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Colorado High-Speed Rail Study Identifies I-25 & I-70 Corridor Station, Route & Technology Options

GOLDEN, CO – Based on input gathered over the past three months, Rocky Mountain Rail Authority's High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study team identified route, technology and station options to be studied during the project. The study team will begin to evaluate the technical, operational, and financial feasibility of the alternatives to determine if any combination of options in the I-25 or I-70 corridors is capable of meeting Federal Railroad Administration requirements for designation as the nation's eleventh high-speed rail corridor.

"Local input from throughout both corridors heavily influenced our development of station, route and technology alternatives," said RMRA Chairman and Clear Creek County Commissioner Harry Dale. "In the next three months the study team will evaluate whether we can build a feasible high-speed rail system that provides reliable service at an affordable cost."

The station options being considered were primarily determined by market or population demand. This information was supplemented by local planning desires to determine the stations that are being evaluated. Once station options were identified, the study team developed route alternatives for various technology options that could connect the stations.

Chairman Dale continued, "Stations are one of the biggest factors in this study. Our challenge is to identify those areas with the greatest ridership potential and find ways to connect them. Our ability to develop cost-effective ways to provide fast, reliable service to the greatest number of riders will directly influence the feasibility of high-speed rail in Colorado."

For the I-25 corridor, the study is evaluating the feasibility of six, high-demand, primary station options; and nine smaller, secondary station options. Various routes in the corridor are being evaluated including using portions of existing rail lines, the I-25 highway corridor and other new, unconstrained north-south routes. The proven technologies that will be evaluated for the I-25 corridor include diesel trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 130 mph, electric trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 220 mph and
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elevated Maglev trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 300 mph. See the fact sheet for more specifics regarding the alternatives including the full list of the station options.

For the I-70 corridor, the study is evaluating the feasibility of 12 high-demand, primary station options, and 14 smaller, secondary station options. Various routes in the corridor are being evaluated including I-70, the I-70 highway valley and other new, unconstrained east-west routes including several options that tunnel through the mountains. The proven technologies that will be evaluated for the I-70 corridor include electric trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 220 mph and elevated Maglev trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 300 mph. Diesel trains will not be evaluated in the I-70 corridor because they are not considered to be capable of providing consistent high-speed service up the steep grades of the corridor. See the fact sheet for more specifics regarding the alternatives including the full list of the station options.

Since the RMRA announced its High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study in August, the study team has worked with ongoing planning studies and projects in both the I-25 and I-70 corridors, including the I-70 Coalition's land-use planning study, CDOT's Railroad Relocation Implementation Study and RTD's FasTracks program. In addition, the team has worked closely with governmental agencies, the freight railroads and other strategic partners in each corridor to gather input on various aspects of the potential projects.

This study, on schedule for completion by June 2009, will make recommendations on whether additional, more detailed high-speed rail analysis is warranted and provide a business and implementation plan if a feasible alternative is identified. The study will not make final alignment, station, or investment decisions.

About Rocky Mountain Rail Authority

Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) is a multi-jurisdictional government body created to explore passenger rail as part of a viable transportation solution for Colorado. RMRA members include nearly 50 counties, municipalities and other organizations along the I-70 and I-25 corridors. For more information, visit www.rockymountainrail.org