

SUBMITTED TO

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAIL AUTHORITY

AUGUST 4, 2008

Stakeholder Outreach Approach Report



SUBMITTED BY

TEMS

Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc.

in association with

Quandel Consultants, LLC

STUDY OVERVIEW

The Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) is a multi jurisdictional government body created to explore rail transit as part of a viable transportation solution in Colorado. Rocky Mountain Rail Authority members include 17 counties and 27 municipalities and other organizations along the I-70 and I-25 corridors.

The RMRA is conducting a feasibility study for a proposed high-speed passenger rail service within a north/south corridor (the I-25 Corridor) from Wyoming to New Mexico and an east/west corridor (the I-70 Corridor) from Denver International Airport to the Utah state border including secondary corridors shown in Exhibit 1. The Rail Feasibility Study (RFS) will examine the I-25 Corridor broadly and generally within existing rail corridors, and examine the I-70 Corridor generally within the existing I-70 corridor and secondary corridors depicted in Exhibit 1, which has no existing rail corridor east of Minturn.

Exhibit 1: Potential Colorado High-Speed Rail Corridors



The study will identify whether or not one or both corridors can be expected to provide a positive operating ratio (operating revenue/operating costs) and a positive cost-benefit ratio (benefits/costs). In addition, the study will evaluate whether the proposed corridor can operate at speeds of 79 mph, projected ridership, percentage of the corridors over which trains will be able to operate at maximum cruise speed, projected benefits to non-riders such as congestion relief, amount of federal, state and local financial support can be anticipated and the level of cooperation from the owner of the rights-of-way (ROW) that can be reasonably expected.

The most feasible alternatives will be submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration for designation as High Speed Rail Corridors which would make them eligible for specially targeted funding.

CORE MESSAGING

It will be critical for Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) members, RMRA spokespeople and third-party advocates to remain consistent and effective in efforts to communicate about the feasibility study.

Throughout the project, certain milestones (e.g. local community benefits, final recommendations, etc) will require specific sub-messaging that will be developed at the appropriate point in the study. However, it is important that RMRA communicate a simple, clear set of core messages about the study.

The core messages for the High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study are:

- The Rocky Mountain Rail Authority's High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study is a year-long study to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of implementing two high-speed rail lines that will provide seamless travel throughout the state's most populated corridors.
 - **I-70 Corridor** – The I-70 Corridor would connect Colorado's agricultural West Slope and mountain communities with the region's largest metropolitan area and Denver International Airport.
 - **I-25 Corridor** – The I-25 Corridor would connect the growing technology-driven and military communities in northern and southern Colorado with other burgeoning communities along the Front Range.
- The overall objective of the RFS is to complete a fresh, objective assessment of the feasibility of implementing high speed rail service within the I-25 and I-70 corridors and to identify the next steps that should be pursued by RMRA and partner agencies in the implementation of that service.

- The study will evaluate various alignments, station location options and train technologies to identify the most feasible alternatives based on numerous factors including projected train speeds, ridership, community benefits and potential public financial support.
- The study will not necessarily recommend one preferred project. It will however identify if a feasible project exists and should be analyzed in more detail in a future environmental study.
- The RMRA will collaborate closely with municipal leaders, transportation agencies and metropolitan planning organizations throughout both corridors to share information and gather input throughout the feasibility study.
- Rocky Mountain Rail Authority is a multi jurisdictional government body created to explore rail transit as part of a viable transportation solution in Colorado. Rocky Mountain Rail Authority members include 17 counties and 27 municipalities and other organizations along the I-70 and I-25 corridors.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The proposed high-speed rail will be of great interest to a vast number of people along the I-25 and I-70 corridors, as well as anyone outside these areas that travels in them for leisure or business. The study will be of particular interest to those communities along potential alignments and those near potential station areas.

Considering the resources and cost of conducting a state-wide grass roots public involvement campaign, the study team will focus its efforts on a campaign to reach and involve key decision makers, influential organizations/individuals and community leaders.

We will create opportunities for the general public to get information and engage in the study, but we will focus the bulk of our engagement effort on the key decision makers and other leaders described above.

KEY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ISSUES

Numerous issues, perceptions and ideas will influence how the public views the High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study. These views will be constantly evolving as a result of our dialogue with the public, ongoing analysis and various other social, economic, political and transportation dynamics.

It is not the role of a feasibility study to address all of these issues or answer all of the questions surrounding them. Quite frankly, many of these issues are influenced by factors beyond the focus of this study. It is however important that the study, and communications about it, recognize these issues as they will influence how the study is perceived and the level of community support it is likely to receive.

