

# **Front Range Passenger Rail:** Tools for Providing Mobility in Rapid Growth Western Cities

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Rail Passengers Association  
Washington, DC



# Today's Agenda

(Times in Mountain)

1:00pm - Overview of Call Structure & Agenda

1:02pm - Introductory Remarks  
ColoRail President Jim Souby

1:05pm - Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Update  
Project Director Randy Grauberger

1:25pm - Moderated Q&A

1:40pm - Legislative Strategies to Address COVID-19's Threats to Service  
Rail Passengers VP of Policy Sean Jeans-Gail

1:55pm - Call to Action on INVEST in America Act  
Rail Passengers President & CEO Jim Mathews

2:00pm - Tease of Next Month's Webinar - We answer your questions about INVEST in America Act



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# Welcome



Jim Souby, President  
Colorado Passenger Rail Association





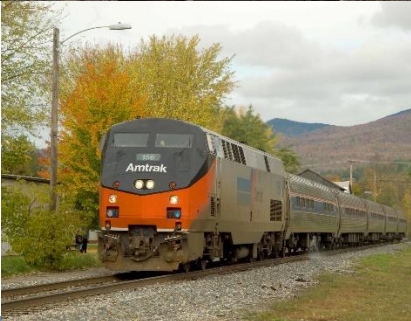
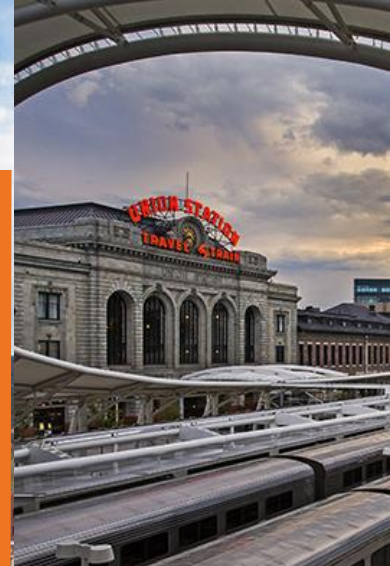
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# Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Update

Randy Grauberger, Project Director  
Southwest Chief & Front Range  
Passenger Rail Commission







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

Rail Passengers National Briefing  
June 24, 2020

The central graphic features a logo with a stylized mountain range and a train silhouette. Below the logo is the text "SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION". Underneath that, the event title "Rail Passengers National Briefing" and the date "June 24, 2020" are displayed. The background of this section is a faded image of a train.





# 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 (SB 17-153)

- 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



## Front Range Passenger Rail Vision

Developing passenger rail that serves Front Range communities from Pueblo to Fort Collins is a critical component of Colorado's future.

Front Range Passenger Rail will provide a safe, efficient and reliable transportation option for travel between major population centers along the Front Range and create a backbone for connecting and expanding rail and transit options in the state and the region.





## Agency Coordination

Project team members have coordinated with federal agencies including Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and Federal Highway Administration.

Three meetings occurred on the following dates, as well as several coordinating phone calls:

