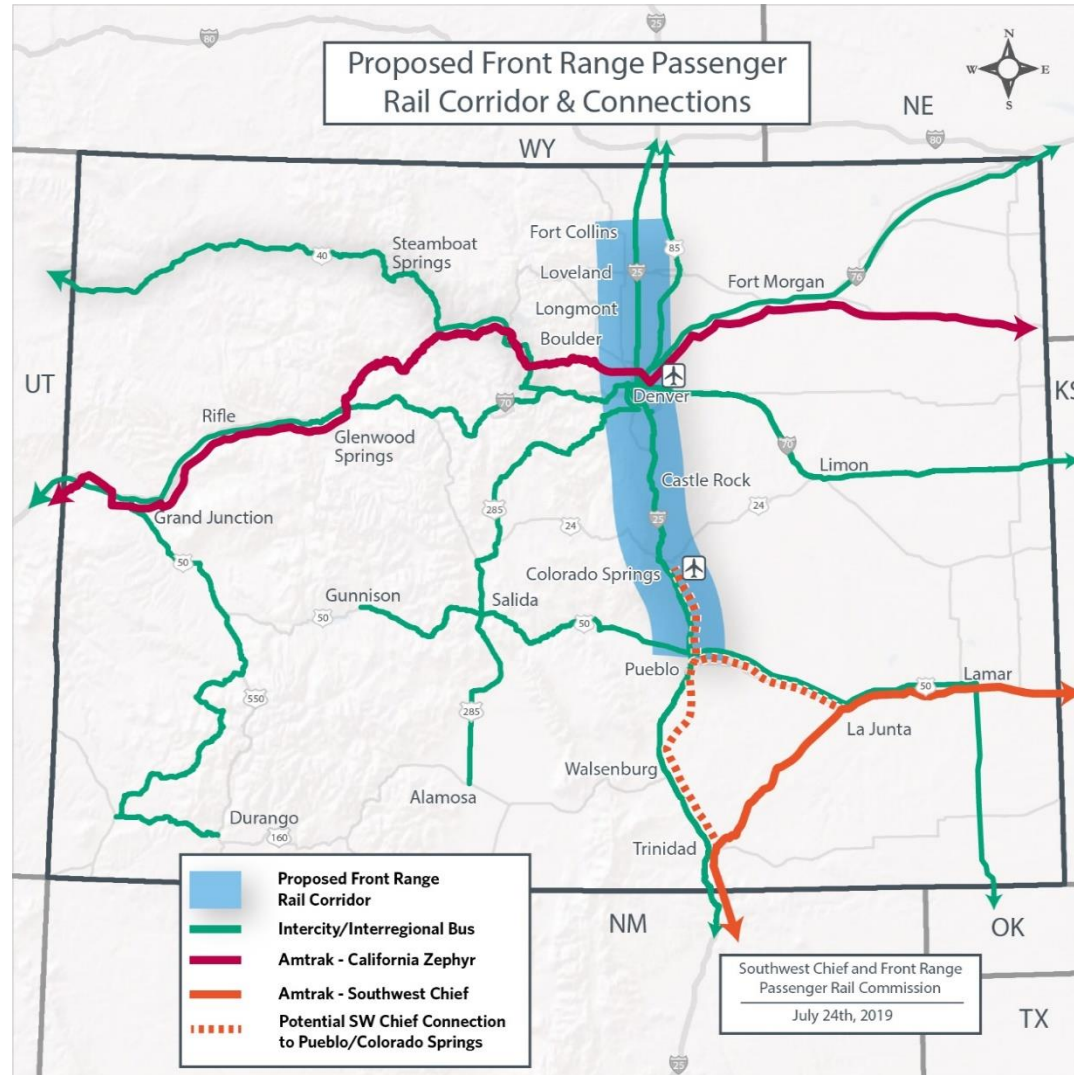
Commission's Purposes



- Work to preserve Amtrak's Southwest Chief service across southeast Colorado
 - Work with neighboring states of Kansas and New Mexico to upgrade rails, ties, signal systems and other rail infrastructure on BNSF's Amtrak Southwest Chief route across the three states
 - Pursue possible Amtrak Southwest Chief service extension into Pueblo and possibly Colorado Springs from La Junta
 - Consider re-routing the Southwest Chief service between La Junta and Trinidad by way of Pueblo and Walsenburg to better serve southern Colorado
- Facilitate the development of Front Range Passenger Rail service