Community Issues:

- **Station Locations** – The communities along the proposed corridors will have a high interest in the proposed station locations. Opinions will vary greatly with some communities seeing stations as gateways and a potential spur to their economic development while others may worry about the perceived impacts stations could bring to their communities. It is also highly likely that there will be more communities wanting stations than is appropriate for a successful intercity rail system.
- **Effect on Business/Economy** – The community will be very interested in the potential effects the rail line will have on business development. The study team's community benefits analysis should provide many in the community with a clearer understanding of the kind of benefit/impact the implementation of the rail line could have on their community.
- **Effect on Tourism** – The communities in both corridors, but particularly the mountain resort communities along the I-70 Corridor, will want a lot of detail about how the rail line will affect tourism. Given tourism's role in Colorado's economy, it is also highly likely that the Colorado Tourism Office and the various Convention and Visitor's Bureaus along both corridors will be interested in this study.
- **Alignment** – There seems to be some perceptions that specific alignments have already been selected. It will be critical that it is understood that the study team has not selected any alignments and that multiple alignments will be evaluated for each corridor.
- **Growth** – The community, outside the metro area, wants to preserve its distinctiveness from the Denver metro area. It is possible that the proposed high-speed rail project could be perceived as a contributor to unwanted growth, although given the nature of high-speed rail, this can be resolved by eliminating stops or simply failing to take advantage of the joint development potential.
- **Environmental Concerns** – Both corridors include significant areas that could be of environmental concern (e.g. wildlife habitats, streams, open space, etc.). Over the past 5-10 years, many communities in the state – particularly in the Denver metro area and along the I-70 corridor – have been engaged in highly detailed environmental clearance studies. It will be important that we help the

public understand that those kind of studies would be the next step in making any of the proposed projects a reality and that the feasibility study does not get into the kind of environmental analysis that those other studies do.

- **Technology** – While the general public is not likely to think much about particular train technologies, there are a number of individuals/organizations in both corridors that have pre-conceived preferences or assumptions about the right technology to use. The study team will need to ensure that the public understands the need for an objective evaluation of a full range of technology options that are available.

Community Leader Perspective:

- **Financial** – A project of this magnitude will not be an inexpensive venture. Community leaders will be very interested in the funding mechanisms for the projects and what role the local, state and federal governments will be expected to play.
- **Practicality** – Many leaders are concerned with practicality and projected ridership numbers. They want to understand if the rail makes sense for their community and if it makes sense for the future success of the region/state.
- **Benefits** – The leaders are interested in knowing how the high-speed rail will benefit their community. The study's Community Benefits analysis should be very helpful on this issue.
- **Express/Light Freight** – There will be a particular interest in whether the passenger rail service could also be used to help provide better transport of goods and services (e.g. mail, supplies and other light goods).
- **Local Transit Integration** – There will likely be many questions about how the proposed rail service will integrate with local transit options. In areas with developed local transit systems – especially the Denver-metro area – there will be strong interest in how the high-speed rail line would relate to the local service. In areas with less developed or no local transit options, there will be questions of what options train users will have after they get to their destination.
- **Study Expectations** – Communities throughout the state have invested varying amounts of time and money in pre-planning activities for a potential high-speed rail line. They will likely have strong desires that the feasibility study take on more of a broad Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) approach to the development and screening of alternatives. It will be important that the study team clearly communicate that the intent of a feasibility study is to determine if a feasible project worthy of further analysis exists and that if one does, the next step would