- October 21<sup>st</sup>
- January 13<sup>th</sup>
- April 2<sup>nd</sup>



## 2019 CRISI Grant Award

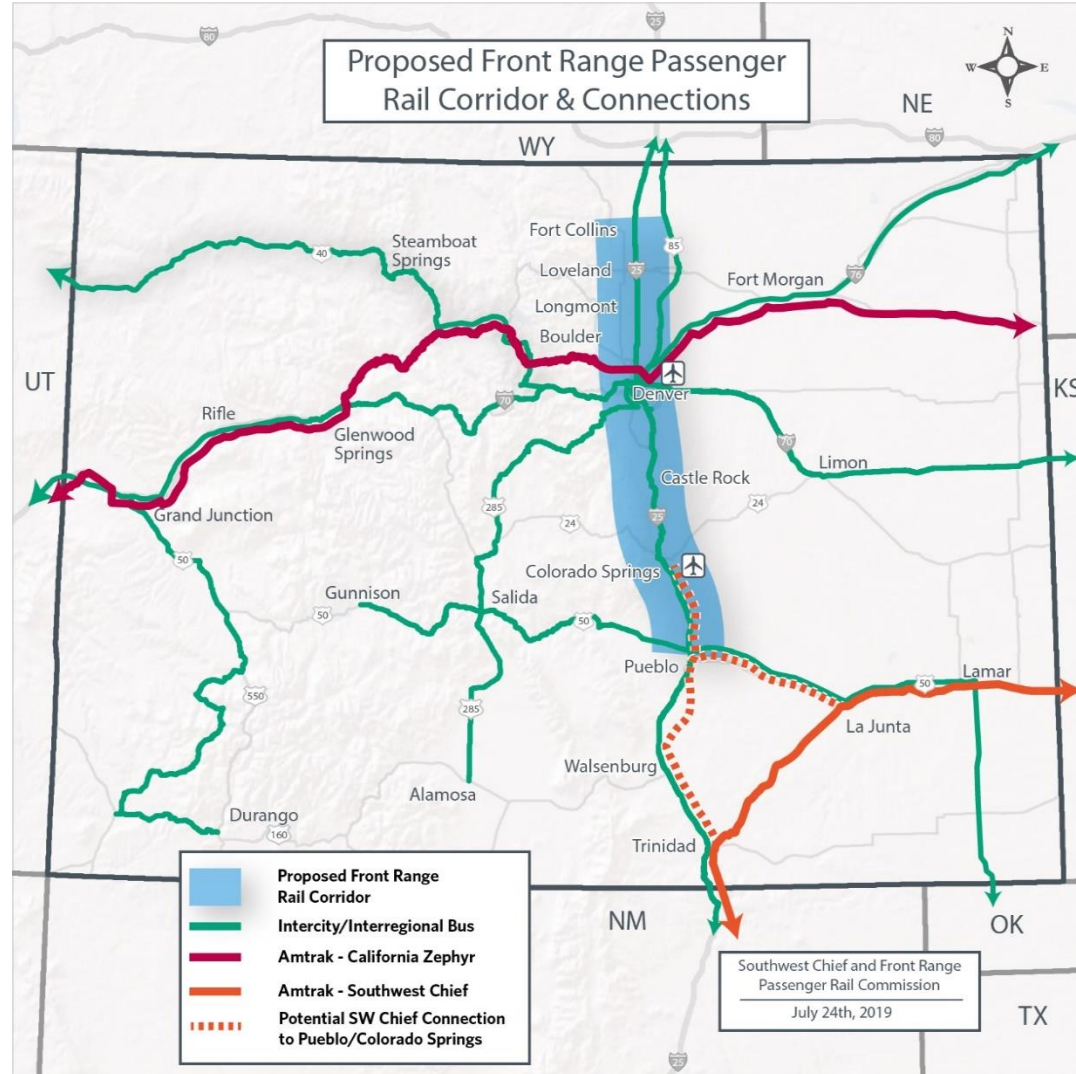
The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission, in partnership with CDOT and other partners noted below, successfully applied for a \$225,000 CRISI grant from the USDOT for the “Southwest Chief Thru-Car Service to Colorado Springs Feasibility Study.”

Matching partners included:

- Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission: **\$159,000** (70.7%)
- CDOT: **\$50,000** (22.2%)
- Pueblo County, Colorado: **\$10,000** (4.4%)
- City of La Junta, Colorado: **\$5,000** (2.2%)
- Colorado Rail Passenger Association: **\$1,000** (0.5%)



# Southwest Chief Thru-Car Service







## 2020 BUILD Grant Application

- The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission and partners will be submitting an application for a 2020 BUILD Grant.
- The grant would provide an estimated \$17 million in funding for new rail, ties, turnouts, bridge decks and at-grade crossing rehabilitation in the 2 states.
- Matching partners include CDOT, Kansas DOT, Amtrak, BNSF Railway, SW Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission and the Colorado Passenger Rail Association as well as the following communities: La Junta, Trinidad, and Dodge City, KS. Additional local entities may pledge match prior to the May 18 submittal of the application.



