



COLORADO

A Vision for Front Range Passenger Rail

In 2017, the Colorado Southwest Chief Commission was legislatively repurposed to become the Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission. The Commission was tasked with facilitating implementation and operation of future passenger rail in and along the Interstate 25 corridor. In 2018, the Colorado General Assembly made a \$2.5 million General Fund transfer to fund the Commission, including the development of a rail passenger service plan for the Front Range corridor.

Colorado continues to improve and expand its highway system, especially I-25. However, a passenger rail service linking Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Fort Collins to Denver—a 173-mile corridor which contains the majority of Colorado’s population—will benefit all Coloradans. The project would be the transportation “spine” along the Front Range, with other multimodal systems east and west of the I-25 corridor integrated into Front Range Passenger Rail.

WHY DOES COLORADO NEED FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL?

Front Range passenger rail service would meet the following needs:

- Address the mobility demands of future population growth
- Improve mobility and system capacity by providing an alternative travel option
- Enhance economic growth and development through improved connectivity
- Improve the state’s environmental quality and energy efficiency
- Provide economic benefits sufficient to attract new funding sources

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE FRONT RANGE

In the next 25 years (by 2045), there will be 7.8 million Coloradans, a population increase of 47%. There will be 5 million jobs statewide, an increase of 51%. Although the number of miles per capita traveled in Colorado is expected to remain flat, the increase in population and employment will increase the demand for travel by approximately 47%. This growth will put heavy demands on Colorado’s transportation system, especially in the Front Range Corridor.

The Front Range is forecast to grow from 4.9 million persons in 2020 to 6.6 million in 2045, a 35% increase. The North Front Range/Upper Front Range Region (Larimer and Weld Counties) will grow 65% from 0.7 million to nearly 1.2 million persons. Colorado Springs (El Paso County) will grow 39% from 0.7 million to 1.1 million persons. Metro Denver will grow 27% from 3.3 million to 4.2 million persons. No action alternatives for north and south of Denver on I-25 show vehicle travel times doubling in the next 20 years.

MORE INFORMATION: codot.gov/about/southwest-chief-commission-front-range-passenger-rail



CORRIDOR PLANNING

The Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission is initiating a decision-making process with interested local, state and federal stakeholders to move forward with passenger rail service along Colorado's Front Range. This public process will be consistent with the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) project delivery streamlining of environmental procedures to align with those of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

This process will blend a rail passenger service development document and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that will prepare the state for preliminary design and project level NEPA. The elements of the preliminary effort will include:

- Identification of purpose and need
- Identification of alternative alignments/routes
- Define service characteristics (commute only vs. all day service)
- Define technology, speeds, possible station spacing
- Perform high level environmental analysis
- Identify high level capital and operating costs
- Perform benefit/cost analysis
- Identify rights-of-way that need to be preserved

ACCELERATING PROJECT DELIVERY

CDOT has institutionalized streamlining measures that accelerate project delivery during planning. Examples include programmatic agreements and blended teams. CDOT will also conduct planning activities prior to formal NEPA initiation. CDOT has strong relationships with regulatory agencies and has demonstrated success in completing NEPA in less time than the nationwide average.

Gaining endorsement from interested stakeholders on a shared vision will be critical to project delivery. A workable solution will respect corridor context including community and ecological values. Stakeholders will have opportunities to participate in process milestones to include purpose and need, screening criteria and alternatives analysis. To avoid duplication of effort, NEPA can build upon assumptions and analysis from previous studies in the corridor on the viability of alignments and technology.