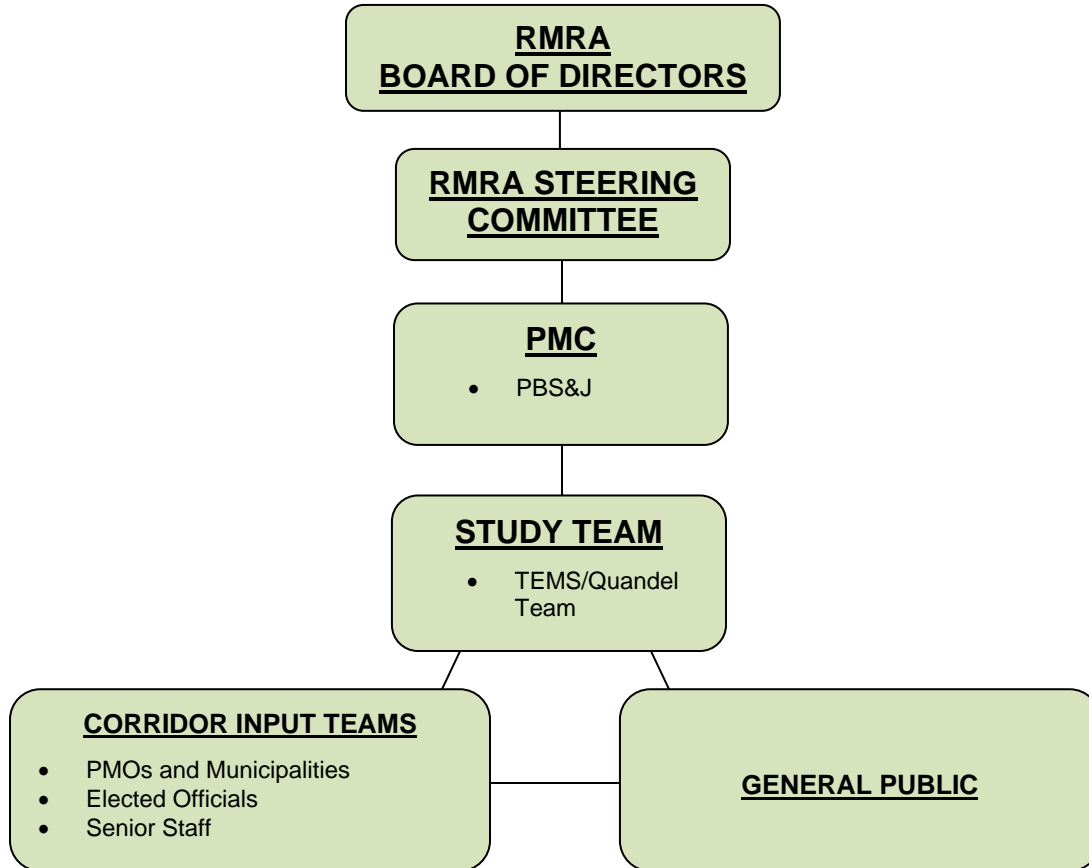
be to conduct an environmental study (e.g. an EIS) that would provide a more in-depth analysis of the option.

Potential User issues:

- **User friendliness** – Potential users will be interested in how easy accessing and riding the train will be. There will also be strong interest in the handling of baggage and operating schedules.
- **Efficient** – How efficient? Will the schedules reflect differences in seasonality and high demand times? Will there be an express train across the corridor, and others with more-frequent stops.
- **Cost Effective** – With the recent upsurge in gasoline prices, potential users want to know how much the rail fares will be and if the price will make it worthwhile for them to forgo using their cars and utilize the train.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Exhibit 2: Decision Making Process



THE DECISION MAKERS

Decision-making will be the primary responsibility of RMRA Steering Committee and RMRA Board of Directors. Their decision-making will be informed by Corridor Input Teams (discussed below) and general input gathered from the broader community.

CORRIDOR INPUT TEAMS

Three Corridor Input Teams will be formed for this project. The teams will be:

- **I-70 Corridor Input Team** – Coordinated through the I-70 Coalition, this team will be comprised of elected officials and/or senior staff from the municipalities and MPOs serving on the I-70 Coalition Board and the Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee. The team will be responsible for providing a deeper

understanding of local preferences, issues and concerns related to the I-70 Corridor.

- Denver Metro Input Team – Coordinated through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), this team will be comprised of elected officials and/or senior staff from municipalities within the DRCOG that fall within the study areas for both the I-25 and I-70 corridors, RTD, DIA, CDOT and DRCOG. This team will be responsible for providing a deeper understanding of local preferences, issues and concerns specific to the Denver Metro area and the convergence of the two rail lines.
- I-25 Corridor Input Team – Jointly coordinated through the North Front Range MPO (NFRMPO), Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), this team will be comprised of elected officials and/or senior staff from the municipalities in the I-25 Corridor study area and senior-management representatives from NFRMPO, PACOG and PPACG. This team will be responsible for providing a deeper understanding of local preferences, issues and concerns related to the I-25 Corridor.