## Front Range Passenger Rail 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

**Meetings:** November 2019, January 2020, April 2020

### **Corridor Stakeholder Coalition**

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

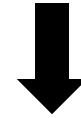
**Members:** Segment Stakeholder Coalition representatives

**Meetings:** December 2019, May/June 2020, Early Fall 2020



# Front Range Passenger Rail Process

We Are  
Here



STEP 1

**PROJECT  
INITIATION &  
SCOPING**

What do we want  
Front Range  
Passenger Rail to  
be?

STEP 2

**LEVEL 1  
EVALUATION**

What are the possibilities  
for corridors and  
operations?

STEP 3

**LEVEL 2  
EVALUATION**

How do alternatives  
compare?

STEP 4

**ADVANCE  
TO NEPA**

Federally required  
process to advance  
major infrastructure  
projects

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE





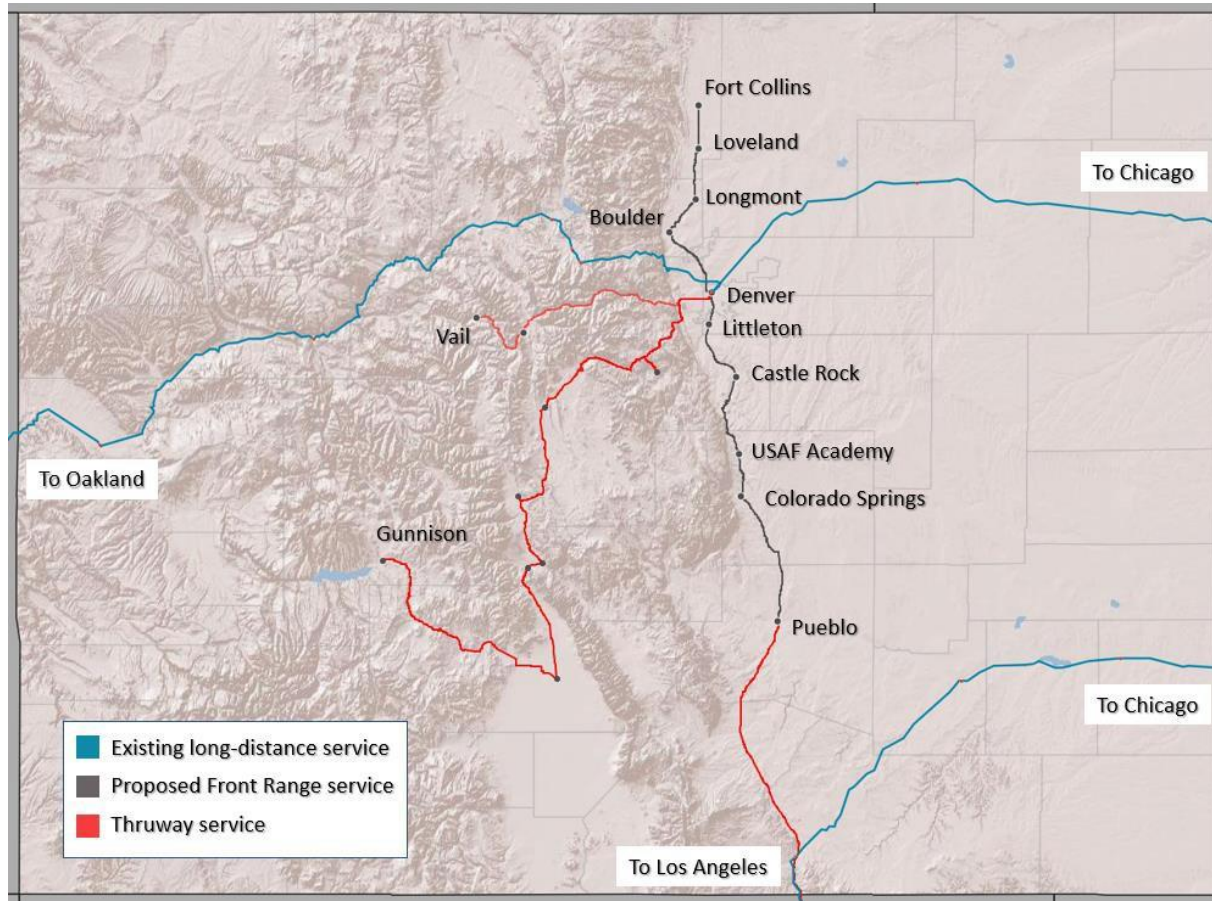
## Front Range Passenger Rail Level 1 Evaluation