Proposed Front Range Passenger Rail Corridor, Amtrak, and Intercity/Interregional Bus Routes





Current Commission Activities

Hired Consultant for Rail Passenger Service Development Plan and environmental work; Notice to Proceed given to HDR consultant team in August.

Worked with Amtrak, BNSF and neighboring States and communities on July 15 application to USDOT for “2019 BUILD Grant” to finish upgrades to BNSF’s track on the Southwest Chief route.

Submitted an application for a CRISI 2019 planning grant to evaluate feasibility of a thru-car service off of the Southwest Chief from La Junta to Pueblo and Colorado Springs.

Hold monthly Commission meetings (2nd Friday of each month); every other meeting is at a Front Range location outside of the Denver metro area. Next meeting in Denver on November 8th



Service Development Plan

ELEMENTS REQUIRED IN RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Purpose and Need for Front Range Passenger Rail Service
- Corridor options/potential feasible alignments, including possible connections to RTD's Passenger Rail Corridors
- Potential speeds/technology
 - Ridership forecasting based on speed/technology
- Levels of service (number of trains per day)
- Stations/Mobility Hubs/transit connections
- High level cost estimates for Pre-construction, Construction, Equipment, Operating, etc.
- Benefit - Cost Analysis
- Potential Service operator (Amtrak, BNSF Railway, Herzog, etc.)
- Governance (Special District, Regional Transportation Authority [RTA], etc.)





Legislative Options

- Commissioners and Commission staff are beginning to discuss possible legislative options for the January 2020 Legislative Session.
- Potential legislative options include measures for governance and future funding for the Commission to supplement the \$2.5m received in 2018 from SB 18-001.
- Commission, CDOT and consultant staff continue to identify possible governance options, including challenges/opportunities.





Stakeholder Engagement

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Function: Obtain feedback and input from local officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

Segment Stakeholder Coalitions (North, Central, South)

Function: Provide project information to and obtain feedback at the local level

Members: Regional and local stakeholders

Responsibilities: Share project information with segment communities; Gather community input and share with Corridor Stakeholder Coalition

Frequency: Quarterly – First meeting second week of November 2019

Corridor Stakeholder Coalition

Function: Create stakeholder-based recommendations for cohesive, corridor-wide project decisions

Members: Segment Stakeholder Coalition representatives

Frequency: Quarterly - First meeting tentatively early December 2019



Upcoming Activities

- **Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission**
 - **Commission Meeting – November 8th, Denver**
- **Initiation of Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement Activities**
- **Initiation of Service Development Plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work**



LARHF Collection





Public Sentiment

MetroQuest Survey

- 6,965 total respondents over the course of 71 days; July 22nd—September 30th, 2019.
- **95%** of respondents believe that passenger rail service could help address transportation needs along the Front Range.
- **93%** support establishing passenger rail between at least Fort Collins and Pueblo.
- **92%** would be interested in using the service if it were available.

RBI/Magellan Survey

- 600 responses across the 13 effected Front Range counties. October 4th-8th
- **85% total support** (10% total oppose) for the use of passenger rail service as a mode of transportation for residents and communities along the Front Range.
- **81% total support** (12% total oppose) for a Front Range Passenger Rail service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo.
- **61% total support** (27% total oppose) for a sales tax increase to fund a Front Range Passenger Rail Service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins down to Pueblo with an estimated cost of five billion dollars.

Questions?



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