



# Front Range Passenger Rail

*Central Segment Coalition Meeting*

*November 13, 2019*



# Front Range Passenger Rail is...

---

An exercise for you to do while we all arrive and settle in. Think of how you would finish this sentence -- free association style:

- Write out your thought on a post-it note
- Write as many thoughts as you have; one thought per post-it note
- Stick your thoughts up on the wall
- Look to see others' thoughts/post-its up on the wall
- If there are ideas already on the wall that are similar to yours, group yours next to them

# Agenda

---

- Welcome
- What is FRPR
- Project Development
- FRPR Governance
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Coalition Workshop
- Next Steps

# Segment Coalition Roles and Expectations

---

The primary responsibilities of segment coalition members are to provide input on project-related issues and serve as liaisons between the FRPR project and members of their community.

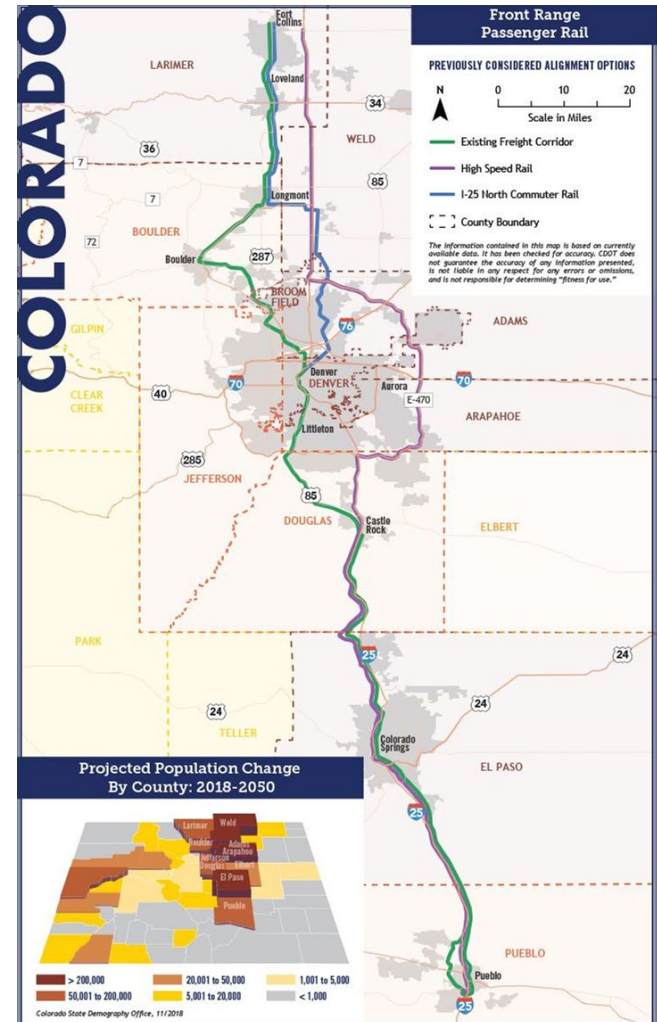
- Share information with community members
- Provide locally-focused input
- Support locally-based engagement
- Constructive problem-solvers

Meetings: 2-3 hours; approximately every six weeks

# Past Studies

## History and Status of FRPR

- Numerous studies conducted for passenger rail in Colorado
  - Across Front Range
    - State Passenger Rail Plan (2018), Interregional Connectivity Study (2014) and Interoperability Study (2017), Rocky Mountain Rail Authority, High Speed Rail Feasibility Study (2010)
  - In regional corridors along the Front Range
    - North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (2011) and Commuter Rail Update (2015), FasTracks corridors in Denver metropolitan area, Northwest Area Mobility Study (2014), I-25 South Gap Environmental Assessment (2018)



