Southwest Chief Routing

Kansas Legislature
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Situation

• BNSF has shifted through freight traffic from the current route of the *Southwest Chief* to its parallel “Transcon” route

• Local freight, coal, and commuter traffic remain on some portions of the current route

• Although BNSF traffic patterns are subject to change, there are no prospects for routine through freight traffic to resume on the *Chief’s* current route

• BNSF requires lesser track speeds and ride quality on the line for its remaining purposes

• This will make the current 700-mile Newton-Albuquerque route unsuitable for through passenger service
Situation

• Alternatives include funding maintenance on the current route, or re-routing the *Chief* to the “Transcon” main line.

• Both Amtrak and BNSF railroads are committed to work with the affected communities to find a solution to the issue, with Amtrak and BNSF saying the current route is the best for the *Southwest Chief*.

• Many communities and others have made investments in their stations and in otherwise supporting the service – and those efforts are recognized and appreciated.
## Current Southwest Chief Route - Kansas

### Current Route in Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected Communities</th>
<th>FY12 Boardings &amp; Alightings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hutchinson</td>
<td>5,239; up from 5,185 in FY11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge City</td>
<td>5,174; up from 5,149 in FY11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden City</td>
<td>7,887; up from 7,511 in FY11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Current **Southwest Chief** Route - Colorado

![Map of the Southwest Chief Route](image)

**Affected Communities** | **FY12 Boardings & Alightings**
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Lamar | 1,936; up from 1,840 in FY11
La Junta | 6,566; down from 6,653 in FY11
Trinidad | 4,770; up from 4,535 in FY11
## Current Southwest Chief Route – New Mexico

### Current Route in Question

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Affected Communities</th>
<th>FY12 Boardings &amp; Alightings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raton</td>
<td>16,292; down from 16,749 in FY11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>5,653; up from 4,952 in FY11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamy</td>
<td>12,589; up from 12,579 in FY11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preserving the Current Route

• Maintaining passenger service on the current route will involve annual maintenance and capital costs, plus one-time major capital needs
  – Annual maintenance costs are estimated at $10 million and must be funded starting January 2016 at the latest
  – One-time capital needs are in the $100 million range and must be funded within the next 10 years
    • If capital costs are not funded through a one-time grant, they must be funded over time through increases in the annual cost
  – Cost estimates are based on Amtrak analysis of data provided by BNSF
Preserving the Current Route

• As Amtrak cannot absorb these costs on its own, one solution is equal cost-sharing among the five affected parties: Amtrak, BNSF, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico
  – About $2 million per party per year, with a 20-year commitment
  – Plus $100 million in one-time capital within 10 years
Preserving the Current Route

Other funding possibilities

• Existing federal grant programs
  – Address the one-time capital costs
  – Passenger capital grants may require a non-federal match and a 20-year commitment to operate the passenger service
  – Highly competitive and subject to future federal appropriations

• Legislation in Congress
  – Last year, the Senate passed S. 1813 (known as “MAP-21”)
  – Section 35107 of the bill would create a Federal grant program that could be used for the capital costs of preserving long-distance Amtrak routes, including the Southwest Chief
  – Amtrak or states could apply for the grants, which would not require a match
  – Would be subject to future federal appropriations
  – Would need to be re-filed in this Congress
Conclusion

- Decisions and financial commitments will be needed in 2014. Costs must be funded starting January 2016 at the latest.
- If they are not in place, steps will need to be taken to operate the train via a different route between Newton and Albuquerque by 2016.