



SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE  
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION

Southwest Chief and Front Range  
Passenger Rail Commission  
Transportation Legislation Review Committee  
September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The central panel features a white background with a logo at the top. The logo consists of a stylized mountain range in blue and white, with a red and yellow sun or wheel symbol in the center. Below the logo is the text "SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION". The main text of the panel is centered and reads "Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Transportation Legislation Review Committee September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019".



**SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE  
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# Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

- **Legislature's Senate Bill 17 – 153 created the Commission (effective July 1, 2017). It 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

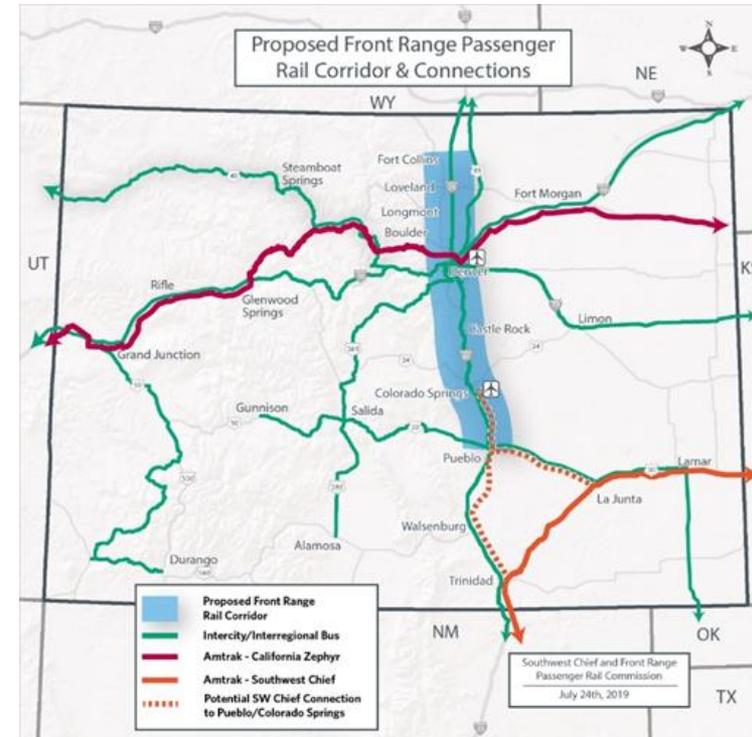
Project Role	Current Commissioner	Organization	Notes
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Salvatore Pace	Resident of Pueblo County	Appointment expires 7/1/2021
Public Rail Transportation Advocate	Jim Souby	ColoRail	Appointment expires 7/1/2020
Colorado Class I Freight Railroad Representative	Nathan Anderson	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



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# Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

- **Commission Responsibilities:**
  - **Work to preserve Amtrak's Southwest Chief service across southeast Colorado.**
  - **Consider re-routing the Southwest Chief service between La Junta and Trinidad by way of Pueblo and Walsenburg to better serve southern Colorado and pursue possible Amtrak Southwest Chief service extension into Pueblo and Colorado Springs from La Junta.**
  - **Facilitate the development of Front Range Passenger Rail service.**





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# Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Meetings

- Commission meetings are held monthly.
- Meetings locations rotate every other month between Denver and a location selected along the Front Range.
- Meeting locations outside of Denver include:
  - Colorado Springs
  - Fort Collins
  - Pueblo
  - Loveland (October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019)



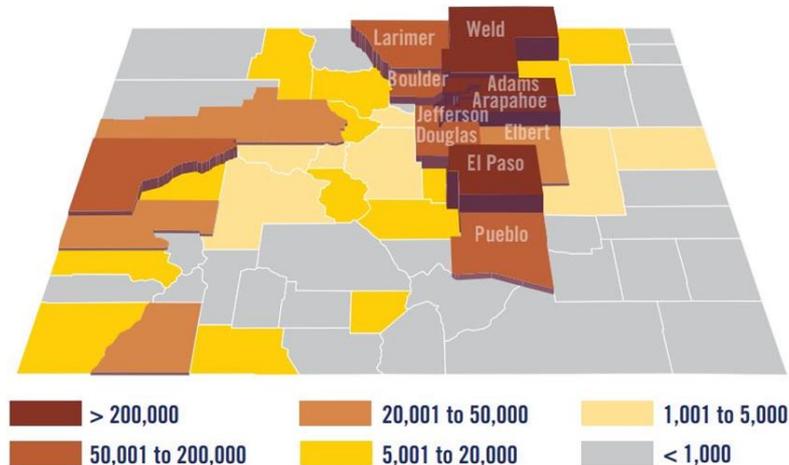


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# Why the Renewed Interest in Passenger Rail?