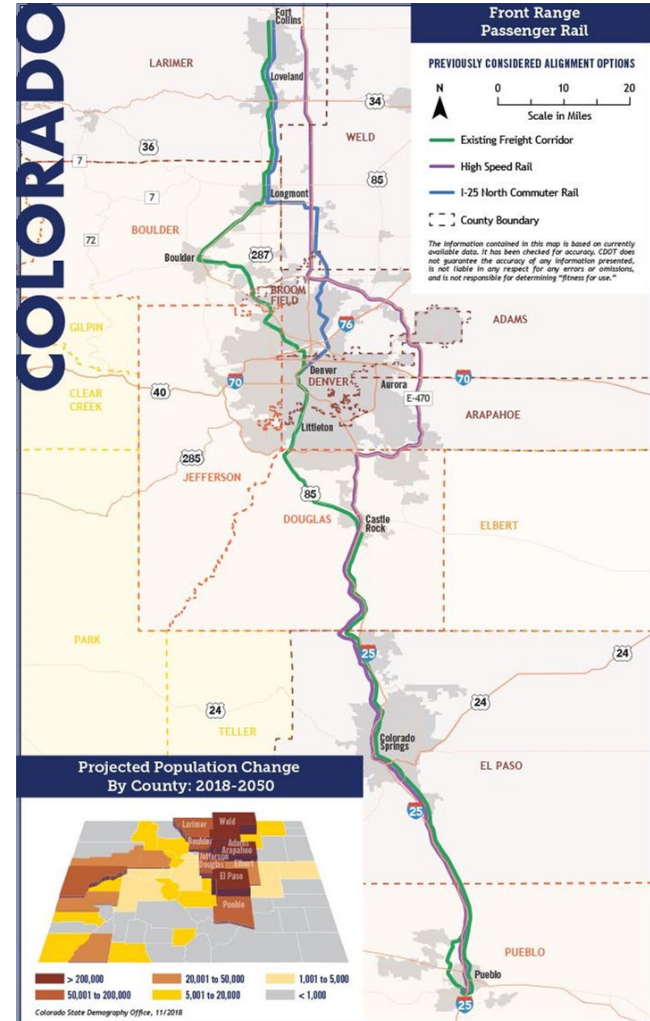
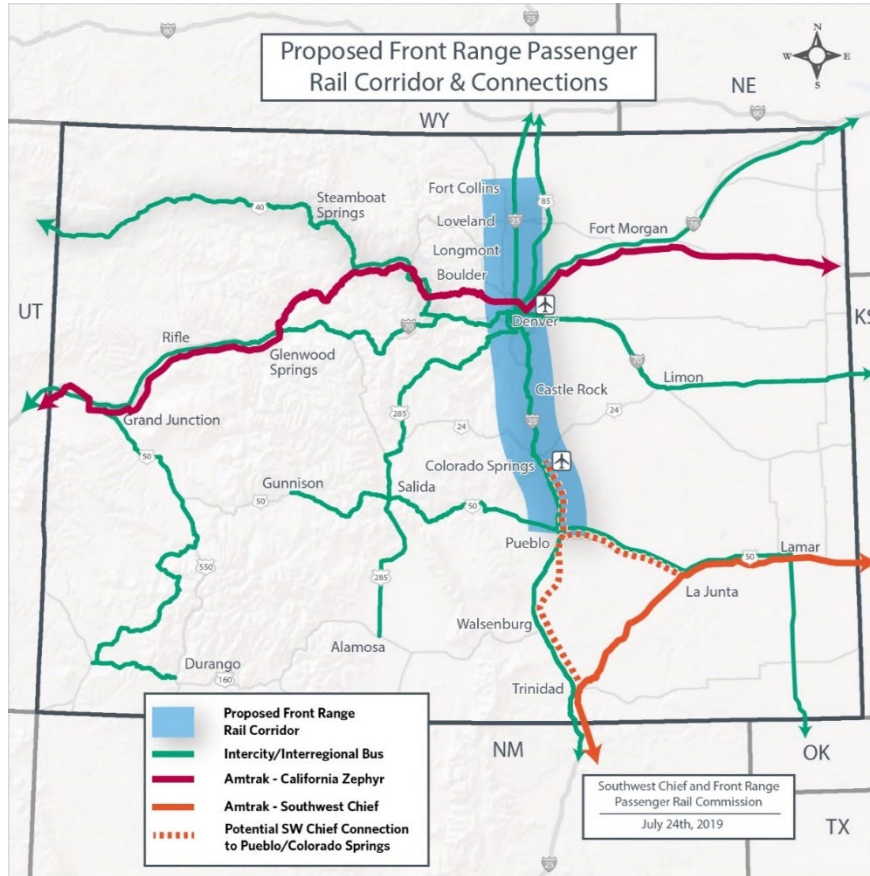
# Who is the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission?