Each Corridor Input Team will convene for three workshops. They will provide and receive input on:

- **Scoping** – Summarize the scope of the study, the evaluation criteria and evaluation methodology. Gather input on local needs and desires within the scope of the feasibility study.
- **Alternatives Selection** – Summarize the alternatives that will be evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis and Feasibility Determination. Gather input on local preferences related to the alternatives under consideration.
- **Alternatives Analysis** – Summarize the results of the Alternatives Analysis and Feasibility Determination. Recommend the “Most Feasible Alternative(s)” to develop a Business and Implementation Plan. Gather local input on this recommendation.

Corridor Input Teams will be expected to represent all populations – including low-income and minority groups – in their input. All general public comments submitted to the study team will be provided to the Corridor Input Teams to help support their achievement of this perspective.

COORDINATION WITH THE RAILROADS

The Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway are very important stakeholders to the feasibility study. The study team will coordinate directly with both railroads through CDOT's Rail Relocation Implementation Study. This coordination and collaboration will play a critical role in the development and evaluation of alignment options for both the I-25 and I-70 Corridors.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER STUDIES/PROJECTS

The study team will coordinate with related studies and projects in both corridors. One goal of this coordination will be to clearly differentiate the feasibility study from other efforts in the corridors. In addition, the coordination will help the study team identify opportunities for RMRA representatives to participate or have a presence at other meetings/events in the study corridors.

COORDINATION WITH CDOT COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The study team, in coordination with the PMC, will alert CDOT's communications and government relations staff to significant communications outreach to the media or elected officials (e.g. issuing news releases, media conference calls, and communication with Corridor Input Teams).

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN DECISION MAKING

Decision making is not accomplished through public referendum. However, the ideas, perspectives and needs of the public are a critical element for decision makers and the committees providing recommendations to them.

Implementation of this Public Involvement Plan will be one part of providing the public with information and perspective about the study. Input provided by the general public will be provided to the Corridor Input Teams and the RMRA for their consideration. In addition, it will be part of the responsibility of Corridor Input Team members and the RMRA Steering Committee members to be listening to and considering their input in discussions with the project team.

The general public will also be engaged in the RFS through the following efforts:

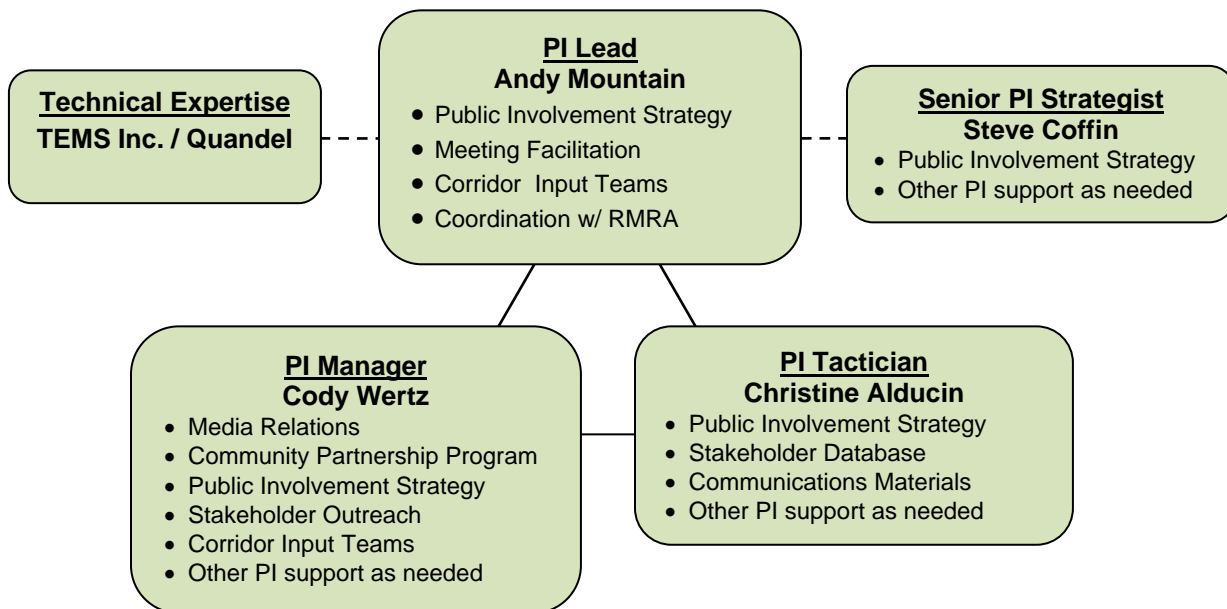
- Community Partnership Program – Organizations and entities with existing capabilities of engaging large numbers of people directly will be provided with materials/information for them to share with the public.