- Reviewed existing Studies of existing freight rail and highway rights-of-way (Corridors)
  - Freight Rail: Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway
  - Highway: I-25, supplemented by E-470 and corridors adjacent to rail (US 85)
- Engineering will not optimize alignments to improve speeds or minimize impacts until Level 2 Evaluations.
- Goal is to understand how the existing freight rail and highway horizontal and vertical geometry, physical location, and right-of-way availability could interact with or support an adjacent passenger rail system.
- Corridor travel times will be broadly estimated considering existing & future population

# Proposed Service Improvements

**Front Range Corridor: three round trips daily, Fort Collins—Boulder—Denver—Colorado Springs—Pueblo\***

\* with intermediate stops



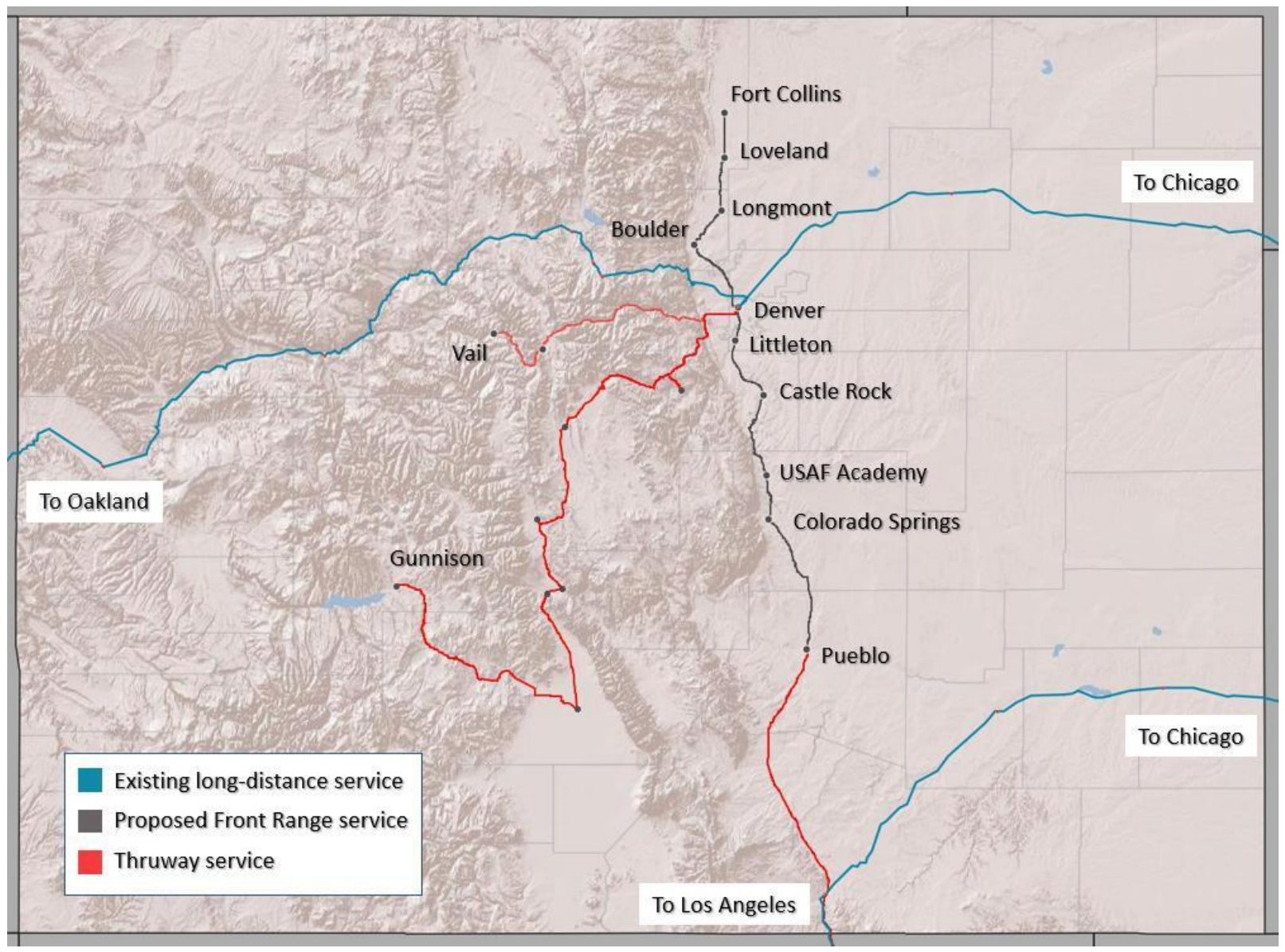
## ***Proposed Grant Program Could Help Fund Front Range Service***