---

## Rail Commission

- Legislative direction (SB 17-153) to facilitate implementation of passenger rail along the Front Range
- Independent Commission, housed under CDOT
  - 11 voting Commissioners
  - 3 non-voting advisors
- Groups represented: PPACG, DRCOG, UP, PACOG, NFRMPO, South County Community Member, Passenger Rail Advocates (2), BNSF, SCCOG, RTD, CDOT (non-voting), Amtrak (non-voting), Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce (non-voting)

# Corridor / Study Area





# FRPR Purpose

---

Developing passenger rail service in and along the I-25 corridor is an important component of Colorado's transportation future. Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) will provide a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation option for travel between major population centers along the Front Range and create a backbone for expanding rail and transit options in the state.

# FRPR Study Objectives

---

- Increased mobility choices for safe and reliable travel along the Front Range - limited intercity transit options today
- Connect corridor destinations and communities - jobs, shopping, recreation, health care, leisure
- Address increasing intercity and regional travel demands - effects of population growth and increasing congestion on major highways
- Provide a mode choice for our changing demographics and corresponding transportation demands
- Provide an inter-city transportation alternative for low-income and underserved communities - connect affordable housing to jobs

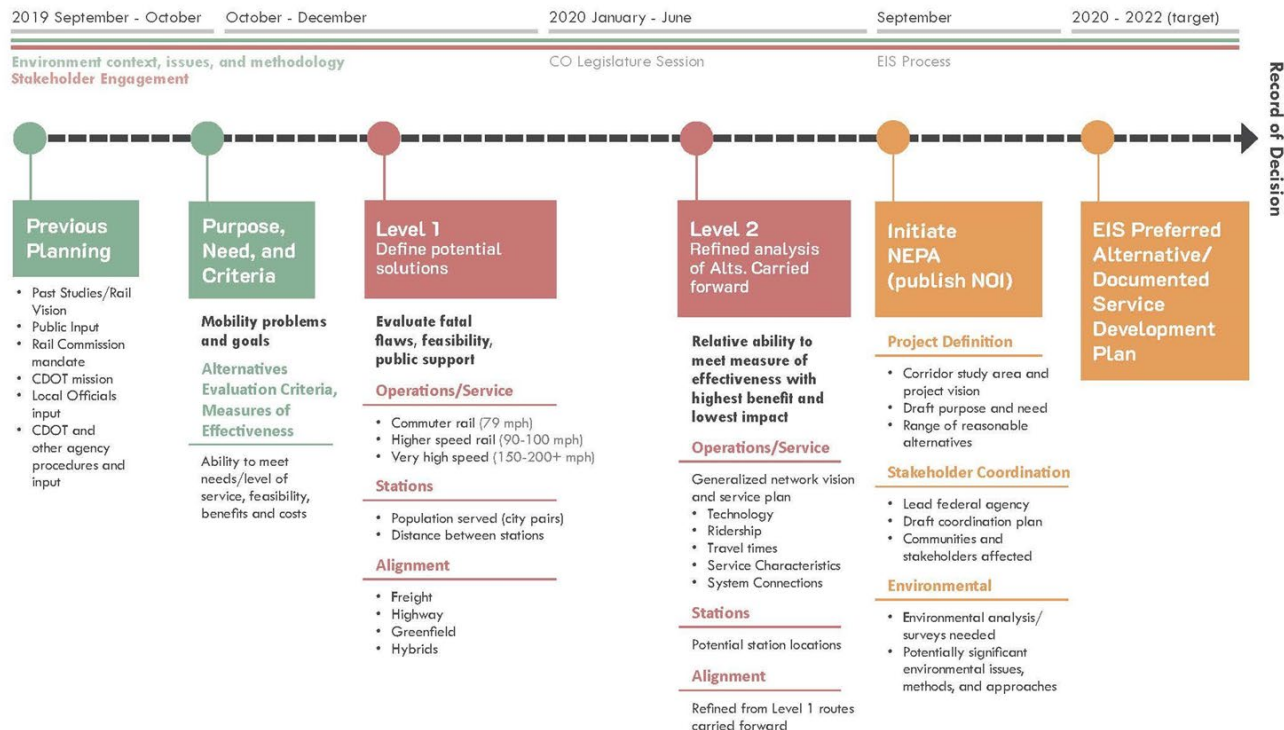
# Project Development

## Decision-Making Process

### FRONT RANGE RAIL PRE-NEPA PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Front Range Passenger Rail project is following an integrated planning process that will directly link with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for a federal approval by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Highway Administration will oversee the activities in the flowchart below: defining the project, stakeholder coordination, and identification of environmental issues. This upfront involvement will ensure a more efficient NEPA process.