- State's population grew by 2.2 million from 1990 – 2016. Fort Collins to Pueblo Front Range Corridor has 83.5 % of state's 5.6 million population; Corridor will gain 84% of state's additional 3 million residents by 2050.
- Population 65 and over to increase by 61% between 2010 and 2020 and an additional 39% between 2020 and 2030

## Projected Population Change By County: 2018-2050



Colorado State Demography Office, 11/2018



# Why the Renewed Interest in Passenger Rail?

- **Highway congestion is getting worse; travel time is increasing and is less predictable**
- **Front Range may be losing ability to be economically competitive with other major US population bases; most having existing or planned Passenger Rail Service to provide mobility options for residents and other travelers**
- **Younger population groups prefer reliable “Transit” over owning a car and associated costs**





# 2018 Accomplishments

## Funding

- March – \$16.0 million TIGER IX grant received to replace 60-year old bolted rail, turnouts and at-grade crossing surfaces on the BNSF's trackage in KS, CO, and NM utilized by Amtrak's Southwest Chief connecting Chicago and Los Angeles by way of southeast Colorado. Also, some funding for signal system upgrades to New Mexico's Rail Runner Commuter service.
- May 31 – Senate Bill 18-001 is signed by Governor with \$2.5 million for Passenger Rail Commission. (studies, staffing and federal grant match)
- December – Received \$9.16 million CRISI Grant to install Positive Train Control (PTC) on 179 miles of BNSF track between Dodge City, KS and Las Animas, CO as required by Amtrak for continued operations.



# Current Commission Activities

**Hired Consultant for Rail Passenger Service Development Plan and environmental work**

**Communications Sub-Committee Created**

- Created Passenger Rail Commission logo
- Updating Commission's Website
- Created Metro Quest Survey for Front Range Passenger Rail, similar to survey for Statewide Transportation Plan.

**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.**





# Project Scope

- 1. Purpose and Need/Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement**
- 2. Service Development Plan**
  1. Alignments and possible station location
  2. Technology and Speed
  3. Levels of Service (Number of trains per day)
  4. High level capital and operation costs
  5. Ridership
  6. Service Operator
  7. Governance structure
- 3. NEPA Process, Analysis and Documentation (NEPA).**





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**COLORADO**  
Department of Transportation

# Front Range Passenger Rail

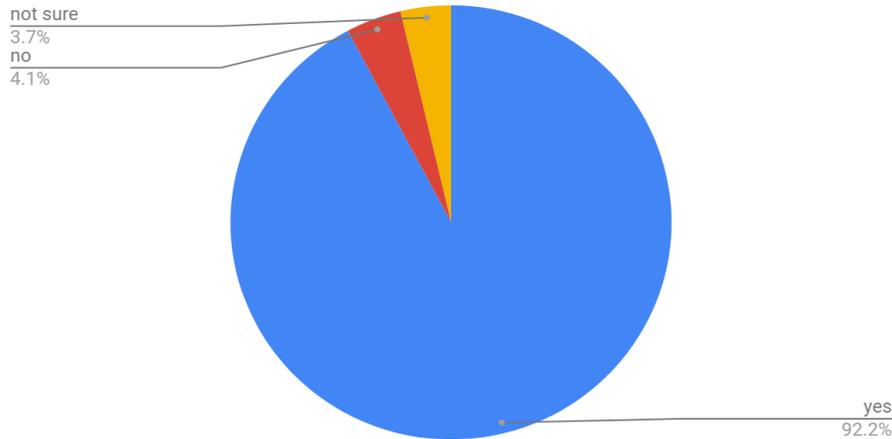
<https://frontrangerail.metroquest.com>



# Interim Results

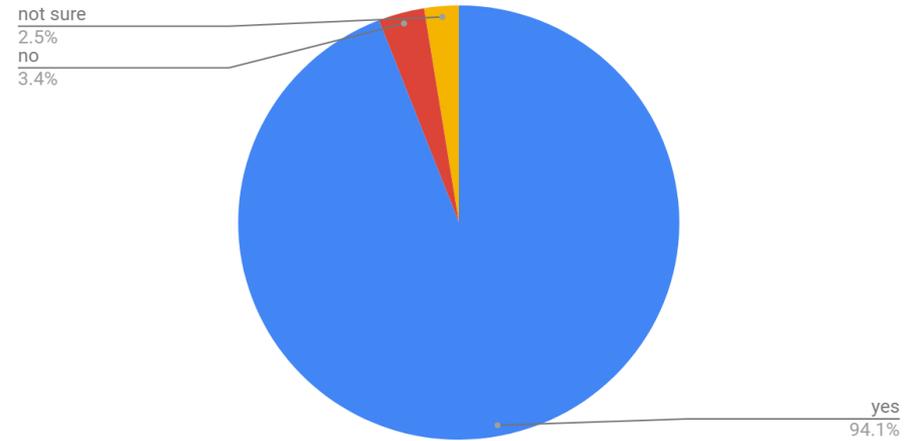
Over 4300 responses (9/10/19)

Do you support establishing Front Range Passenger Rail service between Fort Collins and Pueblo



Yes	3864
No	170
Not Sure	155

Do you believe passenger rail service could help address transportation needs along the Front Range?



Yes	4016
No	144
Not Sure	108

# Questions?



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Commission

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