Amtrak is proposing creation of a **Network Modernization Program (NMP)** as part of our reauthorization to support rail network evolution and expansion, including efforts to plan, develop, construct, and operate intercity passenger rail service in high-potential short-distance corridors like the Front Range.

As envisioned, the program would make federal grant funds available to Amtrak to cover up to 100% of the capital costs and initial operating costs of new corridor service; states would then gradually assume a greater share of operating costs over a five-year transition period. After this five-year period, if the states want to continue service, long-term costs would be allocated in accordance with the existing Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) Sec. 209 methodology as currently used by many states throughout the nation.

## ***Existing Grants Continue***

Amtrak intends for the NMP to supplement existing grant opportunities (e.g., BUILD, SOGR, CRISI, INFRA, & REG), and not to replace them.





# PROPOSED AMTRAK SERVICE IN COLORADO

FRONT RANGE SERVICE® serving FORT COLLINS - DENVER - PUEBLO  
and intermediate stations

Amtrak.com  
1-800-USA-RAIL

Southbound - Read Down			Mile	Station	Northbound - Read Up		
6 00A	11 30A	5 00P	0	Fort Collins, CO	10 30A	4 00P	9 30P
6 17A	11 47A	5 17P	13	Loveland, CO	10 13A	3 43P	9 13P
6 40A	12 10P	5 40P	31	Longmont, CO	9 50A	3 20P	8 50P
6 57A	12 27P	5 57P	43	Boulder, CO	9 33A	3 03P	8 33P
7 37A	1 07P	6 37P	72	Denver, CO	8 53A	2 23P	7 53P
7 47A	1 17P	6 47P			8 43A	2 13P	7 43P
8 16A	1 46P	7 16P	85	Littleton, CO	8 14A	1 44P	7 14P
8 46A	2 16P	7 46P	106	Castle Rock, CO	7 44A	1 14P	6 44P
9 18A	2 48P	8 18P	138	USAF Academy, CO	7 12A	12 42P	6 12P
9 42A	3 12P	8 42P	147	Colorado Springs, CO	6 48A	12 18P	5 48P
10 30A	4 00P	9 30P	191	Pueblo, CO	6 00A	11 30A	5 00P

*N.B.*—This is a high-level, conceptual schedule and has not been fine-tuned to account for special circumstances. Details are provided for illustrative purposes.





# Stakeholder Engagement

## Online MetroQuest Survey

- 6,965 total respondents over 71 days; July 22<sup>nd</sup>—September 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 Front Range counties - October 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>
- **85% total support** (10% total oppose) passenger rail service as a mode of transportation for residents and communities along the Front Range.
- **81% total support** (12% total 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% total support** (27% total 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**.

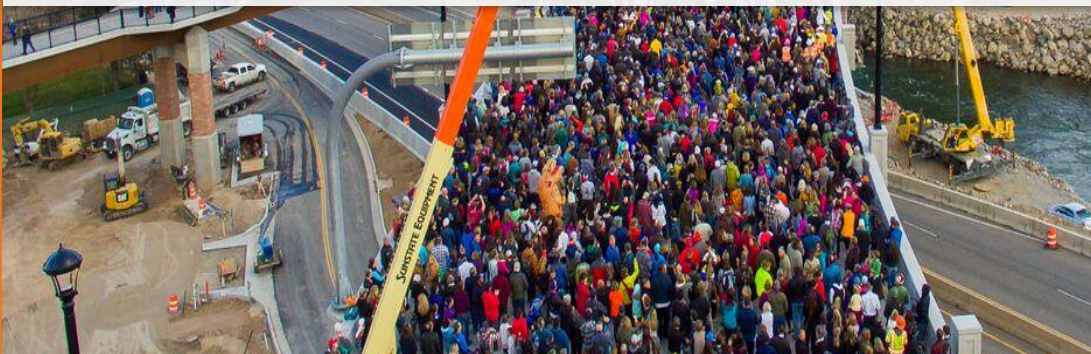




[www.frontrangepassengerrail.com](http://www.frontrangepassengerrail.com)



SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE  
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION



Randy Grauberger, Project Director  
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Commission

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# Q&A

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# Legislative Strategies to Address COVID-19's Threat to Rail Service



Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Gov't Affairs and Policy  
Rail Passengers Association



# COVID-19 Leads Amtrak to Announce Service Cuts

- In response to a systemwide drop in ridership—by as much as 95% during May 2020—Amtrak has announced the following service reductions will go into effect on October 1:
  - 32% fewer frequencies on the NEC;
  - 24% fewer frequencies on the State-Supported Corridors;
  - LDRs to three times per week.
- This is **contingent** on receiving an extra \$1.475 billion from Congress in FY21
- Normal service to resume "as demand warrants, potentially by the summer of 2021."

# INVEST in America Act (H.R. 2) Provides Meaningful Service Protections



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	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Amtrak - Northeast Corridor	\$2,900	\$2,700	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Amtrak - National Network	\$3,500	\$3,300	\$3,100	\$2,900	\$2,900



# INVEST in America Act - Not Just About the Money

- Directs Amtrak to provide reliable national intercity passenger rail service now and in the future.
- Realigns the makeup of Amtrak's board of directors to better reflect the interests of passengers and Amtrak-served states.
- Provides a means for Amtrak to enforce its statutory right of preference.
- Prohibits Amtrak from imposing mandatory arbitration on passengers.
- Requires Amtrak to establish an Office of Community Outreach
- Increases transparency of the costs Amtrak assigns to states for state-supported routes.
- Establishes a working group to improve onboard food and beverage services.
- Requires Amtrak to ensure that all long-distance passengers traveling overnight have access to hot meals (not just sleeping car passengers), and removes statutory language limiting Amtrak's ability to provide F&B due to costs.





# Uncertainty in Reauthorization Calendar

- FAST Act expires September 30, 2020... but no guarantee that a full reauthorization will be done by then.
- Full passage requires:
  - Senate rail title;
  - House financing bill;
  - Senate financing bill.



# A Diversified Advocacy Portfolio

- Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) may be a better vehicle for language to protect services.
  - July 8th markup for House T-HUD;
  - Mid-July for Senate T-HUD.
- Future coronavirus relief legislation.



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# Take Action to Support Passenger Rail



Jim Mathews, President & CEO  
Rail Passengers Association



# Take Action!

- Call your Representative to voice your support of the rail title in INVEST in America Act (H.R. 2):
  - Votes scheduled for June 30th - July 2nd
  - Capitol Switchboard - (202) 224-3121
- Demand that additional funds for Amtrak in FY2021 be tied to keeping workers and running daily trains:
  - July 8th markup for House T-HUD
  - Mid-July for Senate T-HUD
- [www.RailPassengers.org/Action](http://www.RailPassengers.org/Action)



# THE INVEST IN AMERICA ACT

FOR THE PEOPLE

Next month's webinar: The INVEST in America Act

**Wednesday, July 22nd - 3pm eastern**

Presentation by Rail Passengers' Staff & Guest Speaker, where we will answer YOUR questions in a full session Q&A

Submit your questions at [mbutler@narprail.org](mailto:mbutler@narprail.org)

# Thank You!



# Thank You!

Thank you for joining today's Rail Passengers advocacy webinar. We hope you've found the information helpful.

As the oldest and largest national organization serving as a voice for the more than 40 million rail passengers in the U.S., we strive to provide the tools you need to advocate for yourself and your community at the local, state, and federal levels.

As a small charitable organization, the Rail Passengers Association relies on the generosity of others and we hope you consider supporting us.

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