The USDOT agencies will also work with other federal, state, and local agencies to streamline permitting and project approvals once NEPA is initiated. This is consistent with Executive Order 13807, issued in 2017 to reduce the average time to complete required environmental reviews and authorization decisions for major infrastructure projects.



# Governance

---

**Public Rail Authority:** Establishes a statutory tool for local entities to create an authority over time as planning and funding options arise. This tool is similar to PHA and RTA enabling statutes but for rail. (Preferred)

**Front Range Rail District:** Creates a defined district along the I-25 corridor and provides a specific governance structure; powers and financing authority would be detailed in statute.

**Rail Enterprise:** Could leverage HPTE structure, focused more on fees for funding; powers and financing authority would depend on statute.

**Expand SW Chief/FRPRail Commission:** Provide additional scope and authority to existing Commission to further evaluate above options, along with appropriation.

# Stakeholder Engagement

---

## Overview of Engagement Approach

- FRPR Presentations
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Social and Political Risk Assessment
- Online Engagement
- Community Meetings
- Stakeholder Coalitions

# Stakeholder Engagement

---

## **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:** Approximately every six weeks

## **Corridor Stakeholder Coalition**

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

**Members:** Segment Stakeholder Coalition representatives

**Frequency:** Quarterly

# Stakeholder Engagement

---

## Past Studies Public Input Themes

- Thinking about the state's future transportation system differently is wise
  - Need alternative modes of transportation
  - Traffic congestion is getting worse, and paving more lanes is not the answer
- Need for more expansive local transit systems to provide connectivity to Front Range system
- Preference for scenarios with fastest travel times
- Phasing smaller phases will be hard to garner broad support or public enthusiasm
- Concerns about
  - Construction and operation costs and how to pay for them (concerns about tax increases)
  - Appropriateness of passenger rail for Colorado given lower population densities and car culture

# Stakeholder Engagement

## Past Studies Public Input Themes

| North                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Central                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | South                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mix of support and concern about high-speed passenger rail and how it relates to commuter rail along freight corridor</li><li>• Supportive of planning both systems together and providing more direct access to city centers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alleviating traffic congestion is highest priority</li><li>• Linking to DIA is critical</li><li>• DUS Connections<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Important to realize economic benefits</li><li>○ Construction would have substantial and unacceptable impacts</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider impacts to COS Airport</li><li>• Support for eliminating alignment through Black Forest</li><li>• Include Pueblo in initial system</li></ul> |



# Stakeholder Engagement

## MetroQuest Online Survey

- 6,965 respondents
- 95% believe passenger rail could help address transportation needs along the Front Range

## Public Opinion Survey

- 600 responses

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 85% support / 10% oppose | passenger rail service as a mode of transportation for residents and communities along the Front Range                                                                                                                    |
| 81% support / 12% oppose | a Front Range Passenger Rail service project that would have regularly scheduled train service to major population centers from Fort Collins to Pueblo                                                                    |
| 61% support / 27% oppose | 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 to Pueblo with an estimated cost of \$5 billion |

# Stakeholder Engagement

---

## What have we heard?

### *Issues*

- Connect to Local Network
- Be “Future Flexible”
- Speedy and Efficient Service
- Support Future Development

### *Concerns*

- Cost Prohibitive (to build/operate)
- Cannot Compete with Cars (Time, Ease, Cost, Culture)
- Distrust / Historical Problems
- Low ridership

# Stakeholder Engagement

---

## Interactivity

- How will FRPR benefit your region/community?
- What aspect of FRPR is most important to you?
- What are the challenges to implementing FRPR?
- How does FRPR fit into a larger mobility picture?
- What are FRPR success factors?

# Front Range Passenger Rail Is...

---

# Next Steps

---

- Request for Information
- Select Corridor Coalition Representatives
- Next Segment Coalition Meeting
- Level 1 Alternatives

Thank you for joining us!



