

**Colorado - Selected Recent Passenger Rail Developments**

topic	
2009 rail and transit division added	Colorado's SB 09-094 created the CDOT Transit and Rail Division. The Division's responsibilities include development of a statewide transit and passenger rail plan to be integrated into the statewide transportation plan. They also include coordinating and negotiating with railroads.
2009 general transportation bill	SB 09-108, known as FASTER (for Funding Advancement for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery), was enacted. It raised funds for transportation primarily through a road safety surcharge and a bridge safety surcharge, each of which vary by vehicle weight and are collected at vehicle registration. Rail is included under transit. The bill directed \$10.0 million per year of the CDOT share of highway safety surcharges and fees and \$5.0 million from the municipal and county shares be expended on transit-related activities A CDOT official said some FASTER funds have been used to improve stations in Trinidad and La Junta, but the law does not permit improvements on a rail line owned by a private entity.
Jan-10 maintenance costs	In January 2010, BNSF announced to Amtrak that all maintenance costs for continued operation of the Southwest Chief between La Junta, Colorado, and Lamy, New Mexico, would have to be borne by Amtrak, if Amtrak wished to continue operating service over the same right-of-way.
Jan-10 maintenance costs	BNSF stated that it will maintain the tracks between Hutchinson, Kansas, and La Junta, Colorado, at a 60-mph passenger train maximum speed instead of the 79 mph passenger train maximum speed unless Amtrak chose to bear the cost of maintaining the tracks at the higher speed limit, as agreements between the parties permit Amtrak to do.
Aug-10 selling right-of-way	Colorado statute 40-20-103 was amended to allow a railroad company to sell its right-of-way but for use only for public passenger rail.
Mar-12 state rail priorities	State Rail Plan section title: Support linking of Colorado's passenger rail systems to the developing national intercity and high-speed rail networks First listed is an I-70 corridor environmental impact study. "Also, the state should consider supporting the retention of all Amtrak services in Colorado. Numerous discussions have occurred regarding the potential re-routing of Amtrak's Southwest Chief service off the Raton Pass line and onto the BNSF's transcontinental line. The potential re-route would benefit Amtrak by adding service to two major population centers, Wichita and Amarillo, while reducing the cost for service by eliminating operations over Raton Pass. However, the rerouting would terminate service to Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad. CDOT should work with the New Mexico and Kansas Departments of Transportation to determine if a strategy can be developed and presented to Amtrak and BNSF to maintain the existing route."

Mar-12 maintenance costs	In the State Rail Plan, "preserve Amtrak Southwest Chief service on the Colorado alignment (Capital improvements)" was ranked third on a list of projects with estimated project costs of \$200 million and given medium priority. No. 1 was completing Denver's Union Station (estimated costs \$182 million, funded, the only high priority project) and No. 2 was improving Amtrak stations (no costs determined)
Mar-12 expand rail, costs	State Rail Plan proposed inter-city passenger service priorities: No. 1 - passenger rail link to Southwest Chief, Denver to La Junta or Trinidad, estimated project costs \$875 million, medium priority (BNSF property); No. 2 - rail service from Fort Collins to Trinidad on new additional track within existing railroad right of way, estimated project costs \$2 billion, medium priority (BNSF/UP); No. 3 - rail service on existing track from Cheyenne, Wyoming, to El Paso, Texas (option through Fort Collins), estimated costs \$1.5 billion, medium priority (BNSF/UP)
Apr-12 expand rail, costs	<p>Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS) - The ICS is evaluating technologies, alignments and financial/funding options for potential high speed rail along the Front Range from Fort Collins to Pueblo, and the "connectivity" with the Regional Transportation District's FasTracks system in the Denver metro area. This study is working with a Project Leadership Team of representatives from CDOT, federal agencies, elected officials and staff from communities along the Front Range, railroads, and select advocacy groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status: Next major milestone meetings will be late 2012 into early 2013.</li> <li>• Duration: 18 months (April 2012 – September 2013) (from September 2012 meeting materials)</li> </ul>
30-Apr-2012 legislative support for <i>Southwest Chief</i>	Senate Joint Resolution 12-025: "Be it resolved . . . That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, call upon the National Railroad Passenger Corporation to continue routing the Amtrak Southwest Chief through its current southeastern Colorado route." directed to National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), USDOT, Speaker O'Neal, President Morris, Speaker and President in the New Mexico Legislature, Colorado Transportation Commission, Secretary of the NMDOT, KDOT Secretary King CDOT staff noted no appropriation accompanied the resolution.

<p>Sep-12 transportation coordination</p>	<p>Statewide Transit Plan - Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) submitted to procurement the scope of work for consultant services to develop CDOT's first Statewide Transit Plan. The Plan is required by state statute and will "identify local, interregional, and statewide transit and passenger rail needs and priorities." Per state statute, a statewide survey to assess the transportation needs of the elderly and disabled will be conducted as part of the Plan. The scope of work also includes preparation of the local transit and coordinated human services plans for the 10 rural Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs). The Statewide Transit Plan will then integrate the local transit and coordinated human services plan for the 15 Colorado TPRs (10 rural + 5 urban), the passenger rail elements of the State Rail Plan, and results of other DTR studies. The Statewide Transit Plan will then be integrated into the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status: The RFP will be posted to the BIDS system in mid- to late-September.</li> <li>• Duration: 15 months from NTP (Estimated: January 2013 – March 2014) (from September 2012 meeting materials)</li> </ul>
<p>Sources: "Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan," prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff, March 2012; minutes of the CDOT Transit and Rail Advisory Committee, from <a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/about/committees/trac/meeting-agendas-minutes.html">http://www.coloradodot.info/about/committees/trac/meeting-agendas-minutes.html</a>; CDOT pages such as <a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/transitandrail/transit">http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/transitandrail/transit</a>; referenced legislation</p>	
<p>Prepared by KLRD, October 2012</p>	