- Media Relations – Our media relations program is intentionally more robust than is typical for a feasibility study. It is designed to generate greater awareness and interest in the study among large numbers of Coloradans.
- Web Site Content – Web site content on the study will be provided to the RMRA for incorporation into its website.
- Community Presentations – Community presentations, conducted in coordination with partners in the Community Partnership Program, will occur after the range of feasible alternative(s) has been developed.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Critical to the success of our efforts to engage the public in the feasibility study will be clarity about the roles and responsibilities of everyone comprising the Public Involvement Team.

Exhibit 3: Public Involvement Internal Team Structure



SCOPING AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH STRATEGY

The stakeholder outreach activities will be consistent through the year-long process, with increased outreach as we reach identified milestones during the three phases. It can be expected that the media will have tremendous interest in this project and as more coverage occurs, public interest will increase. Our public involvement strategy is split into three different phases outlined below. Please see the next section for further detail of each tactic that comprises the strategy.

PHASE I: Scoping

This phase will introduce the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study to relevant stakeholders and begin to involve them in the input process. This includes creating and holding a scoping workshop with the three County-Based Input Teams, initiating and maintaining media relations efforts, and creating a Community Partnership Program comprised of third-party organizations we will partner with throughout the project.

PHASE II: Alternatives Selection

This phase will set the stage with the public and stakeholders that will present the different alternatives to be evaluated in the study. In addition to a second round of County-Based Input Team workshops, communication about the alternatives with the stakeholder database will continue as well as ongoing website updates and media relations.

PHASE III: Alternatives Analysis

Communications during this phase will focus on the results of the analysis, projected community benefits and recommended alternative(s) to be selected for development of a Business and Implementation Plan. The final phase will involve County-Based Input Team workshops and presentations to organizations throughout both corridors. In addition, we will utilize extensive media relations and other stakeholder communication efforts to help publicize the recommended alternative.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TACTICS AND TIMELINE

PHASE I: Scoping – Sub-messaging during this phase will focus on clearly articulating the goals, objectives and desired outcomes of the study.

July: Our public involvement campaign will kick off in July to introduce key stakeholders to the project. We will work on the following:

- **Update Website:** Updated content (e.g. a Feasibility Study Fact Sheet) will be added to the RMRA website. Additional updates will be made monthly and as needed to reflect the most current information.

August: Our public involvement campaign will continue to introduce key stakeholders to the project. We will work on the following:

- **Kick-off Media Relations:** It is critical to involve the media throughout the project. We will kick off our media relations with:
 - Media Advisory: A media advisory will be sent to statewide and regional media outlets to announce the feasibility study process and the media conference call.
 - Media Conference call: This will be the first of three media conference calls to announce the project and the entities involved. The call will also serve to help answer the media's questions regarding the study and desired outcome/ s.
 - Press Release: This press release will serve the media not attending the media conference call and as a reference on the website to announce the start of the study, entities involved, and details regarding the process.

- **Create I-25 and Denver Metro Corridor Input Teams:** Based on the I-70 Coalition structure, we will create similar teams comprised of elected officials and/or senior-level staff from municipalities, transit/transportation agencies, key representatives from freight railroads, senior representatives from DIA and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to get a deeper understanding of the needs/desires for this project in the Denver Metro area, and along the 1-25 corridor.

- **Create Stakeholder Database:** A stakeholder database will be developed in an effort to maintain open and effective communication with surrounding neighborhoods, civic groups, businesses, local leaders and other citizens affected or interested in the decisions made about the study. The database will serve as the master mailing list and it will track the communications with (e.g. mailings, meetings, etc.) and input from individuals.

- **Create Community Partnership Program:** We will initiate contact with influential and powerful groups throughout both corridors. We will interact closely with the leadership of these organizations and arm them with study information to share with their members and other stakeholders. This program will provide the RMRA with a cost-effective approach to communicate project milestones and updates with large numbers of individuals.

- **Continue Updating Website**

- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

September: We will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Introduce Community Partnership Program to project:** We will send a project introduction to our Community Partnership Program organizations encouraging them to share project information with their constituents.
- **Editorial Board Meetings:** The RMRA Steering Committee and PI Team will identify individuals or a small group to meet with editorial boards of regional media outlets to spread positive and factual information about the feasibility study. We suggest this process begin in late August and continue through October.
- **OP-ED Article:** We will write an op-ed tailored for different regions to submit to at least four regional newspapers. The op-ed's message will be similar to the press release in August explaining the project parameters, entities involved, the importance of public input, and desired outcomes.
- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

PHASE II: Alternatives Selection – The sub-messaging during this phase will begin to shift from overview of the study to summarizing the alternatives that are being analyzed.