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

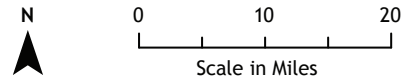


**SOUTHWEST CHIEF & FRONT RANGE
PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION**

COLORADO

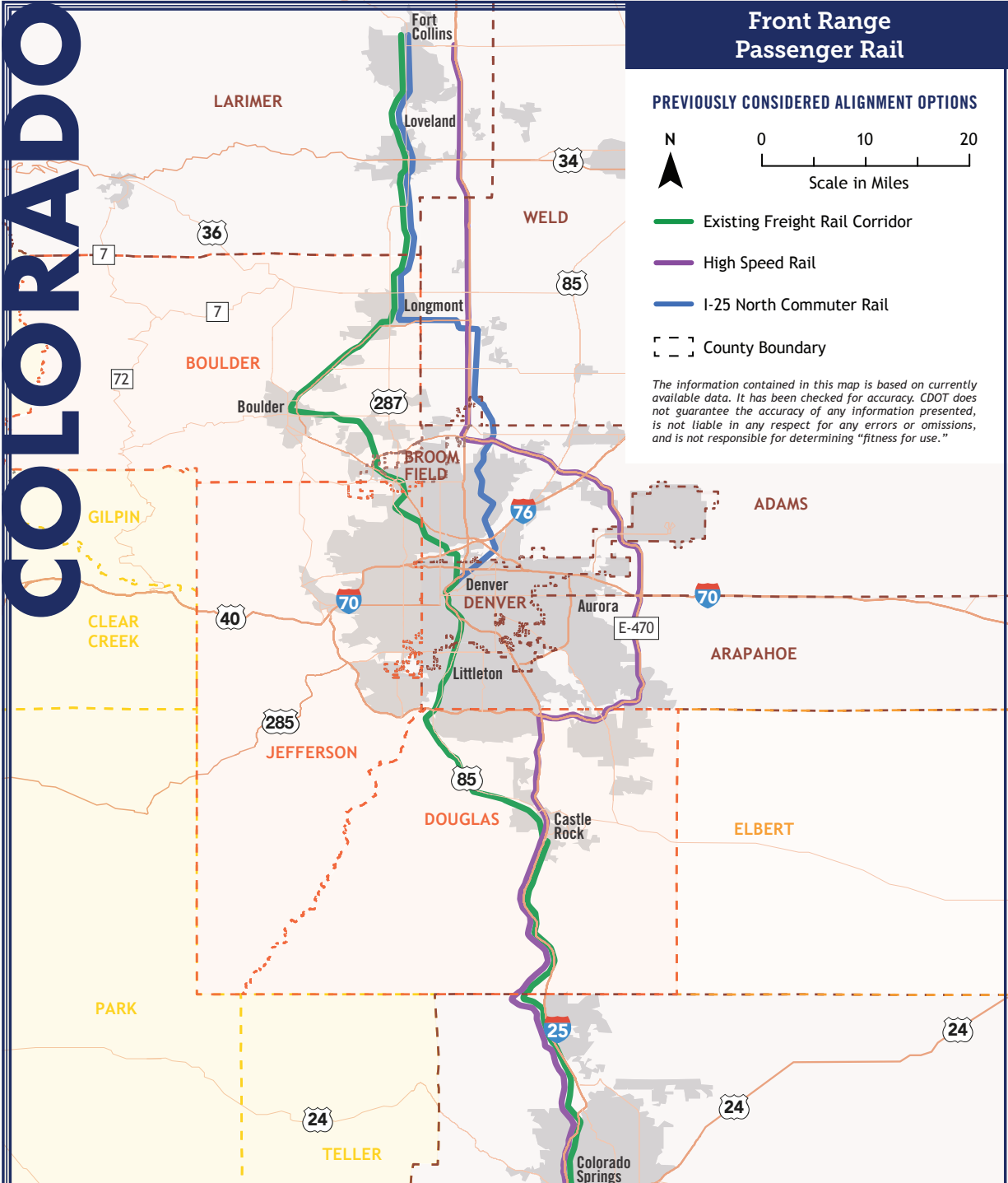
Front Range Passenger Rail

PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

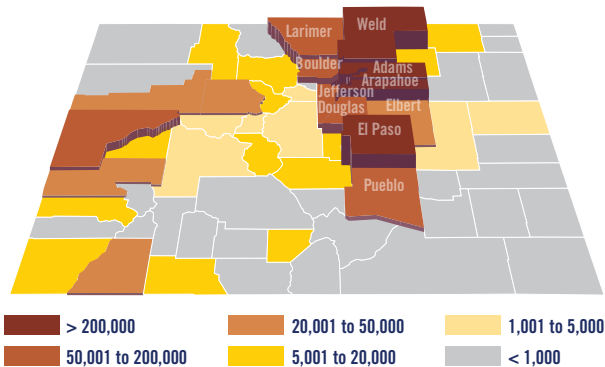


- Existing Freight Rail Corridor
- High Speed Rail
- I-25 North Commuter Rail
- County Boundary

The information contained in this map is based on currently available data. It has been checked for accuracy. CDOT does not guarantee the accuracy of any information presented, is not liable in any respect for any errors or omissions, and is not responsible for determining "fitness for use."



Projected Population Change By County: 2018-2050



Colorado State Demography Office, 11/2018