October: We will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

November: As we have more information during the Alternatives Analysis, we will seek more input from the public with the following:

- **Corridor Input Team Workshops on Alternatives Selection:** Each of the three Corridor Input Teams will meet. In the workshops, we will summarize the alternatives that will be evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis and Feasibility

Determination and gather input on local preferences related to the alternatives under consideration.

- **Stated Preference Survey:** Through the Stated Preference Survey that will be conducted as part of RMRA's Ridership and Revenue Analysis, we will gather the corridors' travel behavior and choice in their areas. Information from this will be used in all of our communications efforts.
- **Update Community Partnership Program on Progress:** We will send these organizations a progress update on the alternatives that will be evaluated and stated preference survey results. We will encourage them to share this information with their members and other stakeholders.
- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

PHASE III: Alternatives Analysis – The sub-messaging during this phase will begin to shift to summarize how the alternatives are performing in the evaluation, with a prominent focus on the most alternative recommended for the Business and Implementation Plan.

December: We will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

January: Kicking off the New Year, we will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities as well as identify the community benefits of the high-speed rail. Our plan includes the following:

- **Community Benefits:** To provide the public with more insight on how the project will affect them, we will focus a significant amount of attention on the individual and regional community benefits of maintaining the high-speed rail throughout the corridor.
- **Media Relations:**

- Media Advisory – This media advisory will announce the second media conference call's agenda, highlighting the community benefits announcement.
 - Media Conference Call – This second media conference call will focus on updating the media on the status of the study as well as outlining individual and community benefits of the project.
 - Press Release – This second press release will showcase the individual and regional community benefits. NOTE: this timing is dependent on when the Community Benefits Showcase is ready. This could be moved to February or March to 'stretch-out' the media outreach.
- **Continue Updating Website**
 - **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

February: We will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Corridor Input Team Meetings on Alternatives Analysis:** In these three workshops (one with each team), we will summarize the results of the Alternatives Analysis and Feasibility Determination and recommend the one "Most Feasible Alternative" to develop a Business and Implementation Plan for.
- **Update Community Partnership Program on progress:** We will send these organizations a progress update on the results of the Alternatives Analysis, summarize the recommended alternative and summarize the local community benefits associated with it. We will encourage them to share this information with their members and other stakeholders.
- **Media Relations** – Write second op-ed targeted to specific regional newspapers highlighting the Community Benefits.
- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

March: We will continue to monitor and maintain our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

April: As the study progresses, we will make presentations to our community partnership program groups, along with monitoring and maintaining our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Plan Community Presentations:** We will work with organizations that are part of Community Partnership Program to arrange five project presentations in geographically diverse areas of the two corridors.
- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

May: We will continue to make presentations to our community partnership program groups, along with monitoring and maintaining our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Community Presentations:** We will present the feasibility study at events hosted by our Community Partnership Program partners.
- **Continue Updating Website**
- **Continue Media Relations**
- **Continue Updating Stakeholder Database**

June: We will continue to make presentations to our community partnership program groups, along with monitoring and maintaining our public involvement activities. Our plan includes the following:

- **Community Presentations:** We will present the feasibility study at events hosted by our Community Partnership Program partners.
- **Media Relations:**
 - **Media Advisory** – This media advisory will announce the completion of the business and implementation plan and a subsequent media conference call to provide the plan’s details.
 - **Media Conference Call** – This media conference call will detail the plan, the process we undertook to involve the public and provide feedback and possible next steps.
 - **Press Release** – This press release will sum-up the information detailed in the media conference call.
 - **Editorial Board Meetings** – We suggest the individuals or group identified in August of 2008 meet with key regional and statewide

newspaper editorial boards to give an update on the results of the plan and summarize next steps.

- **Final Updates to Website**
- **Final Updates to Stakeholder Database**

CONCLUSION

The strategy and approach outlined in this document is designed to provide the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority with an effective, cost-efficient method of engaging Coloradans in the High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study. It will broadly position the study and its results statewide, while also establishing relationships with influential organizations that will be critical to making the implementation of its recommendations a success. Finally the approach will help ensure that the study's results and recommendations are able to effectively consider vital input from the municipalities, planning organizations, transit authorities and the freight railroads.